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The life, ministry, and  
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LIFE AND REMAINS

OF

THE REV. SAMUEL WALKER, B.A.

NORWICH:

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THE LIFE, MINISTRY,

AND

SELECTIONS FROM THE REMAINS,

OF THE

REV. SAMUEL WALKER, B.A.

FORMERLY OF

TRURO, CORNWALL;

BY

THE REV. EDWIN SIDNEY, A.M.

AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE OF THE REV. ROWLAND HILL."

---

"UNSKILFUL HE TO FAWN, OR SEEK FOR POWER  
BY DOCTRINES FASHION'D TO THE VARYING HOUR;  
FAR OTHER AIMS HIS HEART HAD LEARN'D TO PRIZE  
MORE BENT TO RAISE THE WRETCHED THAN TO RISE."  
GOLDSMITH.

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LONDON:

BALDWIN & CRADOCK, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1835.



## P R E F A C E .

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THE nucleus of this work was found among the papers of the late Rev. Rowland Hill, and consisted of five sermons on brotherly love, recommended by him in a brief prefatory memoir. When I first designed to publish these, with such additions as I might be able to collect, I little imagined that my gleanings would swell into the present volume; nor could they ever have done so, but for the extreme kindness of the Rev. W. Rawlings, the venerable incumbent of Padstow, Cornwall, and other members of his family, who in the most friendly manner confided to my use a number of interesting documents, which could have been supplied from no other quarter. These they have long preserved as memorials of a ministry and friendship, which were the means of enkindling and cherishing in one of their name, that sacred flame which has been transmitted in all its original brightness to the present generation.

I also desire to express my thanks to several other individuals who have kindly added to my

collection of materials. Amongst these, I feel it due to them to mention the late excellent J. B. Wilson, Esq., of Clapham; the Rev. T. Wildbore, of Falmouth; the Rev. C. Bridges, of Old Newton, Suffolk; and Mr. Lloyd, of the Religious Tract Society.

In editing my selections from the remains of the laborious minister of Truro, I have made no corrections, but such as appeared absolutely necessary, being anxious to preserve all the force of his energetic though often quaint mode of writing. The generality of his sermons are plain expositions of gospel doctrines, written with no other object than the edification of those who heard or read them, and a desire that his people should rather feel than admire, what was dictated only by his earnest longing for their salvation. But while in all the humility of true zeal, he thus skimmed, as it were, along the surface of the ground, to gather the lowliest and most nutritious fruits of truth wherewith to feed the flock of Christ, he could rise in majestic flights towards the very fountain of light, and return resplendent with its brightest beams. This is evident in the grandeur of thought in his discourses on the *Power, Holiness, Eternity, and Omnipresence* of God, which I found among his manuscripts, and have inserted in these pages.

I could easily have expanded my work into twice its present size; but recollecting the observation of

a distinguished authoress,<sup>1</sup> that “lives are short and books are long,” I hoped to find more readers and to do more good by condensation, than by endeavouring to avail myself of that *ductility* which some biographers seem to have discovered in the papers of eminent persons, and which they have spun out to a wearisome extent.

My chief object has been to shew the great usefulness of a clergyman skilled to give its due effect to every portion of the spiritual system of our church, and thus to exhibit a practical illustration of its excellence and power.

The means used by Mr. Walker in his endeavours to unite his people amongst themselves, when religion had separated them from the world, are unquestionably open to many powerful objections. No part of a clergyman's work requires more judgment and care than this, nor is it possible to lay down any fixed rules for the accomplishment of so desirable but difficult an object. *Principles* however should be well defined in the scheme of every pastor; and the clearness with which Mr. Walker comprehended his, and the consistency with which he acted up to them, combined with the truest Christian forbearance towards those who differed from him, were, under God's blessing, the chief causes of his wonderful success.

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Hannah More.

Happily for us there are members in the ranks of our parochial clergy, who are pursuing a like course with the same firmness and consistency of conduct, and equal charity of heart. These, while they must prove to be the truest bulwarks of our sanctuary, will, it is hoped, also become the instruments, as their field of operation is gradually and wisely, and not hastily and foolishly extended, of reviving a spirit of true Christian unity, amongst a people awfully shaken by dissensions, and from whom truth will assuredly withdraw its light, if discord be permitted to chase away the sister grace of love.

*Acle, near Norwich,*

*March 9th, 1835.*

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THE LIFE  
OF  
THE REV. SAMUEL WALKER.

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CHAPTER I.

FROM HIS BIRTH TO HIS CONVERSION, AND FIRST  
FRUITS OF HIS MINISTRY.

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*Design of this memoir.*

THERE are many names more conspicuous in the religious history of the last century than that of Samuel Walker, of Truro, because their exertions extended over a wider surface ; but no minister has left for the imitation of posterity, a more perfect pattern of parochial administration. While others, engaged in a laborious itinerancy, were endeavouring to break the spell of that awful lethargy which had spread its fatal charm over the land, this exemplary pastor was constructing from limited and unpromising materials, a model of the private duty of such as are appointed to spiritual cures among settled portions of the people. It is the object of this volume, to collect and re-unite the scattered fragments of this admirable study for every shepherd of a flock, and particularly for those who design, in humble reliance on assistance from above,

to employ, for the benefit of souls committed to their charge, the truly scriptural and therefore effective machinery of our church.

The subject of this narrative was born in the city of Exeter, Dec. 16, 1714, and was the youngest of seven children. Members of his family had represented their native place in parliament for many generations, amongst whom was his paternal grandfather, Sir Thomas Walker, Knight. In addition to this reputable connection, he had the honour of being lineally descended from the great Bishop Hall, by the marriage of the only daughter of the youngest son of that distinguished prelate with the last mentioned gentleman. His parents were Robert Walker, Esq. of Exeter, and Margaret, daughter of the Rev. Richard Hall, minister of St. Edmund and All-Hallows, in that city. Till he was eight years of age, Samuel was the subject of parental tuition under his father's roof, but received the next ten years' education at the grammar school in Exeter. We have no account of the progress he made in learning during his boyhood, or of his character in the midst of his schoolfellows, but his works all bespeak the judicious early cultivation of a naturally powerful and discerning mind. At eighteen he was sent to Exeter college, Oxford, where he cultivated logic with much success, and always considered his early devotion to that study, as the foundation of the facility he afterwards attained in a clear and methodical arrangement of his ideas. When complimented by his friends, who admired the lucid and argumentative mode in which he treated every subject, he always

observed that logic had been his favourite pursuit in youth, and recommended it to all young divines. Of his mode of life at the University we know little; he appears to have possessed habits of application which prevented his entering with a congenial spirit, into the gaieties and temptations that surrounded him. In addition to both capacity and inclination to acquire knowledge, he seems always to have had a pleasing propensity to adorn his conduct with the graces of integrity and virtue, and took pains to give to morals of a mere earthly temper, the brightest polish they were capable of receiving. Besides mental endowments and a character of no ordinary kind, nature had favoured him with a most attractive and commanding person, as well as handsome expressive features, indicating all the characteristics of manly open intelligence. Frank and unreserved in conversation, freely communicating his own thoughts, and courteously listening to others, he became an agreeable companion to such as appreciated the value of his society, and was respected by the whole circle of his acquaintance. But the seions of virtue and morality had been grafted on the wild stem of human nature, and produced nothing but blossoms; it was when his heart became changed by the grace of God, that they ripened into fruit.

Mr. Walker proceeded to his degree of B.A. and took orders in the year 1737. His first curacy was the parish of Dodeseomb Leigh, in the vicinity of his native place, which he held only till August, 1738. He discharged the duties of a pastor at this early period of life, with great diligence, and his private cha-

acter was altogether unimpeachable. He left his parish at the request of Lord Rolle, who invited him to undertake the tuition of his youngest brother during a journey through France, a proposal to which the advantages of travelling abroad induced him readily to yield. While on this tour, he seems to have cultivated with great diligence, those lighter accomplishments which give a grace and charm to the man of letters, particularly the arts of music and dancing, in both of which he excelled. After being thus employed for two years, he returned home, and went to reside at Lanlivery, in Cornwall, as curate to his friend Mr. Nicolas Kendall, canon of Exeter, and archdeacon of Totness. On the death of the archdeacon in the spring of 1740, Mr. Walker was presented to the vicarage of his parish, to hold during the minority of a nephew of Walter Kendall, Esq. patron of the living.

During the time Mr. Walker continued at Lanlivery, he was both a teacher and an example of virtue. His talents rendered him an attractive preacher, while his decorous life and fascinating manners ensured him much affection and respect. He reproved, exhorted, and watched over the people of his flock, preaching, catechising, and visiting diligently in private; nor could any minister more sincerely deplore evident unfruitfulness in his spiritual vineyard. His husbandry, however, extended only to the branches; he was unacquainted with the nature and cultivation of the root. While under a severe sickness in the year 1744, he dictated a letter, to be sent in case he should not recover, as his dying remonstrance to certain of his

parishioners, whose names he desired to be taken down. These persons had been the most inattentive to his admonitions, and he thus manifested a sincere interest in their welfare. Could he have seen an outward decency in these individuals, he would have died content, and discovered the defects of his ministry in another world; but it pleased a gracious Providence to raise him from the bed of sickness, and to shew him the insufficiency of all virtue that does not spring from a heart, made acquainted with its natural enmity against God and holiness, reconciled to him through the death of Christ, and purified by the holy, and therefore necessarily reforming operations of the divine Spirit.

In the summer of 1746 Mr. Walker resigned the vicarage of Lanlivery to the young gentleman for whom he held it, and removed to the curacy of Truro. He eagerly embraced the offer of a residence in this populous town, that he might enjoy the pleasures of exhilarating company, and engage in those social amusements, of which he was passionately fond. Though regular and decent in the external observance of the forms of religion, he acknowledges his heart to have been in the world, and confesses that a desire of applause was in a great measure, the motive of his exhibition of accomplishments in society, and of his sermons and activity as a minister. He had not yet preached or borne the *cross*, and therefore during his days of worldliness, his private rebukes and pulpit advice gave no offence.

The first year of his being curate of Truro, his only ambition seemed to be that he might be courted for

his gaiety, admired for his eloquence, and become the reformer of the vicious by the power of persuasion and force of example. He was not in his preaching a mere common place teacher of moral truths, but his extensive reading had rendered him what is called a *divine*. He had, as we are informed by himself, "historical notions" of the leading doctrines of the gospel—the *corruption of man's nature, his misery and helplessness; the satisfaction and sufficiency of Christ; the necessity of a renewed mind; the need of the work of the Spirit*. These he tells us he "knew notionally, but neither felt nor taught them practically." In fact the period was but just past when these subjects had been treated with eminent learning, but with little or no unction, by men of erudition and research, but whose light, being only that of reason, while it rendered their pages luminous, left them indistinct. From the writings of these celebrated theologians, it is probable that Mr. Walker drew much of his lore, and in common with many others, had studied the popular treatises published not long previous to the accession of the House of Hanover, neglecting the older, sounder, and not less learned divines of our church.

If human qualifications, however lovely, were capable of making an efficient minister of Christ, Mr. Walker would have shone conspicuously in that character during his first year's residence at Truro; but he had to learn the important lesson, that the fairest union of morals, knowledge, and urbanity, is insufficient without grace, to a successful exercise of the pastoral office. All the external brilliancy of man's learning cannot render the mysteries of scripture dis-

tinctly visible in this benighted world: the gospel is like a transparency; its character can only be clearly read in darkness by light within, and this must be the candle of the Lord, himself illuminating the pages of his own word. Acquaintance with the theory of Christian doctrine, and the rigid performance of every social duty, ought invariably to mark the character of a teacher of the gospel; but he may exhibit these excellencies in some degree, and yet be destitute of grace and wisdom. Happily for us, the holiness of our God renders the converse of this impossible: the Spirit of Christ in our hearts is the sure spring of a performance of all moral obligations, and the true regulator, in the command to love each other as ourselves, of every relation of man to man. The hardest lesson human creatures have to learn is, that works must be the *evidence*, though they cannot be the *price* of our justification. Want of this view of the true nature of spiritual religion in his early course, was afterwards bitterly lamented by Mr. Walker, who says, that “though he was thought well of, and indeed esteemed beyond most of his brethren for regularity, decency, and endeavours to keep up external attendances, and somewhat or other in his public addresses,” yet he felt, when looking back upon the time he spent at Lanlivery, he “ought to go sorrowing to the grave, upon a review of six years so passed over.”

Mr. Walker had been “at least a year” in his curacy at Truro, before he fell under “any suspicion or uneasiness” about himself or his manner of preaching. The first impression that he was in error, arose from reflection on a conversation between himself and

a few of his parishioners, on the subject of *justifying and saving faith*, to which he was judiciously led by a pious and able individual. This was Mr. Conon, master of the grammar school at Truro, of whom his minister said that he was "verily the first person he had ever met with, truly possessed of the mind of Christ, and by whose means he became sensible that all was wrong within and without."

It was a singular incident which led to this good man's intimacy with his minister. Mr. Walker received a letter, containing a sum of money which the writer requested him to pay at the custom house, as justly due to the revenue, for duty on some French wines he had used for his health. He had been unsuccessful in his attempts, in that age of smuggling on the coast, to obtain any on which custom had been paid, but the virtuous conscience of the spiritual Christian remembered his Master's divine command.<sup>1</sup> The letter contained an apology for troubling Mr. Walker, but stated that his high character would prevent all suspicion of straightforward honesty in the transaction. Curious to know whether the same happy conscientiousness was manifest in all his doings, Mr. Walker sought his acquaintance, and the result was a respect approaching to veneration, for one who exhibited in his daily habits, all the true effects of religion on a Christian's heart and actions. The attractions of his conversation and the purity of his life, at length ripened intercourse into intimacy, and the result was the conversion of the minister, through

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxii. 21.

the wise and prudent instrumentality of his pious friend.

Mr. Conon was one of those rare and devoted Christians, who in an age of darkness shone with a lustre little comprehended and greatly opposed; but he was content to be *hated without a cause*, and to suffer obloquy and shame for the Lord's sake.

Though threatened with the loss of stipend and scholars, a threat afterwards actually carried into effect, he persevered in his course, and like the glow-worm shone brightest, when the gathering of the dark night-clouds gave warning of an impending tempest. He was persecuted purely for the sake of his religion, being acknowledged on all hands to be an instructor of youth of extraordinary ability, to whose tuition almost all the gentlemen's sons in the middle and western part of Cornwall had been committed. But he was guilty of the unpardonable crime, in those days, of training up his pupils in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, an error far less venial in the eyes of their ignorant and prejudiced parents, than carelessness of their morals or neglect of discipline. For many years, he walked hand in hand with his pastor and convert, Mr. Walker, who never took any step of importance in the management of his parish without asking his advice. He bore all his trials with the truest Christian resignation, and carried himself with a dignity and mildness that would have disarmed the rancour of all enemies, but those who abhor the image of the Saviour wherever they may find it, and whose corrupt nature renders them irreconcilable to spirituality of mind and holiness of life. Speaking of his school

and the treatment he received, he says in a letter,<sup>2</sup> written under the pressure of severe illness—"this has shaken my purposes in regard to the school. I am engaged in honour and conscience to do all I can for the good of it and the public, and have forgot, and most heartily forgiven all former bad treatment and even present unkindness." The severest blow he ever received was the death of his beloved minister and friend, an event which, coupled with other circumstances in after years, induced him to remove to Padstow, where he undertook the instruction of a select number of pupils. This occupation was his great delight, and he frequently expressed a wish, that if it pleased God, he might die while employed in his school, and that suddenly. His prayer was heard: one Saturday evening, after endeavouring to prepare the youthful minds of his scholars for the solemnities of the coming sabbath, he earnestly prayed for a blessing on his labours, when suddenly the stroke of death silenced his voice of supplication, and changed it for that of ceaseless thanksgiving in regions of eternal praise.

At first the conversation of Mr. Conon only excited in Mr. Walker's mind a suspicion of himself, but this was soon succeeded by the deepest convictions. He was a character of all others the most difficult to deal with, inasmuch as freedom from "gross sins" and a general conscientiousness had covered, with a specious bloom, the poison of a corrupt nature. The openly profligate will readily acknowledge, if they do not

<sup>2</sup> Vid. *Wills's Spiritual Register*, vol. iii, p. 34, London, 1795.

quit their errors ; but the most arduous portion of a minister's work is to divert into the true channel, those who imagine that they are being carried down the stream of the world in the frail bark of *human merit*, strait to the haven of their reward. Such, like Mr. Walker, may have "learnt to reason in a speculative and historical way upon man's degeneracy," and yet, as he did, live "many years in an entire ignorance of a corrupted nature, deceived by outward decency into the supposition that they have escaped its guile. At length, to use his own words, "it pleased God in some measure, to enlighten the eyes of his understanding," and then he reverted with feelings of amazement to his days of blindness, and was enabled to look into the secret recesses of his soul, and see that while he fancied he was serving the Lord, his heart was occupied by idols. He acknowledges that in the midst of all the decorum of his conduct, he was actuated by two "hidden principles, as contrary to God as darkness is to light"—"a desire of reputation and a love of pleasure;" yet before his mind became enlightened, he had not "the least suspicion that he was out of the way." He found also that while he sincerely desired that his people should come "to church and sacrament, and not drink and swear, and the like," yet he had never felt any interest in, nor "taken the least notice of, their spiritual state," because he was in total ignorance of the "effects of the fall," and therefore knew not how "to make a right use of the gospel." The change wrought upon him was slow ; but in process of time, and by a variety of means, he was brought to *the knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ*

*Jesus* ; and Truro, which he designed to be the arena of his gaiety and the source of his pleasures, became the scene of his unwearied labours of love, and the birth-place, under a faithful ministry, of many heirs of a blissful immortality.

It was not till some time after his first impressions, that Mr. Walker commenced the decided course which he subsequently pursued. He had many struggles with himself, and “was ashamed to leave” the resorts of pleasure he had once so much enjoyed, in a town notorious for its worldliness and frivolity. “The love of pleasure,” he tell us, decayed first, but he “could only part with it by degrees,” and it was long before he could bring himself to “any reasonable measure of indifference about the esteem of the world,” and then only with “heartfelt pangs of fear and disquietude.” When invited to participate in his former enjoyments he was reluctant to refuse, because there had been no species of what is called innocent festivity, of which he had not been the life. His first resolution to absent himself from company so uncongenial with the newly-awakened feeling of his mind, was intimated in a manner characteristic both of the man and of the age. The bells of a church near Truro had been recast, and their completion was celebrated by a merry peal, and a supper given by a wealthy gentleman of the neighbourhood to the ringers. The *Squire*, as he was called, not only provided the feast for these people, but gave an entertainment to his friends, and desired the company of Mr. Walker, to whom an acquaintance was sent with a message in unison with the habits and mode of expression of the

times—"Sir, Squire — is going to give a supper to the ringers, and will be glad to have your company to sup with him on a roasted pig." He answered, to the utter astonishment of the bearer of the message, who never knew him refuse to participate in such a thing before,—“Give my compliments to the *Squire*, and say I am better employed.” He next began to preach as he felt, declared the alteration in his views, and faithfully pointed out the evils of the vortex of empty pleasures in which the inhabitants of his parish were involved, and the danger of the mere formalities of sabbath worship, on which they rested for salvation. Repentance, faith, and the new-birth, became the topics of his sermons; truths which, treated with all the powers of his highly cultivated mind, brought down on him hatred as an enthusiast, derision as a madman, and vehement opposition as the destroyer of harmless joys. An infidel even went so far as to insult him in the pulpit, an affront which he bore with extraordinary patience and dignity. Soon after, this misguided individual was, seemingly in judgment, summoned before the tribunal of his God, without having manifested the slightest symptom of repentance. Mr. Walker refused to read over his grave, those parts of our burial service which are inapplicable to the character of such a man, and this omission raised against him the bitterest animosity and the most virulent invective. The *Squire*, once a friend and companion, now became his foe, and complained of his conduct to the bishop, in the hope of effecting his removal. The bishop, however, first wrote for an explanation to Mr. Walker, and upon receiving from

him a faithful account of the man's character, public violation of the decorum of the sanctuary, and the state in which he died, wrote to the *Squire* in terms of approbation of his minister's conduct, and added a wish that there were many such conscientious men in the diocese. Probably this exemplary pastor was justifiable in departing from the ritual of the church in that particular case, which received the sanction of his diocesan; but it is certain that by imitation of his conduct, under less flagrant circumstances, we should be sitting in the seat of judgment and assuming to ourselves the prerogative of the Lord, who alone can know, as he determines, the state of any human being after death. How far Christ may be revealed in the moment of dissolution to the expiring sinner, and who may be selected as a wondrous monument of infinite mercy, it is not for us to say—the living are the objects of pastoral solicitude—we have no concern with the dead. Hence our reformers have wisely put a hypothetical case all through our services, leaving it to God, and not to the priest, to decide to what particular persons it is applicable. In all probability, the evident bad spirit of Mr. Walker's accusers operated in a great measure towards eliciting the reply of the bishop, which became, under Providence, a most happy check to the virulence of his enemies.

The progress of divine grace in Mr. Walker's mind was by slow degrees, and it was only gradually that both his views and preaching became matured. He had not courage at first to proclaim the gospel in its fulness, and to attack the depravity of man. It was, he said, "by and by" that he "began to deal with

them as lost sinners, and beat down formality and self-righteousness, and to preach Christ;" and then, and not till then, "the fruit of this, by the mighty working of the Spirit, quickly appeared." There is among his papers a sermon on Matt. xviii, 7, preached Dec. 7, 1746, levelled against outward immoralities, which he describes as abounding awfully on all sides. It contains much of powerful *moral* address to parents, masters, and others, and concludes with an admonition to those who neglected attendance at the communion, but is totally deficient in evangelical application. This sermon he delivered again at St. Olave, April 5, 1747, and at Truro, Oct. 9, 1748, which last date is subsequent to the period of his becoming suspicious of the unsatisfactory nature of his state of mind. What he says of the conduct of his neighbours, is a melancholy confirmation of what has been stated by so many writers, as to the character of that part of the last century. "I observe in general, that in all ranks and orders of men professing Christianity and the practice of religion, there is yet so little of it to be found, that all seriousness and decency are actually put out of countenance; and a man must have a large share of resolved piety not to be drawn by the authority of the great, and the example of the multitude, into infidel or libertine notions, or licentious practice. Indeed *there seems to be a general conspiracy in the cause of wickedness*, by which every man, one would think, was engaged to entice his neighbour into the unchristian practices which the world in one shape or other is guilty of." These vices are however noticed and condemned by

Mr. Walker, without any discovery of the cause or true remedy of the depraved condition of the world ; but increasing grace begat in him a holy boldness openly to declare, without fear of man, the corruption of nature, and salvation as it is in Christ Jesus. Upon this the gall of human bitterness overflowed, and the sinners who could bear to have their visible faults plainly exposed, were unable to endure the searching probe of a faithful gospel, and vented their enmity to it in reviling, insulting, and persecuting its newly awakened minister. He now preached *repentance* according to the gospel, in the following powerful language—"Christ sets up remission of sins and other most gracious privileges, but then they belong only to those that repent. Repentance and remission of sins saith he, must be preached in my name through the world. Do you consider this, you who are yet in your sins, labouring after the meat that perisheth, drudging in the nastiness of lust ; you that are proud and high-minded and selfish ; you that are lovers of pleasure, living without God in the world ? Do you know that you are never the better for that Christ hath died for you, rather much the worse—heirs of a blacker destruction, seeing you have denied so much offered grace and mercy ! And you, too, who are setting up a religion of your own, who conceit that you are well enough, because you are not altogether so abandoned as your neighbour ; you who content yourselves with doing no harm, and you who satisfy yourselves with the outside, the formality of holiness ; whilst you have never discovered the hidden iniquities of your hearts, nor put on the power of godliness ; and you also who

are at a stand, easy with just so much holiness as you imagine will carry you to heaven, and now striving for no larger victories nor more enlivened graces, than those poor mistaken ones you already possess. Do you know that none of you have repented! Repentance, you will hear, is a work which convinces us of utter sinfulness, and confounds us with the sense of it; it brings us down to the dust, and makes us feel that we are nothing, and can do nothing to deliver ourselves; which makes us hate sin and refuse it in every shape; which engages us to strive earnestly against it, and never to imagine we are got far enough from it; which makes us delight in holiness, and endeavour to do all things, be they great or little, to the glory of God; and ready and zealous to every good word and work towards him and our neighbour. Such a repentance is the only proof that we have an interest in Christ." Addresses of this description could not fail to excite the feelings of those who heard them, and their first ebullition was in anger against the man who now denounced the very path in which, the immoralities excepted, he had cheerfully accompanied them, and proclaimed that the profane, the lustful, and the formalist, were all marching with the multitude on the same broad road to destruction. Still, the earnestness of the preacher, and the striking alteration of his habits as well as of the tone of his sermons, stirred up the curiosity of the people, who while they were enraged at the fidelity, were enchained by the eloquence, and trembled at the sternness of their reprover. Even out of the pulpit they feared the presence of their minister: the Sabbath

loiterers and profane would retire at his approach, saying "let us go, here comes Walker." His manner is said to have been commanding and solemn in the extreme; and his life was so truly in unison with his precepts, that at length he awed into silence those who were at first most clamorous against him. Such crowds attended his ministry, that the thoroughfares of the town seemed to be deserted during the hours of service, so that it was remarked, "you might fire a cannon down every street of Truro in church time, without a chance of killing a single human being."

The gross vices and apathy of the age, fully warranted the style of address employed by Mr. Walker; yet it must be confessed, that he perhaps did not sufficiently include *himself* with his hearers, nor advert enough to those days, in which the same cloud that now cast its shadow over his flock, had enveloped his own mind. This would have tended to conciliate without compromise of principle; but in his early sermons, he seems to have spoken to his people as though they had been the only persons in the wrong, and himself not a novice in the truth. This was decidedly the error of the few faithful preachers of his time, and undoubtedly had the effect of giving offence which might have been avoided. The surest way of getting at the hearts of his congregation, is for the minister to give them fully to understand that he is their fellow-sinner, and stands in equal need of the one common Saviour by whom alone we can find peace with God. Not that the excellent curate of Truro denied this, far from it, but it was not sufficiently

prominent in his discourses, nor is it in those of ministers in general.

To return, however, to the effects of Mr. Walker's labours. The outward results were very remarkable; for, in addition to those already mentioned, the play-house and the cock-pit were forsaken and given up to other purposes, and similar reforms extended to places in the neighbourhood through his instrumentality. His own account is very striking—"they were surprised and grew angry, not without an evident fear resting upon them, and an interesting curiosity to hear me again of this matter. I have reason to judge that almost all of them have been, one time or other, awakened more or less, although I fear many of them have *rejected the counsel of God against themselves.*"

Mr. Walker's first convert was a youth that had been a soldier, of licentious habits, who was greatly alarmed under one of his striking sermons. He called him his "first and dearest child," and rejoiced over his consistency of life, firmness of faith, and patient endurance of persecution, with all the fondness of a parent. The example of this young man brought others to inquire; but it pleased God to take him to himself, and to make his death the apparent cause of a great awakening among the people. His funeral sermon was the means of many conversions, and the succession of inquirers became so numerous, that Mr. Walker was obliged to rent two rooms at a distance from his lodging in the town, to hold spiritual intercourse with them in private.<sup>3</sup> But few of these

<sup>3</sup> He afterwards had a house of his own, and saw them at home.

were under terrors; the greater part were brought to a knowledge of the truth in a very gentle manner, being led to seek salvation under mourning for sin. The way in which he dealt with his converts by private instruction, suited to the state and character of each individual, will be seen in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER II.

### SCHEME OF PRIVATE INSTRUCTION. FACTS ILLUSTRATIVE OF MR. WALKER'S MINISTERIAL CHARACTER.

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#### *Mr. Walker's dealings with his converts.*

MR. WALKER found the persons who came to him for spiritual advice, "universally ignorant in the grossest degree." He accordingly devoted a few evenings in each week to their instruction in private, that he might impart to them a knowledge of the plan of salvation, warn them against insidious allurements to return to the world, and encourage them to disregard the reproach with which they were besieged by enemies of the truth. When the earlier followers of his counsel and ministry, had arrived at a more advanced stage of religious progress, he sought their assistance in watching over beginners. He recommended them to converse and pray with each other, and at such times *left them to themselves, only giving them directions as need required.* This was a much wiser course than permitting them to exercise their gifts in the presence of their pastor, making spiritual pride the unnatural foster-brother of professed Christian humility. Mr. Walker's penetrating and judicious mind at once perceived and avoided the mistakes of his more celebrated, but not equally practi-

cal cotemporaries, in the classification of their numerous and scattered converts—evils which were felt at first, and still continue to be most injurious to the growth of genuine religion. That Christians should assemble in small parties for mutual edification, praise, and prayer, no minister can for an instant doubt; but long experience has confirmed the prudence of Mr. Walker in not remaining with them on these occasions, staying only to give his advice and blessing. In allusion to the prayer meeting at Olney, Mr. Scott says, “I soon found it needful or advisable to withdraw, and to leave the persons who conducted it to themselves.” Mr. Walker foresaw and escaped these troubles. This cautiousness in a man of whose zeal, piety, and judgment, there cannot exist even a shade of doubt, should operate as a lesson to young clergymen, not to be led away by a love of popularity, or by false reasoning, into habits of which they may have to repent, both on account of themselves and their people, to the end of their pastoral career.

With that accuracy and thoughtfulness which formed a remarkable part of the sound character of Mr. Walker, he did not trust, as many would have done, to the suggestions of the moment for his private conversations with inquirers, but drew up a systematic plan of instruction, which may yet perhaps form a happy guide to many who are placed in similar circumstances. Ministers seldom prepare for private interviews with their awakened people, though nothing in their office requires more prayer, reflection, and heavenly wisdom. The paper alluded to is as follows.

A SCHEME OF PRIVATE INSTRUCTION IN THE  
CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

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It is supposed that the person seeking instruction is awakened to some general concern about his soul.

## SECTION I.

The first step is that he be brought to some sense of his guilt, and being liable to the wrath of God, without any refuge in himself. Here it may be useful to state the case of man generally, as born in sin and a child of wrath; and also to speak of that gracious and all-sufficient remedy provided in the gospel—both of them as certain truths on the authority of God's word, though acknowledged by none to good purpose, unless, and until, the Holy Spirit works them into the heart. The design of this caution is, that the encouragement of the promise may go along with conviction of sin. This is the Scripture way; repentance and remission are declared together.

Then, that a due discovery may be made in the soul of the former of these truths, *birth-sin* must be carefully opened, and that in some such way as that man is by nature proud, and carnal, and filthy in the flesh and spirit. The present world is full of objects which are suited to gratify the one and the other. It hath *honour, wealth, grandeur, reputation*, to humour our pride; it hath *indulgence, pleasure, lewd-*

ness, to gratify our carnal appetite. Hence we naturally love this present world, because it is so suited to our natural inclination. Under this influence, the perverted will naturally chooses this present world, and hence the end of creation is overturned, God's sovereignty is injured; for man is *unwilling* and *averse* to do any part of the *will of God*, or to submit to his dispensations. Did God bid us to enjoy the world, we should naturally do it; doth he dispense to us the enjoyments of the world, we are easily content; though in the one case there were no *obedience*, nor in the other any *submission*, because we should so do and be *content*, not to please *him* but *ourselves*. But doth God bid us to love *him* not the world—doth he expect we be content in the absence of any worldly comforts, as having a sufficient portion in him—both *pride* and *lust* rise up against him, and we *will not*. Pride and lust have thus biassed the will of man; he is entirely selfish; self is his great idol, and in it is implied all manner of ungodliness, such as a spirit of murmuring, unbelief, distrust, unthankfulness, and also all manner of uncharitableness, such as a spirit of resentment, malice, envy, cruelty, covetousness, sloth, vanity. Thus the heart is naturally full of all manner of wickedness, sending forth sin in the thoughts, words, and actions. From hence hath sprung all that actual sin of *omission* and *commission*, which every man on earth, more or less, hath committed.

Yet in opening this scheme, it will be mostly proper to begin with the *outward fruits* of birth-sin: to insist on the general carelessness and forgetfulness of

God, in which the person hath lived; because the conscience is commonly awakened by a sense of grosser sins at first, and it is of the last importance to preserve and improve that impression; and then afterwards, when the conscience is more tender, to take occasion from the fruits to shew the principle and cause in corrupt nature; which is not effectually done till he hath such experience of himself as readily to trace every outward sin up to the corruption which gave cause to it, and is competently acquainted with the whole body of sin.

This is properly self knowledge, and the true foundation of walking humbly, much talked of, but little practiced by many professors.

Though it be most advisable to argue from the *effect* to the *cause* with grown people, yet the young may perhaps be better dealt with the other way, and immediately made acquainted with birth-sin, which is the point the catechist especially (nor often the preacher) should not lose sight of.

Natural pride will be making excuse; the person to be instructed will be pleading to his teacher or himself, that he never knew or thought of this, was never taught, and the like. His conscience must be appealed to; he often *quenched* or did *not attend* to it; he *practiced* what he knew to be sin; and to him only that hath shall be given; and the peculiar guilt of such a course as his, under gospel light, must be insisted on.

He must be taught to search after his sins, depending on the influence of the Holy Spirit, whose office, he must be shewn, is to convince of sin; and he must

be made sensible of the scriptural promises relating to prayer, and pressed continually thereto.

At the same time somewhat may be said (or thrown in all along) concerning God's perfections, especially his *holiness, justice, and presence.*

He must be often questioned what discoveries he hath made, or what sense he hath of his sins or his heart—whether it be *abiding, with a desire to know more of them,* and full of concern, so that nothing besides goes so near him. He must also be warned against all such things as will lessen the impression, and stop the work of the Spirit, as ill company, trifling conversation, amusements, above all, sloth in prayer, and delay.

The fact being now ascertained, the great consequence, the curse and wrath to come, must be fully laid open. In doing this there should be neither reason nor argument used, but the plain declarations of Scripture only insisted on. If there be any kicking against them, the sense of sin hath not gone deep enough, and he must be set to seek further into it (as indeed we must be always doing, however advanced) till he can coolly and deliberately, upon the most sedate determination, (not in a mere heat of passion) acquit God of cruelty should he cast him into hell, saying from the bottom of his heart, God hath threatened sin with death, but *I deserve* to die. It is not a full conviction till it comes to this, and it is of great moment to the whole after-state that this should be now fully acknowledged, otherwise God is not justified in his judgment, and there will be much leaning to self righteousness perhaps ever after.

He must be made clearly sensible of these two things. First, that no future obedience, however perfect, could render God satisfaction for the sin he hath done [so as] to deliver him from the threatened wrath. Secondly, that by reason of the perverse bias of his will, (by means of the *pride* and *lust* of his heart, naturally drawn after earthly things and utterly averse from God,) he hath not the least power of his own to return to God and to serve him.

Thus *full* in every particular must his conviction be, that the pride of his heart may be altogether beat down, (for it will be contending with every inch of this) and the way made plain and open for the Redeemer.

N.B. Though this work be thus methodically set out, yet many workings of faith will often be discovered in the progress of *conviction*, such as kindly touches of self-leaving, true sorrow, and displeasure at sin; and I am inclined to think there may be some beginnings of faith from the very first commencement. The Spirit works as he will, and there is great variety.

## SECTION II.

The sinner being brought to a due sense of his guilt, danger, and helplessness, is fitted to bear and receive the promises which are now to be opened to him, and that in some such method as this.

*First*, and principally, he must be led from the express declarations of the word, by the illumination of the Spirit, to a firm persuasion of Christ's sufficiency; and seeing this, to a convinced sinner, is the hardest thing in the world, and that also which the

artifices of the devil will be above all things opposing, he must be set to search it out in the Scriptures, and in much prayer for the Spirit, labouring that all doubt concerning it may be removed, and that he may be growing up into a more satisfying assurance of Christ's sufficiency. Here these things must be carefully observed by the instructor.

1. That the sinner do not deceive himself by a supposed conviction of this truth, as because he hath always heard it was true, has been taught to assent to it from his youth, nobody seems to doubt it, it is one of the articles of his belief, and all good people believe it. These foundations are merely human, and so must the faith be which is built upon them, neither justifying nor giving peace, nor sanctifying the heart and life.

2. That the only ground of faith is God's word, on which he must and can only build his belief of its sufficiency, so that he must be satisfied hereof from God's mouth.

3. That there is a natural unbelief in his heart of this thing, which he cannot subdue by his own strength.

4. That it is the Spirit must shew him Christ in the Scriptures. In opening this point, he must be made to see the purpose of God before the world, to save sinners by a Redeemer, and the promises consequent to and issuing from that purpose. From *the fall* [he must be shewn] the fitness of the Redeemer in his double nature, his obedience unto death, with the design, fulness, and proofs of his atonement, his exaltation, dominion, and intercession. He must be

made sensible how, in the execution of this merciful contrivance, Christ hath magnified the law, satisfied divine justice, taken away the curse; and how, the scheme being purposed at the instance of God's infinite good will towards sinners, planned by his infinite wisdom, and actually engaged for by repeated promises, all the perfections of God, his love, wisdom, truth, and faithfulness, stand at stake for the performance of the whole and every part of it.

*Secondly*, being persuaded of the sufficiency of this salvation, he must be assured of Christ's *willingness* to be his Saviour, and so be encouraged to make application to him. To this [end] the gospel *invitations* "come and be saved," the gospel *complaints* against such as come not, "ye will not come to me," the gospel *commands*, "this is the will of God, that ye believe," the gospel *threatenings*, "he that believeth not shall be damned," must be made out to him.

N. B. There will often be found a doubt of Christ's *willingness* when there seems to be a persuasion of his *power*. But I suppose they who doubt the former, do so because at the bottom they do not believe truly the latter.

*Thirdly*, he must be made distinctly to see that this only is the way of salvation, and that the faithful God doth certainly forgive and take into his favour all self-condemned sinners, who come to him by Jesus Christ, and that for Christ's sake only. Not in the least degree for the sake of any thing he sees in them now, or for the sake of any thing the Spirit shall work in them hereafter.

Here the sinner must be guarded against self-

righteousness, must be shewn the workings of it in his heart, in those complainings he makes of the want of sensible sorrows and particualar frames, which he seeks for to substitute them in place of Christ;<sup>4</sup> and this he will be apt to lean towards during his whole after course. This lies couched under that common expression, "God for Christ's sake will forgive us our sins with *true repentance*," where, however true it be, that such as repent not shall perish, yet in the common acceptation of that expression, the repentance is made *the cause* of God's forgiveness, and is put up in the place of Christ; for which, by the way, our self-justiciary divines<sup>5</sup> have given but too much room, in most of those sermons and discourses which have appeared for many years past.

The person to be instructed is by no means to be perplexed with any notions, which in truth have nothing to do with Christianity. As far as it is *notional* Christianity, it is perverted to speculation; for which reason, at this time at least, he should not be put to determine *what faith precisely is*. The above is the real practice; and if he be in the practice of it, it is sufficient, and far better that he be not set a disputing and doubting by the various opinions of one and another, concerning the precise nature of justifying faith. Whatever condemned sinner, being persuaded of the sufficiency of Christ, doth commit

<sup>4</sup> This remark shews a very deep knowledge of the human heart, and should be indelibly impressed on the minds of such as trust too much to these delusive criteria of their state.

<sup>5</sup> We here have Mr. Walker's matured view of the character of those divines alluded to in the last chapter.

his soul to him to be saved, doth surely believe; though he knows not what is the justifying act,<sup>6</sup> yet he certainly performs it. Nor is it of any importance he should know the time when he first did this. Doth he do it *now*? Doth he live upon Christ daily? Else, whatever he seemed to do and experience, a while ago, is of no avail. Yet the instructor should ascertain distinct notions of the true nature of faith, should be clear that it is such a persuasion of Christ's sufficiency, as determines the heart to rest wholly upon him, should separate in his own idea of it, faith from feeling, faith from sight, faith from the fruits and proofs of it, else he will lead the person to be instructed into doubt, if not danger.

The thing to be discerned and kept always in view by the instructor is, that not for the sake of any thing in us, disposition, desire, feeling, joy, love, sorrow, &c., but for the sake of what Christ hath done, we must be accepted. Otherwise, our people will be looking for a Christ in themselves, not a Christ in heaven, and so will either be deceived or comforted. In a word, the endeavour must be, that the person to be instructed be brought at all times and in all cases, in all frames, high as well as low, and low as well as high, in all attainments, and in all spiritual temptations to rest on Christ only, and so to give God glory by believing.

Especial care must also be had, that his faith be

<sup>6</sup> There is an inaccuracy in this expression. Faith is neither the matter nor meritorious cause of our justification, but only instrumental. The *justifying act* was the atonement of Christ. Mr. Walker would no doubt have corrected this had he printed the scheme himself.

grounded only on God's declarations in the Scriptures, on what he hath heard with his own ears, and seen with his own eyes in them; not taking it for granted these things are so, (as through the slothfulness of his own nature, averse to pains, thought, and inquiry, he will be apt to do) because his instructor says they are, and other good people, nor particularly, putting up the experiences of others in the place of God's word, as is too much the practice of many serious persons in this day. To provide that his faith rest only on God's word, the instructor must carefully direct him thereto, and make the word of God the ground of all he says to him; and this not only by taking heed that what he advises be agreeable to Scripture, and the analogy of faith, but also bringing out the Scriptures on all occasions, making the express word of God, suited to the case, the foundation of his advice and direction. To this end the instructor must take care that his own heart be free of all party prejudices, that he means not the sect or denomination, but Jesus only and souls; otherwise he will be usurping authority over the conscience of the instructed, and while he is solicitous to gain him to his persuasion, will not leave him to be taught by the word and Spirit.

### SECTION III.

The third great thing is the fruit of faith. After conviction and faith follows *repentance*, (*μετάνοια*) which is the heart choosing God in Christ as a master and portion, and refusing the service of sin

and the delights and confidences of the world, and which is also called *conversion*, and must be understood as the vital act of the will's choosing God, and refraining from the world and sin. This must be distinguished from *sanctification*, which is the carrying forward by the Spirit, that which was begotten in the soul by the fruit of repentance or conversion. Both conversion and daily sanctification are the immediate fruits of faith in Jesus Christ; and the person to be instructed, being brought to Christ for pardon and acceptance with God, must be made diligently and continually to attend to and regard what that mystery of redeeming love presents to him, in order that it may have a converting and sanctifying influence upon his heart, and must be warned that his faith is not true unless it hath such influence.

It will be hardly possible for the instructor to manage this matter rightly, and to distinguish the real work of the Spirit, converting and sanctifying the heart through faith, from many false appearances, unless he hath a true experience of it in his own soul, and also a distinct understanding of its manner of bringing forth the fruit, wherein he ought experimentally to have wrought in him, and clearly to understand and discover these several things.

1. The gospel representing God as an appeased majesty, infinitely disposed to pardon and receive sinners.

2. As freely offering himself in all his perfections, to the sinner in the gospel, not merely as pardoning, but making over to the sinner in Christ his *whole self*, his power to protect, his wisdom to guide, his

countenance to bless, &c. and this in all the unchangeableness and eternity of them.

3. The effects of this discovery upon the heart.

1. The exalting God therein as an object supremely to be desired, and gladly accepted, whose favour, presence, protection, and will, the whole soul approves and prefers as its greatest happiness.

2. A clear sight and sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin.

3. An unfeigned displeasure at a man's self for having sinned against God, by having sought his own will, and a happiness from the things of this life, in compliance with the perverse inclination of corrupt nature.

4. A settled detestation of sin, both of the corrupt principle lying in the heart, and of the various aetings of it within and without.

5. An actual determination against every sin, every thing contrary to God, and all the things of this world, as far as they would influence to seduce the heart from God.

Here it is plain that the real motive to delighting in God, and choosing his service, and the true ground of a due sense of the sinfulness of sin, of self-abasement, hatred of sin and actual rejecting it, is an *evangelical* sight of God. When we sinners look on God absolutely, or in the law, all his perfections are against us [he is] privy to our offences, because he is present with us, displeased at us, because he is holy, a consuming fire, because he is just, a terrible enemy, because he is almighty—so that in these absolute or *legal* views of God, instead of turning to him we must fly from him. It is his love must draw us, and when

we regard him in the gospel as a pardoning God, all his perfections change their face; his power, holiness, justice, presence, are delightful. So that evidently the motive, and principle of conversion and daily sanctification, is an evangelical sight of God, it is *faith that worketh by love.*

It may be seen from the whole how the Spirit works—viz. by impressing on the heart a sense of sin, he drives the sinner to Christ for mercy, and by enabling him to believe that God in Christ is a merciful, gracious, and desirable God, doth engage the heart to turn and daily to return to him.

These things being deeply experienced in the heart, and well digested in the head of the instructor, he may easily direct the person into the manner of conversion and sanctification.

*First, as to conversion.* The self-condemned sinner must not only be put to seek for mercy with God at the hand of Jesus, i. e. as was before shewn, to believe his sufficiency and love, making application to him; but as then he was made to see the grounds of the sufficiency of Christ in the purpose, determination, and promise of God, in order to induce faith, so now he must be set to review the same, as a scheme of mysterious divine love and compassion in order to conversion. He must be put diligently to pray for clear discoveries of God's love and compassion in Christ, and as he is made to grow into them, both his confidence in God will be confirmed, and his heart converted; that is to say, he will prefer God's favourable countenance to all manner of carnal delights, and the doing God's will to the following of his own.

For conversion is nothing else but a new choice which the will makes of God, as a portion instead of the world, as a master instead of corrupt nature. Religion lying in the will, this being duly regulated, all the other powers of the soul must of course be so, because it is the leading power; and it will be needful the instructor should ascertain, that all which can properly be called religion, doth entirely lie in the will's choosing God in Christ.

*Two* cautions should herein be in the mind of the instructor.

1. That no other motive can convert the heart but an evangelical sight of God. Legal fear will beget many appearances, such as great uneasiness, much diligence in means, abstaining (at least for a season) from outward sins which were formerly practiced, sigh and complaining of inward corruptions, earnest expressions of divine love to God—but in all this there is no true motive, and so conversion is not wrought.

2. That inasmuch as conversion lies in the will, neither knowledge on the one hand, nor sense on the other, can be mistaken for it. To draw over the will [from what] it naturally chooses to what it naturally dislikes, is the great difficult work, and the glorious power of God; and seeing this turning of the will is so directly contrary to flesh and blood, to interest, reputation, and especially the whole bent of that carnal principle there is in us, the sinner will sooner be brought to any thing than this, and will be found (being secretly withholden from a true conversion by his own naturally selfish, worldly, carnal will) to sub-

stitute somewhat else in the place of it, viz. resting either in a knowledge of gospel truths in his head, or in those sensible, passionate emotions and feelings, which, when gospel truths are first discovered to an awakened sinner, they commonly produce in his affections. These latter, viz. sensible feelings of delight, are not to be slighted, they are only not to be abused, and the design of the Spirit's ministering them for the support of beginners, perverted by resting in them and stopping upon them, as if now the work were wrought. From this a double ill consequence is to be apprehended; the truly converted will be cast into great discouragement in the absence of these feelings, and the unconverted will think well of their state while they have them. In the mean time, the one and the other will be diverted by the pursuit of these sensible feelings, from pressing on in the work of conversion and sanctification. Wherefore great care must be had that neither knowledge nor feeling be put in the place of conversion; and the deceitful heart will be for any thing rather than that. However, these strong affections, usually wrought up in the beginning of a state [of grace,] are by no means to be discouraged; and perhaps the safest way will be that the instructor say little about them, but go on describing *conversion* and *sanctification*.

*Secondly. Sanctification.* This is a progressive work by which what was begotten is built up, and it contains the daily renewal of the graces on the one side, and the daily mortification of the body of sin on the other. Here three things must be noted.

1. The motive to sanctification which is the same as

the motive to conversion, viz. a sense on the heart of God's love towards sinners in Christ. Whenever this is lost, sanctification stops, and this should be rather be noted, not only because sanctification, being the immediate fruit of a lively persuasion of God's free love in Christ, can only be built up as that advances, but also because we are apt to lean on the work of sanctification as it goes forward in us, and so, in a degree, to lose sight of Christ as our righteousness. But now that sanctification be forwarded, and self-righteousness excluded, this motive must be kept in view, which as far as it goes, will effect the one and the other—as well forward the work as exclude boasting, because the sight of that pardoning love, which builds up sanctification, will ever keep the sinner sensible he is not admitted to stand before God, but in the merits of Christ.

2. The work itself, viz. the growing up of the graces, and mortification of the lusts. The latter of these it should be observed is the consequence of the former, forasmuch as I love God more, I love the world less, and so of the rest. From whence it would follow that when there needs mortification of a particular lust, the direction be that the opposite grace be especially quickened.

3. The means, viz. self-examination, prayer, the word, and meditation, by which a more humbled mind and a more stedfast faith should be sought out. Humiliation on the sight of our sins, especially on the apostacy of our nature, must be continually exercised, and we must seek for a larger acquaintance with the fullness of Christ. The fruit of this will not be only

a growing sense of our vileness, but also a discovery of our insufficiency, by reason of the power of sin abiding in us, either to do good or resist evil, and so a more stedfast living by the power of Christ. Under these exercises will grow up a more continued watchfulness over our hearts, together with a desire to approve ourselves to God.

Sanctification will not go on without many discouragements, falling under these heads—hardness of heart, unprofitableness, imperfection, failures, and falls. All these are the great means by which the Spirit more especially humbles the heart, shewing us our sinfulness and nothingness, and so bringing us to a more entire dependence on Christ. Wherefore as such complaints are made, the instructor must not fail to improve them to the following purposes.

1. To shew the person his exceeding sinfulness and insufficiency manifest herein.

2. To convince him of the unbelief of his heart; he cannot trust Christ, now that he sees himself to be nothing.

3. To stir him up to sue for a stronger persuasion of Christ's power to justify the ungodly.

4. To guard him against impatience and murmuring, because he is a corrupted creature; than which nothing argues more forgetfulness of the free gifts already received, or does more dishonour to the faithfulness and power of God to fulfil his promises in Christ. It hinders the work of grace in the soul, and begets a selfish frame, wherein there is little concern for God's glory, or man's salvation, with a strange unreadiness to promote the one and the other,

and unfitness for any kind of duty, if not also a bringing Christ into disrepute by a peevish, fretful, sullen, conduct.

Yet on the other hand, there will not be wanting consolations. From time to time the Spirit will be making gracious visits, quickening this and that grace in a delightful manner, shining upon and witnessing to his work in the soul, &c. concerning which there is need only to say, that if they be of the Spirit (for Satan will transform himself) they will be accompanied by deep abasement and thankfulness, and will be followed by a more zealous and close walking. There is need only of this further caution, that they, be not rested in, neither put up in the place of Christ, nor made occasion of pride or security.

These three things, conviction, faith, and its fruit in conversion and daily sanctification, constitute a Christian. Upon all these, this general object must be had in view, to humble the sinner, and exalt the Redeemer through the whole, by leading [the beginner] out of himself to Christ in every thing; and this observation should never be lost sight of by the instructor in the whole procedure.

One word concerning the communion. It is plain no one can be numbered among the faithful till he be converted, yet none but the faithful are actually within the covenant, nor consequently qualified to receive the seal of the covenant, which Christ has appointed as the instituted remembrance of his death. Nevertheless, in the first awakenings, people will be pressing for it, and if admitted will surely be resting upon it, and so greatly hurt and hindered by it. As

far as I have seen, a year after will be full soon: by which time, unless they have been remarkably diligent and had uncommon opportunities, they will scarcely have attained so much advancement in faith, and in knowledge of Christ, themselves, their work, and their enemies, as to be capable of receiving this seal of the covenant with suitable discernment. But whenever they come, it should be under the direction of their instructor, to whom, if they be right, they will submit the matter, and he ought to be satisfied, ere he permits them to come, or at least to have a good ground for supposing they have a good work begun in them."

Such was the mode in which Mr. Walker dealt with those awakened persons who sought the advantage of his private instruction; and with what judgment, discrimination, and soundness he performed that important, but too much neglected branch of ministerial duty, will be evident to all who peruse the foregoing scheme. His intimate knowledge of the deceitfulness of the hearts of others, was derived from an attentive observation of the workings of religion in his own, and thus he was enabled by experience, to detect those weak points in the Christian's character, which are hidden under a specious gloss by the deceiver of souls.

He also knew the *real nature* of religious progress, and taught carefully the important truth, that whatever has a tendency to withdraw the fixedness of the eye of faith from Christ, deprives us of light from that star, which is our only certain guide through the trackless and dangerous ocean of human life. In

two things he was supereminently distinguished—the detection of hypocrisy, and a power of instilling into his awakened hearers an acquaintance with themselves. He had a peculiar penetration, and knew equally how to deal with the tender spirit, or to probe deeply into the corruption of the self-deceived, or the deceiver. One of his visitors, for private instruction, was a young man who stated that he called to thank him for the benefit he had received from his ministry, and to beg his advice. Mr. Walker immediately questioned him as to the knowledge he possessed of his own heart, when the youth expressed in general terms, a conviction that he was an unworthy sinner. Perceiving by his manner that he had never duly experienced that conviction, Mr. Walker at once entered into an explanation of the sinner's character, with a personal reference to the individual before him. He dwelt upon his ingratitude to God, the evil nature of the motives which had influenced all his actions, the fruitlessness of his life, the defilement even of his best deeds, and then added, "I fear you are secretly displeased with me, because I have not commended your good intentions and flattered your vanity."

"No indeed, Sir," he replied, "I feel extremely thankful for this striking proof of your kindness and regard."

The discerning minister had however formed a true judgment of the character before him. The young man acknowledged the next day that he had given a false answer, and that, chagrined by the little account Mr. Walker seemed to make of his profes-

sions, he had secretly determined to encounter no more, the searching questions which exposed his shallowness, and brought low the vain imaginations of his heart. This experienced pastor had dealt wisely with him: he was flighty, ostentatious, and injudicious, but afterwards became an exemplary and useful Christian.

The faithfulness of Mr. Walker, both in public and private, involved him, as has been before stated, in every species of opposition from the enemies of vital godliness. Foiled in their attempt to injure him with the bishop, they next tried to prevail on the rector of Truro to dismiss him from his cure. The applicants, being some of the wealthiest inhabitants of the place, found him willing to listen to their complaints, and he promised them to go to Mr. Walker, and give him notice to quit his charge. He went; but like the Gaul who was sent to the Roman hero to despatch him in prison, retired startled and abashed at his lofty tone and high bearing. When the rector of Truro entered the apartment of his curate, he was received with that elegance and true dignity of manner, which was natural to one who had long been the charm of society, and became so embarrassed as to be perfectly unable to enter on the subject of his visit. He at length made some remark, which afforded an opportunity of speaking on the ministerial office and character, which Mr. Walker immediately embraced, and entered on the subject with such acuteness of reasoning and solemnity of appeal to his rector, as a fellow labourer in the gospel, that he retreated, overwhelmed with confu-

sion, and unable to say a word about the intended dismissal. He was in consequence reproached with a breach of his promise, and went a second time to fulfil it. He again retreated without daring to allude to the subject of his visit. He was pressed to go a third time by one of his principal parishioners, but replied—"do you go and dismiss him if you can, I cannot. I feel in his presence as if he were a being of a superior order, and am so abashed that I am uneasy till I can retire." A short time after this, the rector was taken ill, when he sent for Mr. Walker, entreated his prayers, acknowledged the propriety of his conduct as a minister, and promised him his hearty support if he recovered; but it is to be feared his resolution passed away with the alarm of illness. Never was a more striking instance than this of the power of religious consistency—it is inconsistency that makes us inefficient; while a life suitable to our profession, attracts esteem from the godly, and repels the hostile weapons of our foes. It is when her priests are clothed with righteousness, that the saints of the church rejoice and sing; and though the enemies of truth hate the light of that celestial dress, they retreat overpowered with the bright reflection of its beams.

The high moral conquest thus achieved by Mr. Walker, as well as perpetual accessions to his church, of those whom he had reason to hope were such as should be saved, endeared him with the affection of a father to his converts at Truro, and determined him, while providence permitted, to spend and be spent in their service. Soon after his arrival amongst them,

he had been presented by the trustees of his late patron, Mr. Kendall, to the vicarage of Talland, and had obtained leave of non-residence from the bishop. The genuine character, however, of his religion having engendered in him a great tenderness of conscience, he began to have serious scruples about the justifiableness of deriving any emolument from a charge, the duties of which he was unable to perform. With his usual calmness and deliberation, he weighed in his own mind the question of non-residence and pluralities, consulting able writers on the subject; and after mature reflection, coupled with earnest prayer, he decided to resign his preferment. Although this resolution reduced his finances so as to bring him into exceedingly low circumstances, he did not hesitate for an instant to act upon it, and told his friends that a weighty burden had been removed from his conscience. He bore with cheerfulness all the inconveniences of his diminished fortune, relinquished his accustomed comforts, and went into humble lodgings with accommodations of the plainest kind. While in this condition, he had four offers made him of preferment, but declined them all. He could not leave his devoted flock; he would not receive from any portion of the vineyard where he laboured not; all his desires centred in longings for God's presence in his soul, and a blessing on his ministry. He thus exhibited in practice his own description of the contented Christian. "No desire is there of other treasure but God, nor is there any want grievous while the light of God's countenance is enjoyed. This changes rags into purple garments, sweetens the

coarse and homely meal, satisfies *that the dwelling be narrow and inconvenient*, and makes the heart dance for joy, while beholders regard, some with pity, and some with scorn. O, ye poor great ones; poor, because strangers to God, poor, and without quiet, how little cause have ye to boast that ye fare sumptuously! This man hath delicacies which ye cannot relish, a continual feast he hath satisfying his soul, while your very heart is troubled with all the contrivances of art to please, and all the elegances of luxury to indulge you; you cannot feed upon content as he doth, because ye know not God, for it is his privilege, having nothing, to be as if he possessed all things.”<sup>5</sup>

The resignation of his vicarage was not the only instance of Mr. Walker’s genuine disinterestedness. There resided in the neighbourhood of Truro, a young lady of accomplished manners, beauty, fortune, and piety. Her religion attached her to the ministry of Mr. Walker, while superior education and good sense enabled her to appreciate his attainments. There was every reason to believe that she would have readily accepted an offer of his hand, and that their union would have been most happy. A friend anxious to see him relieved from his humble circumstances, by an alliance with a lady of fortune, piety, and zeal, ventured to advise him seriously to consider whether he ought not to avail himself of such an opportunity. He made no reply at the time, but a few days afterwards remarked—“you spoke to

<sup>5</sup> MSS. Sermon.

me lately about Miss ——. I certainly never saw a woman whom I thought comparable to her, and I believe I should enjoy as much happiness in a union with her, as it is possible to enjoy in this world. I have reason also to think she would not reject my suit." Here he paused, and added with great feeling and seriousness—"still it must never be—what would the world say of me? Would not they imagine that the hope of obtaining such a prize, influenced my profession of religion? It is easy, they would say, to preach self-denial, and heavenly mindedness; but has not the preacher taken care to get as much of this world's good as he could possibly obtain?" "Sir," he again said, with emphasis, "it must never be. I can never suffer any temporal happiness or advantage to be a hindrance to my usefulness." Whether, in coming to this determination, Mr. Walker exercised a sound discretion, or otherwise, it is impossible to determine, unless every circumstance of the case were before us. One thing is however certain, that he denied himself, took up his cross, and followed Christ. His conduct was like that of the celebrated Fletcher, of Madely, who refused a living because "there was too little work and too much money." It is probable that when Mr. Walker's friend came to him with the suggestion just alluded to, he determined to think it over with prayer for divine direction; and doubtless he came to the conclusion, that as a minister he must in all things give incontestible evidence that God and his service were the first objects of his heart. That such were the feelings of his mind, is evident from the following words addressed to the converts of his flock.

“ I know that ye sometimes need such evident proofs, when one how or other, ye are in doubt and sadness. Keep this by you then, as a sure ground of confidence, that while ye do so choose God as to prefer him to all things, refusing them all in comparison of him, ye cannot but be his. This would be one of the most common, and also of the safest and most profitable evidences of a good state. It is *common*, ye may always have recourse to it; it is *safe*, it cannot deceive you; it is *profitable*, because it will always keep you on your guard where you are most in danger, and put you upon a still greater mortification of the law of sin you have in your members.” This sentiment Mr. Walker reduced to the most scrupulous practice, he daily trimmed his lamp, and proved the purity of his sacred oil, by the unclouded brightness of its burning. A quaint farmer once observed to a gifted and eloquent, but not very exemplary divine, “ Sir, you light a good candle on a Sunday, and put it out all the week;” but the lustre Mr. Walker shed upon his weekly path, was even more luminous than the brilliancy of his sabbath exhortations. In every sense of the expression, he was a “ burning and a shining light.”

His holiness of life was the fruit of constant and deeply spiritual communion with God. He was emphatically a man of prayer, and reaped the rich fruits of that prevailing exercise. He once mentioned to a friend who pressed the question earnestly, that he was sometimes favoured in prayer with such rapturous views of the excellency of divine things, that he almost enjoyed a foretaste of heaven. He

added, however, with singular wisdom, "I never mentioned this for three reasons. *First*, it might have held out to my people a false standard of religion, causing them to substitute feeling for holiness; *secondly*, it might have discouraged some pious and humble persons, who from various causes are destitute of such enjoyments; and *thirdly*, it might have encouraged those presumptuous enthusiasts, whose arrogant pretensions I am always aiming to expose." Thus did this vigilant pastor weigh the probable effect of every word he uttered, desiring to serve God and edify his people, by laborious diligence, watchful prudence, and uncompromising self-denial. The discipline of his flock will be described in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER III.

### RELIGIOUS SOCIETIES, LAY AND CLERICAL.

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#### *Formation of the society at Truro.*

THE natural powers of Mr. Walker's mind, would have rendered him singularly qualified to contrive, and carry into effect, a due discipline over those, of whom he might, in any circumstances, have been constituted the leader. He possessed both the gift of penetration into character, and the spell of influence over the human mind, and brought these rare qualities into admirable exercise in the spiritual management of his people. By the signal blessing of God upon his life and ministry, the number of awakened persons in Truro became augmented, beyond what it was possible for him to bring within the limited circle of private advice and personal attention. He accordingly, in the year 1754, conceived the idea of forming his converts into a religious society, of which he gives the following account, in a letter<sup>1</sup> to his "dear and much respected" friend, Mr. Adam, of Winttingham. "It was in the year forty-six that I first came to this town, bringing with me those principles,

<sup>1</sup> Vid. *Christian Observer* for 1802.

(if so I may call them) with which I left the university ten years before. Here God had provided better and quite different things for me, than those which engaged me to come hither. Nothing was further from my thoughts, than that I must oppose those very pleasures and engagements of life, the prospect of which led me to Truro. It was in about a year, that principally by the means of a pious Christian friend, whom I found here, I was brought to the knowledge of the ways of God. By and by, I began to deal with the people as lost sinners—my discourses were levelled at self-righteousness and formality, and Christ was preached unto them. From that time God hath done great things for us, and is doing. The number of those who have made particular application to me, inquiring what they must do to be saved, cannot have been less than eight hundred, of whom, though far the greater part have drawn back, yet I have the pleasure of seeing a very considerable number about me, who, I trust, are sincerely seeking God. The beginning of this year, it was found proper to form a religious society, the members of which, being persons who have given some proof of their faith, are about eighty.<sup>2</sup> I will delay further particulars, till I hear it would be agreeable to you to be informed of them. Only, in general the eyes of the county are upon us; and the influence of what God has done here, has reached unto many places near, and at some distance. However, Sir, it may be needful you should be especially informed of one circumstance, relating to my

<sup>2</sup> They were afterwards greatly augmented.

manner of proceeding with those who have been brought under impressions, and have made application to me. From the beginning, I have not been content with giving them advice; but have required them to come frequently to me, singly at first, and since their number hath been larger, two or three together, that I might be informed of their progress and difficulties, and assist them with suitable directions. This personal communication hath been greatly blessed; and I have reason to believe nothing hath contributed so much to our success as this."

The society here mentioned was formed with consummate prudence, and care to avoid those obvious evils, which have been so blindly overlooked by others in the classification of their converts. Mr. Walker first inquired into the religious state of the members with great attention, and then made two divisions of them; one, composed entirely of men, into which no female was admitted; the other, of married men, their wives, and unmarried women, from which all single men were excluded. The objects of their association, and the necessity of a suitable demeanour, were ably laid before them in the following paper,<sup>3</sup> read at their first assembly.

<sup>3</sup> This paper I have taken, not from the short and interesting memoir prefixed to Mr. Walker's *fifty-two sermons*, but from an original MS. for which I am indebted to the kindness of J. B. Wilson, Esq. of Clapham. This will account for a difference of expression in the two documents; in substance they are much alike.

“ CONSIDERATIONS LAID BEFORE THE MEMBERS, AT THE OPENING OF THE SOCIETY AT TRURO, BY S. W. 1754.

You expect, my friends, that I now lay before you the design of this society, and give you some cautions concerning it.

The design is threefold—to glorify God—to quicken and confirm ourselves in faith and holiness—and to render us more useful among our neighbours.

*First.* As a society, we shall be better able to glorify God; for hereby we shall bear a more public and convincing testimony to the cause of Christ, and make a more avowed profession of his name and gospel in these evil days, than we could do when separate. Every one of you desires that his kingdom may be further enlarged, and better established than it is, which, by joining your hands together to promote so desirable an end, will be most effectually brought about. Take then these cautions for this purpose.

1. Let each look upon himself as associated with others, to promote the honor of their common Master.

2. Never therefore be ashamed of him, or his doctrines, or your fellow Christians in this society.

3. Demean yourselves, every one, as his disciples, by walking in all humility, meekness, heavenly mindedness, and charity, after his blessed example.

4. Keep yourselves heedfully from all things that may disgrace your profession, or this society—such as pride, in a conceit of your own knowledge and attainments, or that you are admitted members of this society—valuing yourselves on any distinction of

place or circumstances, sinking into a worldly frame, or declining into sloth and idleness, practising the least dishonesty, or conniving at it in others; making sinful compliances to avoid shame, or promote your temporal interests, falling into luke-warmness, and losing your first love, and absenting [yourselves] from, or slighting public ordinances.

5. Often, especially before or after temptations to any of these, reflect that you belong to a religious society, instituted to promote the honor of Christ.

*Secondly.* The second design of this society is to quicken, comfort, and build up yourselves and one another in your holy faith. By this means, we shall be better able to maintain the war against our enemies, who are all united against us, and to grow in grace; as we may hope, by this association, we shall have the Spirit to assist and strengthen us; we shall have the benefit of mutual advice, and reproof; shall be more hardy in opposing temptations besetting us from a wicked world: shall walk under a peculiarly happy restraint, from the observation and eyes of our brethren upon us, and be assisted by the mutual prayers of each for the rest. To this end,

1. Watch over one another in love.

2. Be willing to hear of your faults, and thankful for reproof.

3. Watch against any disgust against any of your brethren, and if any arise, without delay tell the party, and if that fail, the director.

4. Desire the prayers of one another, and pray for one another.

5. Be sure not to rest on being members of this

society, as if that could be your security either from falling here, or for heaven hereafter.

6. Guard against the least decay in your love for Christ, zeal for his honour, and love to souls.

7. Preserve continually in your mind, your obligations to these things, from your relation to us as members of this society.

*Thirdly.* The third design of this society, is to promote our usefulness among our neighbours. Hereby we make ourselves more discernable. People cannot so easily be quiet in their sins, when they see united societies testifying against them by their practice. Good examples are naturally more prevalent than reproof or advice, especially if the first be wanting. To this end,

1. Be careful to set such examples to all about you.

2. Think not to gain any by making sinful compliances.

3. Discountenance all things which may be snares to your neighbours, such as public-houses, gaming, and many diversions and sports, which are not convenient nor of good report.

4. Shew all love to men's souls, and enforce that by a care of their bodies.

5. Avoid all quarrels and disputes, which usually begin in pride or impatience, and end in anger, malice, and revenge.

6. Do not be angry with those who blame this society. If they point out any thing wrong, reform it, if not, meekly and silently bear with them.

7. Despise none in your hearts, because not members with you.

8. Shew no valuing of yourselves because you are.<sup>7</sup>

Let the following motives encourage you to observe the above rules.

1. Real disciples must do more than nominal professors.

2. The Spirit is promised to comfort and assist those who walk by these rules.

3. You will have peace and satisfaction in your own consciences.

4. You are engaged in the most honourable service.

5. You will hereby promote the best of interests, and honour the best of masters.

6. He will acknowledge you as his servants, and reward your labours and perseverance, in the day of his appearing.

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Such were the well digested and truly pious considerations, submitted to the associate Christians, of Truro at their first meeting. The effect of such a union must, humanly speaking, depend upon two things, its leader and its rules. No man was ever more competent to manage a body of this description than Mr. Walker: his rules, taken from the old manuscript before mentioned, were as follows.

<sup>7</sup> To this, according to the memoir previously mentioned, the caution to each was added—"Never speak of yourself as a member, unless with a view of doing others good." It is, however, not in the MSS.

A COPY OF THE ORDERS FOR THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETIES  
AT TRURO, UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE REV.  
MR. S. W.

*Instituted February, 1754.*

1. In the single men's society no woman to be admitted.

2. In the married men's, their wives and other women, but no single men.

3. That the sole design of this society, is to promote real holiness in the heart and life of all who belong to it, in a dependence upon the Divine Power, and the conduct of the Holy Spirit, through our Lord Jesus Christ, to advance and perfect all good in us.

4. That in order to our being of one heart, and one mind, and to prevent whatever may engender strife, as well as to remove all occasion of offence being taken against us, no person be admitted a member of this society, or allowed to continue such, who is a member of any other religious meeting, or follows any other preaching than that of the established ministry in this town. That none be admitted members, but such as are inhabitants here and communicants, and that no person at any time be introduced, but at the request of the director.<sup>8</sup>

5. That the members of this society do meet together at a convenient place, one evening in every week, and that they go home at nine o'clock.

6. That every member endeavour to give constant

<sup>8</sup> The director was Mr. Walker.

attendance, and be present at the hour of meeting precisely, and that whoever absents himself four meetings together, without giving satisfactory reason to the society, shall be looked upon as disaffected to it.

7. That to prevent confusion, no person be removed from the society but by the director, who shall be present on such occasion, and that any person do apply to him in cases [where] he judges such removal needful; and that a disorderly carriage, or a proud, contentious, disputing temper (the greatest bane to Christian love and peace) be sufficient ground for such complaint and removal.

N. B. By a disorderly carriage, we mean not only the commission of gross and scandalous sins, but also what are esteemed matters of little moment in the eyes of the world, such as light use of the words, *Lord, God, Jesus, &c.* in ordinary conversation, which we cannot but interpret [as] an evidence of the want of God's presence in the heart. The buying and selling of goods which have not paid custom. The doing needless work on the Lord's-day. The frequenting ale-houses or taverns without necessary business.

8. And considering the said consequences of vain amusements so generally practised, we do in charity to the souls of others, as well as to avoid the danger of such things to ourselves, think ourselves obliged to use particular caution, with respect to many of them, however innocent they may be, or are esteemed, to be in themselves; such as *cards, dancing, clubs for entertainment, play-houses, sports at festivals and parish feasts*, and as much as may be parish feasts themselves; lest by joining therein, we are a hindrance

to ourselves and others. And that no person may remove from one place or society to another, without the consent of the director.

9. That with the concurrence of the director, the major part of the society may have power to make new orders, when need shall require it, but that the proposal for this purpose be made by the director, and that any member may consult him about it before the day of meeting.

10. That every member do esteem himself peculiarly obliged to live in an inoffensive and orderly manner, to the glory of God and the edification of his neighbours; that he study to advance in himself and others, humility and meekness, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, love to God, gospel repentance, and new obedience, in which things Christian edification consists, and not in vain janglings. And that in all his conversation and articles of his faith, he stick close to the plain and obvious sense of Holy Scripture, carefully avoiding all intricate niceties and refinements upon it.

11. That these orders shall be read over at least four times a year by the director, and that with such deliberation, that each member may have time to examine his own conduct by them.

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Not only did Mr. Walker submit these strict rules to the society, but during the time of its meeting, he assumed that due control of the people which belongs to the minister, and prevented all improper trespass on his province, by reserving to himself the sole per-

formance of the devotional exercises. For this purpose, he drew up what he called the "office of devotion," for the weekly meeting. He commenced with reading six appropriate sentences of Scripture,<sup>9</sup> and the collects of our church; "*prevent us, O Lord*"—"blessed Lord who hath caused all Holy Scriptures," &c. "*O God, forasmuch as without thee, &c.*" After this, the whole assembly seated themselves, and a portion of the bible was read, followed by the confession, "*Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, maker of all things, judge of all men, &c.*" succeeded by the Lord's prayer, in which they all joined kneeling. This concluded, Mr. Walker alone offered up a prayer composed by himself. It commenced with the collect—"Almighty and everlasting God who hatest nothing that thou hast made, &c." and continued in a strain of fervent supplication, for help to cultivate the graces and exhibit the conduct recommended in the rules.

They next sung a psalm, after which the director, or in his absence some person appointed by him, read an instructive treatise, which was followed by a prayer selected for the occasion. The whole assembly upon rising, stood in silent attention to hear an exhortation to humility, drawn up for the purpose by their minister. After this they sang again, and the director said, "*it is very meet right, &c.*" adding "*therefore with angels and archangels, &c.*" in which all united. The director then concluded the meeting

<sup>9</sup> These were Ps. lxxxix, 8; Psalm vii, 12; Eccles. xii, 14; Proverbs xxviii, 13; 1 John ii, 1, 2; Psalm xcvi, 6.

with "the grace of our Lord, &c." and all departed in order to their houses.

A meeting of serious people thus conducted, upon principles of church discipline, under the watchful eye and controlling hand of Mr. Walker, could not fail to be productive of most happy results. Their director so well knew how to combine dignity with affection, tenderness with fidelity, and superiority with meekness, that his followers were insensible to the strength of the rein by which he guided them into the paths of duty and knowledge. He was himself a bright example of the Christian virtues and acts of self-denial enjoined upon his people, and thus obtained a power to restrain or excite them, which no precepts, unaccompanied by actions, could ever have achieved. Powerful objections have frequently been urged against such associations among the serious parishioners of clergymen, and it may be fairly argued, that without able management, their tendency is to produce a greater aggregate of evil than of good. Laymen officiating in the presence of their authorized minister, and endeavouring to rival or eclipse him in prayer; women forgetting the modesty of their sex, and the propriety of their situation, in the enthusiastic utterance of feelings real or imaginary; youths put forward because of a *gift*, to the destruction of all humility; ignorant and illiterate persons permitted to give vent to unintelligible rhapsodies, exhibit violations of decency and order, such as it is surprising that any leader of a sect should ever have permitted, much less encouraged. That some of the most devoted champions of religion could have

looked, as undoubtedly they did, with complacency on such caricatures of its sublimities, only affords a melancholy proof of the tendency of party spirit to distort the clearest vision. Mr. Walker foresaw and obviated these objectionable results, and so arranged his regulations, that no motive but a desire to gain and do good, could well operate with those who asked to be admitted into the Truro classes.

When he wrote to the wise and excellent Mr. Adam,<sup>5</sup> of Wintringham, on the subject, he received from him a reply, in which that judicious man inquires, "how do you manage to avoid disputes in your society? and what method have you of terminating them amicably when they do arise?" Lest, however, he should be understood as at all discouraging the laudable proposal to bind together the people of God, by the ties of a discreet union, he adds, "you will understand me right; I have not the least thought of damping the design: Heb, x, 25. I take to be fully to the purpose, and much good may be expected from it. Indeed truly religious persons will hardly be kept asunder. But upon the whole it is a delicate affair, and requires all the steadiness, prudence, and piety of an able conductor, to keep the members of it knit together in the bonds of Christian love, considering the variety of tempers and the frailty of the heart. May it answer your most sanguine expectations! May God daily add to it, and make it a blessing to the place where you are, in the pious examples, Christian lives, and brotherly

<sup>5</sup> Vid. *Christian Observer*, 1802 and 1803.

charity of all who belong to it. For the eyes of many will be upon you; and graceless, ill-judging, bystanders, will be ready to take occasion from the miscarriages or infirmities of a few, to involve all in one common censure." To this letter Mr. Walker replied, "the hint you gave me about the society I endeavoured to improve, by reading that part of your letter to them, and taking occasion from thence of enforcing the passage referred to. I have no doubt you will pardon that freedom, and will be glad to hear that it seemed to contribute to the thing you aimed at, love and unity. It hath been our singular blessing, that we have had no disputes amongst us, which, under God, we ascribe to the nature of our constitution, which is, *that no one is to be talking there but myself*. That private persons should be speaking in a large company, we had observed from the methodists, to be so great a temptation to conceit (and the next step to that is always envy, strife in the heart, and contention) that we dared not venture upon it. Our way is, to take advantage of one passage and another of scripture, to give and impress some piece of advice suited to a society; which office I ever take upon myself. Conversation they have enough elsewhere."

In order to secure to the members of his society the advantages, without the dangers of being permitted to speak in their meetings, their wise and careful minister instituted assemblies of them in small numbers, to converse freely upon their trials, consolations, and experience. These little parties were arranged to suit the convenience of those who de-

sired mutual edification from unrestrained intercourse, were not limited to any particular hour, nor suffered to interfere with their usual temporal avocations. They sometimes therefore met early in the morning before service on the Sabbath, or between the services, and also on week-day evenings after their business had ended. There never were to be present less than five or more than eight, and these persons were called on to exercise an affectionate inspection of each others conduct, and to administer reciprocal encouragement or reproof as the case required. These limited associations were suitably classified, and the members distributed according to age, station, circumstances, and sexes. The married met with the married; the men with the men, and the women with the women; and the same rule was also extended to the single, in order that their cases, being as nearly similar as possible, their sympathies might be so also. Although Mr. Walker was not present on these occasions, he was careful to provide for their usefulness and comfort, and drew up for their direction a little treatise, called "Regulations, and Helps, for promoting religious conversation among Christians." The regulations consisted of directions for preparation, conversation, humble demeanour, self examination, subsequent reflection, and confidential secrecy. They were to open their minds freely to one another, and to give their opinions in turn, taking care that no inquiry was actuated by mere prying curiosity, but with a single aim to correct faults, warn of dangers, relieve despondency, and stimulate to Christian progress. To guard against

improper questions, interruptions, or jealousy, each filled in turn the office of *inquirer* for the day, whose business it was, according to a plan drawn up by Mr. Walker, to elicit an account from his associates, of their Christian experience and conduct. If any one had observed signs of inconsistency in another, he was directed to mention it, without reserve, that explanation might be given, or the error corrected. The rest of the time was passed in Christian conversation, when the inquirer concluded the meeting with prayer, to which they occasionally added singing. Mr. Walker, with his usual wisdom, gave them the following admirable directions for prayer.

SOME HINTS FOR PRAYER FOR THE SOCIETY IN THEIR  
PRIVATE MEETINGS, BY THE DIRECTOR'S ORDER.

1. He who leads the rest need not be over solicitous about the manner of expression, but begging to be impressed with an awful and reverential sense of the presence of God, may in some measure endeavour to lose sight of his fellow-worshippers, that his desires may the more sincerely ascend unto God. Neither need he bind himself to the method of this, nor always to the whole matter, but after short recollection, take of it what God may be pleased to enable him.

2. We are to humble ourselves as a society of professing Christians, who have peculiarly distinguished ourselves by our profession, and yet by our unseemly behaviour, as well as unfruitfulness, have not brought honour to the gospel of Christ ;

each one in his own particular [case] looking on his own sins as the cause of the Lord Jesus threatening to remove his gospel in its power, purity, and fulness. We are therefore to pray for the continuance of it; and in order to this, we are to plead his free, rich, and unchangeable mercy and love, in his everlasting covenant. We must plead the honour that redounds to Christ, by the preaching of the gospel, the danger also as well as the worth of precious and immortal souls, and of our own in particular, if the light of the gospel be withdrawn.

3. We must pray for our minister in particular, whose relation to us, though he be absent, still continues, and whose doctrines we are bound in conscience, when agreeable to the Scriptures, to follow—that God would direct and keep him in all his ways—that he would by grace keep him steady and resolute to all the holy purposes he has brought himself under, and has been enabled to be an example of among us—that he may eminently hold forth the light of the glorious gospel in doctrine and conduct, wherever he is, or wherever he goes—that he be no ways dismayed by the opposition he may meet with from the world and the devil—that he may drink largely of the comforts of the Spirit in the trials he may undergo, and may be richly supplied with the treasures of the gospel, and if it be the will of God, may return unto us with the fulness of it.

4. We must pray ardently that the grace of the Spirit may attend the ministration in the public congregation to which we belong, and bless the means to the profiting of our own souls, that we may still grow in grace,

and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. For this end it will become us to pray, that we be kept from all undue prejudices [in favour of] him or them, who may minister the ordinances to us, because of their seeming eminency in gifts and graces [above] others; always remembering that the Spirit worketh as he will and by whom he will, and therefore that we must always look above all means for his blessing on them.

5. For our neighbours who are prejudiced against us; that God would be pleased to awaken their souls, and grant them repentance unto life; that he would turn their hearts to us, and ours effectually towards them. Here we shall find hard work; we must not be therefore content with our most passionate supplications for them, unless afterwards we find ourselves ready to do them good for evil. When we behave towards them with meekness, modesty, and humility, then we may indeed look upon ourselves as the children of our Father which is in heaven, and may, under the present dispensation of providence, be enabled to do them more good than ever, though we may be apt to think otherwise; for the Lord's ways are in the sea, and in the deep they are wisely hidden from us.

6. This may be a time of trial to separate the wheat from the chaff; we must therefore pray that we be kept from falling, but especially from totally falling away from the profession of the gospel; that we be not scandalized, if some should be suffered to apostatize, but cry for stronger faith to believe and live upon the promises of the covenant, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church of

Christ; that he is to be with them unto the end of the world; that the Lord knoweth them that are his: and let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

7. We must pray for sincere and unaffected love to one another; without this we shall fall to nothing.<sup>6</sup>

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The extraordinary influence and consummate judgment of Mr. Walker, enabled him to work this machinery of discipline, without perceptible or injurious friction. He communicated to it the unction of a warm and devoted spirit, and regulated its movements with a skilful hand, having himself first superintended the adaptation of its various parts. The success was so complete, that his good friend, Mr. Adam, urged him to strict watchfulness over his own heart, lest he should be puffed up by what God had done by him. He received this admonition with becoming meekness, and begged him to continue his "seasonable and acceptable," counsel, observing, "it is a very dangerous thing to be particular any way; and when we are grown up to a becoming disregard of the reproaches of the world, it is but too easy a step to become vain of them. Perhaps it is more dangerous still to be in the direction of a number of serious persons, and yet worse again to hear of the commendations which injudicious zeal will be throwing in our way. I have

<sup>6</sup> I received this interesting paper through the kindness of the Rev. Mr. Wildbore, of Falmouth. Like many of Mr. Walker's valuable documents, it is drawn up with much more attention to matter than to style.

indeed much need to watch over my spirit, perhaps more than a high degree of preferment would have called upon me to do."

While this work was going on in his own parish, Mr. Walker endeavoured to stimulate the exertions of his brethren around him, and in several instances with success. He conceived and carried into effect the design of a union, among the pious clergy in his neighbourhood, for the purpose of mutual edification, encouragement, and advice, as to pastoral duties. It was called the "Parson's Club," and the original number of members was seven, afterwards increased to eleven, who met for the first time on March 18, 1755. They generally assembled once a month at each other's houses, and their whole design was to "consult upon the business of their calling," which, the excellent founder of the society informs us, was "done all along with so much freedom, love, and unanimity," that he was "even astonished at the remembrance of it." With that propriety which always marked his conduct, he sought and received the sanction of his diocesan before they assembled, at least as "far as the words *do not forbid you* may be interpreted to go." They came together at the house appointed at ten, and separated at six, dining at two, with a stipulation that the fare provided should on no account exceed a couple of plain dishes of meat. The host was director for the day, and conducted the discussion of the subject proposed, preventing interruption, or the introduction of any new question, till the one under consideration had been fully settled. To guard against a superficial or hasty treatment of the

principal topic before them, each member was required to bring his view of it drawn up in writing, in such a form as he considered would be most useful to his brethren. Thus with the advantage of the master spirit of Mr. Walker at their head, the society became a source of real benefit to its members. A great outcry was, however, raised against it, on the alleged ground of methodistical bias; a charge most unfounded, as every one of its members was sincerely attached to the doctrines and discipline of the church of England. Mr. Walker recommended to his associates a string of searching queries, as to devotedness, zeal, self-denial, design in joining their brethren, dependence on divine help, and conscientious inquiry into the motive of every ministerial action. These were drawn up with his usual ability and knowledge of the heart, and were thankfully received, as also a form of prayer compiled chiefly from the Liturgy and Jenks's devotions. Many fluctuations took place in this happy union, occasioned by deaths, removals to distant places, and in two instances by a fear of the violent opposition they had to encounter; still upon the whole it conferred upon the clergy who belonged to the club, and their parishes, a lasting advantage.

In order that any meeting of this kind may be permanently useful, it is necessary that the spirit of it should be well kept up; but from want of regulations like those of Mr. Walker, and due preparation upon subjects discussed, clerical clubs are apt to degenerate into a lamentable barrenness. As early as the year 1699, such conferences were recommended by Archbishop Jennison, in a circular addressed to the bishops

of his province; and perhaps the best rules ever drawn up for their management, are those of Fletcher of Madeley. Frequent as they are in these days, there yet remains the want of a sufficient stimulus. When strangers meet together, at first they are influenced by fear of superior attainments in their brethren, and prepare what they have to say; but as soon as they have sounded each other's depth, they are apt to become careless, and it not unfrequently happens that both director and members are equally undecided as to a plan of discussion. Unless some mode be discovered by which the interest in these meetings may be kept alive, they will confer little real good on individuals coming together, or the church at large. If also the clergy composing them, do not attend prepared to communicate knowledge which is the result of reading, meditation, and prayer, their conversation will naturally decline into such a thinness of matter, that the time so passed would be more profitably spent at home, than in associations where there is no likelihood of reaping the harvest of research and well grounded experience.

## CHAPTER IV.

### CATECHISING. USE OF THE SEASONS KEPT BY OUR CHURCH.

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#### *Catechising.*

THE town of Truro, from the year 1754 to 1760, presented a delightful example of the happy effects produced on a Christian community, by our church's discipline and doctrines wisely enforced and spiritually expounded. Among other instruments of good, so ably called into action in that place, was the long neglected habit of catechising. This custom, valuable at all times, and particularly so in days of extreme ignorance, had fallen into almost universal disuse, "by which," Mr. Walker observes, "more than by any other thing, the kingdom of darkness and sin was established in England." The young people of Truro were divided into three classes, of the following ages: under twelve—between twelve and fifteen—between fifteen and twenty, who were instructed at stated periods in private, and then catechised in the church, "an hour after sermon," before an audience sometimes amounting to five hundred people, who were "for the most part much impressed." When they had done, Mr. Walker took a single point, which he

explained “as shortly as possible, enforcing it afterwards as largely and warmly” as he could, in order to influence the daily practice of his hearers. Herein not only the young persons, but all present were considered, which was found to be a most effectual mode of getting at the hearts of parents, who were brought out by interest in the performance of their children. The continuance of this exercise was at least an hour: towards the middle a solemn pause was made, and the young were questioned as to what they had heard, which was repeated again at the end. “The young people,” says Mr. Walker, in a letter to Mr. Adam<sup>1</sup> on the subject, “are without fear or shame; and at that age so quick, that if any thing I have said hath slipped them, (which is very seldom) I find it hath been through my defect rather than their fault.” “I have had,” he continues, “the unspeakable pleasure of seeing many of them brought into a very serious way under this means; particularly I remember in the first year, about fifteen of them, whom I had seen in the beginning of the season trifling and laughing, while I was speaking to them.” Mr. Adam’s plan was something similar to this; and when he did not catechise, he read on the Sunday afternoon, one of the most instructive of the Homilies,<sup>2</sup> explaining and enforcing its most material parts.

<sup>1</sup> *Christian Observer*, 1802.

<sup>2</sup> Wherever the Homilies have been circulated and explained, they have been made most useful. To the truth of this, the agents of the excellent Prayer Book and Homily Society can amply testify. Instances are perpetually occurring of their being blessed of God to the conversion of souls, particularly among the lower classes, who read them with the keenest enjoyment, entering with much relish into the unadorned style of their composition, which

In this work he was happily encouraged by Mr. Basset the good archdeacon of Stowe, whom he called “an industrious labourer in Christ’s vineyard, exerting himself to the utmost to revive the antiquated doctrines of the church of England; for which he does not escape scot free; but he is a stout champion for the truth, and has grace enough to fear nothing.”

Mr. Walker not only found the church catechism, of which he was one of the ablest expounders,<sup>3</sup> a valuable manual of instruction, but he also used with great effect the *seasons* appointed to be kept in our establishment. These have been long too much neglected and forgotten. We will take for an example the admirable improvement made at Truro of the time of Lent. In preparing his people for the solemn service of Ash Wednesday, Mr. Walker addressed to them the following striking consideration in defence of the ritual for that day.

“The second thing proposed was to say something of the office for Ash Wednesday, and this I have chosen purposely to do beforehand, that some prejudices relating thereto being removed, no person may be deprived of the most awakening service of that day, by an unaccountable mistake of the design of the office. You have already heard the design of this holy season, and it hath been intimated how exactly it was observed in times of greater piety; that during these days of mortifica-

renders them so suitable to plain capacities. They say they can understand them better than many of the other pious, but less simple tracts distributed among them.

<sup>3</sup> Vid. his lectures on it.

tion, as the best Christians were humbling themselves before God by a willing exercise of self-denial, so notorious and public offenders were brought to open penance. We are told in the entrance of this office of commination, or denouncing of God's anger and vengeance against sinners, that this was a godly discipline; and so it must be allowed to be extremely apt to reclaim the impenitent, (more especially when to be shut out of the church was scandalous as well as inconvenient,) and to affect others who being admonished by their example, might be afraid to offend. The error of the church of Rome had brought this piece of discipline (as it had also corrupted itself in all pious institutions) to be no more than an empty ceremony of sprinkling ashes over the heads of the people, as an admonition to repentance—repentance in the mean time, the very substance of the thing, was entirely dropt; and for this reason our prudent reformers kept nothing of this formality but the name. It was no easy matter to restore the godly discipline of penance, even in the days of the reformation: how much less then, in the days of overgrown vice in which we live! But still, if notorious offenders might not be brought to open shame, some attempt might be made to lead them to repentance. With this view the office before us was chiefly [drawn up,] although the sentences of God's wrath will be found no way unprofitable upon the hearts of those, who by the grace of God are now free from the terrors of them. You must needs own that whatever may contribute to the saving of a sinner, by awakening him from the dead and eternal sleep in which he lies, must be the most cha-

ritable and useful service that can be done him. Now surely the most direct way to alarm sinners, and to arouse them from their security, is to lay before them, in the plainest manner, the terms which God's law denounces against them—God's jealousy, anger, and vengeance, from which nothing can save them, but a speedy and sincere repentance. Here then you see, how properly the denunciations of God's cursings against sinners are read before them. The sentences for this purpose, are for the most part taken out of the twenty-seventh chapter of Deuteronomy, where you may find that the people of Israel assembled, the one half on Mount Gerizim, the other half on Mount Ebal, were to hear the threatenings of God's law read to them, and to acknowledge the justice and equity of God, the righteousness of his commandments, and the punishment denounced against the breakers of them, to be most certain and unavoidable, by adding their *Amen* to the end of each of them. This was done in order to make them afraid of breaking those laws, which they themselves had pronounced to be so righteous, and withal the punishment due to the breach of which, they had declared to be so just and right. In conformity to God's own direction to the Israelites, what more proper method could be found out of working upon hardened sinners at this time, than to represent these very curses and denunciations of God to them—than that we should with one mouth declare and acknowledge in their ears, the righteousness of God, in the vengeance threatened against them if they remain impenitent? [We are also more especially bound to do this,] as the denun-

ciations of wrath cannot but be righteous, and will most assuredly take place on them, whether we declare and believe it or not. When therefore we add *Amen* to any of the curses read in this office, we do but this plain thing—only acknowledge the justice of God in the punishment threatened against the breakers of his laws, in order to make ourselves and others more sensible of the great hazard we run if we be disobedient. This is so very plain a thing, that one might imagine it could not be mistaken; but, however, it is mistaken. It is said, that the saying *Amen* at the end of these sentences of God's law, is cursing our neighbours, than which nothing can be more uncharitable, and it were better to be absent from the church than join in it. This would be very certain if it were true. But let it be remembered that God himself enjoined this very service to the Israelites, and commanded them to say *Amen* at the end of these very sentences. We may be sure then at first sight, that there can be no want of charity in what the God of love enjoins. We may not charge God so foolishly as this. But in truth, people are strangely out of the way, when they conceit that by saying *Amen* after these sentences, we do pray God to curse and take vengeance on the wicked. Nothing is further from the thing intended than this; for the word *Amen* doth not originally and properly signify our wishing or praying for any thing, but our affirming and giving consent to the truth of it. It is very often translated *verily* in the gospels. *Verily, verily, I say unto you*, is frequently our Saviour's language; but the original words are *Amen, Amen*, meaning no

more than, *in truth, in truth*. Jesus who is the Truth, is called *Amen* by St. John, i. e. the faithful and true witness; and in him the promises were *yea and in him Amen*, i. e. *certain and true*. So at the end of the Creed, when we say *Amen*, it is not to express our wish or prayer that the articles of it may be true, but our stedfast belief that they are so. And so in like manner, when the people of Israel in Joshua's time, and we here in imitation of them, say *Amen* after the reading of the divine threatenings, we do no more than acknowledge that God is true, and his vengeance to be feared, because it will most certainly fall upon the sinner. Nor doth this agreeing to the truth of God's word, bring any curse on the penitent, nor so much as express any desired vengeance on the impenitent. It doth but shew to these the curse and the wrath before them, whilst they are at a distance from it, and charitably warns them to fly from it by repentance; being like our Saviour's *woes*, of which the gospel is so full, not wishes of evil and wrath, but compassionate declarations of it, in order to men's avoiding and escaping it. You would think it no unreasonable nor uncharitable thing, to beseech the nearest friend you had upon earth to fly from eternal wrath, which you would not stick to tell him he must needs inherit, if he continues obstinate in his iniquities—and in the present case you do the very same thing. It is certain that sinners, whilst they remain such, are really accursed; to make them sensible of this, is the kindest office surely you can do them, whilst to deal otherwise by them, were to deceive them to their everlasting ruin—this would be to

curse them indeed. Upon the whole, *Amen* here is no more than a declaration that he whom God blesseth is blessed, and he whom the Lord curseth is cursed; and if we believe this with our hearts when we have it in our mouths, it will shew us our danger, and may bring us to repentance. By this time, I can make no doubt all objections to this office are removed, and that none of you will think yourselves any longer obliged to absent yourselves from the service of the day, which is exactly fitted to bring on a more solemn observance of the season it begins, being so weighty and important, that it cannot but alarm the sinful, quicken the pious, and engage us all to humble ourselves before God—the ungodly to begin, and the godly to hasten the work of holiness in the season before us, by a humble, pious observance of this time of humiliation.”

In this way did Mr. Walker attract the attention of his flock to the seasons appointed by our church, endeavouring to make them occasions of arousing slumberers, and quickening the awakened to increased activity. In addition to his preaching, he lent his sermons, always carefully written, for circulation among the educated part of the congregation, and they were read again in the society, and often copied out and kept by the members. Many of these still remain as monuments of a pastor's diligence and a people's earnestness.

As in the beginning of Lent, this good man called the attention of his flock to personal repentance, so on the 30th of January he made a solemn reference

to their duty, with respect to sins more peculiarly to be denominated national. Were this last subject adverted to constantly, on that or any other appointed day, by the clergy of our land, the custom would probably be attended with a visible blessing, and perhaps give a powerful check to any notorious vices practiced by a large part of the community, such as drunkenness, profligacy, gaming, and sabbath breaking. Two causes however concur to prevent the adoption of this custom—a want of due inquiry on the part of ministers into the nature, causes, and effects, of the sins of the country; and on that of the people, a lack of humility, and an unwillingness to sit in the dust under a sense of national sin. The evil of selfishness preys insensibly on the hearts of Christians, who think they do enough in caring for their own souls: the *holy seed* of the nation strive not sufficiently to become *the substance thereof*. Viewing this subject in all its fulness of importance, Mr. Walker spoke thus from the pulpit of Truro, on Jan. 30, 1756.

“We have not taken any measures to turn away God’s wrath: for we have not returned unto the Lord our God. But you will say, why will not the people return? The rulers, and governors, and nobles, why will they not stand up in their places? Alas, my brethren this is but excusing ourselves, but making excuse for our doing nothing. If those in power should do nothing, would this discharge us from our duty? While the great are blaming the little, and these in their turn are blaming them, there is but a sort of consenting on the one part and the other, to do nothing. But if you say, what can we do? I answer you can in your

own persons return unto the Lord, and then you can mourn for, and pray over, and cry to God for all estates of men in the realm; and this be assured will be doing much. Why, Sirs, it is because of a few righteous up and down that we are not consumed. God loves his people, and is rather willing to spare their ungodly neighbours, than to mix them in a common ruin with the wicked. Then also he heareth their prayers; these stop his indignation, and withhold that hand which is half drawn out of his bosom to consume. Also ye know that repentance is the gift of God; men cannot repent without God's grace. The continued instant prayers of the saints must go up to the throne, that God may not utterly take away, but plenteously pour out his Spirit upon us. Now all this we can do—we can return ourselves; we can lament the sins of the people, and the share ourselves have had in them; we can humble ourselves in fasting and prayer as Daniel did for his people.”

To these searching exhortations he added also the important consideration of individual connivance at, if not participation in public sins. “Instead of hating and opposing all evil ways, have not the best of you too often sided, yielded, and complied with them? No man knows what hurt he does to God and others, while he doth but not act up to the strictness of a Christian's religious behaviour; how the bad are unreproved, the good not encouraged, if not discouraged, and the lukewarm left at ease by it. If deficiencies do so much mischief, how much more then, actual sin in the face of the world? The world cannot but know it, and which of you hath not done this, one

way or another—by vanity, idleness, indulgence, anger, evil speaking, sabbath breaking, lightly using God's name? By one thing or another all have sinned, and so deserved public judgment, as by their sins they have augmented and encouraged the common transgression. For what are the sins of a people, but the sins of every particular man put together? He therefore who had never sinned in his own person, would have incurred nothing of the public guilt; but as we all have, we ought all to be sensible of it, and humbled for it; else we can neither set ourselves to return to the Lord, or offer up penitential supplications before God."

It is one part of the excellency of the ceremonial of our church, that nothing having a wholesome tendency to impress the mind, escaped the penetration of its framers; the reason it has not been more powerful in its effects, is a want of full comprehension of the scheme as a system, and the consequent neglect to use it skilfully. The strong personal application of the topics of each season, to the hearts of Mr. Walker's hearers, was with divine assistance, one of his great secrets of efficiency. In this way, all subjects connected with Christian doctrine, practice, and experience, came in regular succession before his people, enforced by an authority they respected, recommended by an establishment they loved, and elucidated by the word of God, from whose exhaustless treasures the church alone has received her true riches. The great duties of repentance for our own sins, and those of our fellow-countrymen, were most strongly urged on the occasions just referred to,

and applied in a manner calculated to make a lasting impression. All other church holidays were similarly improved at Truro, so that our services being fully understood, were valued as they deserved, and triumphed in their scriptural purity and force, over the public vices of profane opposers. The lectures, not only in Lent, but at Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide, were of a character so heart-searching, that when they failed to convert, they awed the sinner into outward decorum, and actually prevented the recurrence of those scenes of profligacy, by which festivals were disfigured, whose design was to call men to a vivid and thankful remembrance of the incarnation, sufferings, and victory of Christ. Strolling players, cock fighters, and others of a like description, ceased from the streets of Truro during these seasons, and its inhabitants became ashamed of open desecration of such solemn occasions, though the majority remained destitute of the grace, which would have led to the purer joys and happier pursuits of vital piety. By setting apart certain days for celebrating events of high importance, our reformers guarded against the possibility of their being overlooked; and if at such periods our congregations are taught to anticipate with interest, the subjects that will be pressed upon their attention, numbers of them will be greatly edified thereby. Each minister must carefully watch against the tendency of the human mind, to allow religious habits to degenerate into mere form; a weakness of our nature, which will affect even the better part of his flock. The remedy however depends much upon himself. If he brings out his old treatises, and reads

them year after year, all interest in their matter will decline; but by ever applying anew to his periodical task, he will discover that the Scriptures can supply him with power to clothe questions apparently exhausted, with an endless variety. Each time the dew of heaven descends upon the same soil, it imparts to it a new freshness and fertility; undiscovered beauties spring up to arrest attention, and command the deepest interest. No man better knew this property of the word of God, or used it more skilfully than Mr. Walker. Scripture, like the ocean, remains essentially the same, while the light never plays upon its surface without varying its hues; but the dull mind of man loves earth too well, to contemplate its beauties, in that spirit of enjoyment, which imparts to the bosom of a believer such pure and rapturous delight.

If we availed ourselves of this characteristic of the bible, we might, like the wise minister of Truro, cause our people to hail each returning season as a source of fresh comfort to their souls. They would, in succession, be reminded of mercies, pointed to examples, warned of dangers, and instructed in doctrines; and by following the routine of our church, all chance of omitting any vital question would be certainly avoided. All that Mr. Walker effected by such means, is within the reach of every clergyman, if in the spirit of prayer he will be guided by the rules of our reformers. Instead of contending for our establishment by invectives against its enemies, let us set every wheel of the great machine to work. Let the people be well instructed in the true excellence of our Liturgy; let

them be more earnestly exhorted to imbibe its spirit, to seek to feel its petitions, to rejoice in its spirituality, and the ark of God will go forward in majesty and triumph, and though shaken by the motion of those who bear it, will never fall.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE DAILY CHURCH SERVICE.

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#### *The daily church service.*

IN order to impress upon his people the importance of joining in the prayers of the church, with a full appreciation of their excellence, Mr. Walker addressed to them a series of sermons on the nature and use of prayer. He desired, with the fervent interest of a watchful pastor, that his flock should be "well qualified to bear their part in public worship, in a manner becoming the majesty of the God they served, the decency and dignity of his house and family, and highly improving and profitable to the begetting and confirming religious habits within them." He therefore, after preparing their minds by the lectures before mentioned, carefully explained to them the *Daily Service*, and *Litany*, in order "to shew the spirit of devotion with which their several parts ought to be performed, and also how expressive they are of the sentiments with which a pious heart is warmed and enlivened." It too often happens that due stress is not laid by ministers upon the devotional parts of worship, nor are our congregations always sufficiently reminded of their value. That the faithful and wise curate of Truro was not chargeable with this omis-

sion, will be evident to all who read the following admirable treatise on

## THE DAILY SERVICE.

“You will remember that God, successively considered in the various characters of being infinite in power, in majesty, in dominion, in wisdom, in justice, in goodness, is the object of your devotion, which rises upon you as you view him in one or other of these excellencies; and as you consider yourselves weak, ignorant, defective, sinful men, strongly convinced of your vileness, dependance, and obligations. Now, let us suppose ourselves, in the first place, approaching publicly the divine presence, that with one mouth we may confess the vileness, which, upon comparing *ourselves* with God, and our *actions* with our *duty*, we do every one of us at heart lament and bewail, and earnestly beseeching infinite goodness to avert the punishment we so well deserve. This [penitent approach to his Creator] by the creature of his power, the sinful object of his wrath, the child of his merey, is the first step that a sinful creature, well aware of what God is, and what himself ought to be, must make towards God in his addresses to him. Confession<sup>1</sup> therefore, very properly bears the first place in our church service; and this, with the

<sup>1</sup> In order fully to understand the nature of this illustration of the Daily Service, it is necessary to observe that Mr. Walker, in his preparatory lectures, described prayer as consisting of (1) Confession, (2) Praise, (3) Petition, and (4) Thanksgiving. He now designs to shew how admirably these are united *in order* in the morning and evening service.

other parts of prayer, is introduced in such a manner, as is exactly fit to call up the true spirit of devotion. Hear then with earnest attention, the awful sentences of [the bible] which open the public worship, and you shall be soon convinced that, as 'the Scripture moveth you in sundry places' to do, nothing can so much become you, as that you should 'confess your manifold sins and wickedness.' You shall be convinced, that 'if you say you have no sin, you are miserably deceiving yourselves;' for so many are the transgressions you have been guilty of, and your sins are so constantly bearing heavy upon you, that you cannot but tremble at the correction of God's anger, which must assuredly bring you to nothing, nay which is even at hand to take vengeance on you. [You will see] therefore, that nothing but a speedy repentance can save you, nor is there any other way of avoiding God's entering into judgment with you, in whose sight no man living shall be justified. While therefore 'your spirit is broken and your heart rent,' you must 'arise and go to your Father, and say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son,' much less to be treated as thy child. If these sentences were regarded, and had their due influence, they could not fail of stirring up a dread of just punishment, an earnest desire of being restored to God's favor, and a humble, unaffected persuasion of our vileness in his sight. Under such a conviction, we should with all readiness fall in with the minister's exhortation, and giving up all pretence to self-righteousness, all 'dissembling and cloaking our sins,' fall down before

‘Almighty God, our heavenly Father, confessing them with a humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient heart,’ if by any means ‘we may obtain forgiveness of the same through God’s infinite goodness and amazing mercy.’ If by this time a high dread of most mighty justice, which you see due to you for your sins, has taken possession of your souls, and you stand confounded and condemned before God and your own consciences, (as the importance and weightiness of these reflections being considered, methinks you cannot but be,) you will be ready humbly, seriously, and heartily, to do honor to the Lord, in the open acknowledgment of your sinfulness before that congregation, with which you are assembled, for the great and exalted purposes of religious worship. When you are deeply affected with the odiousness, the ingratitude, the danger of sin, and your mind is impressed with shame and fear; whilst your heart is troubled and your spirit within you desolate of comfort, you shall long to pour out your soul before God, in unfeigned confession of your guilt and overflowing sorrow. Fall then low on your knees before God, and with the convicted congregation lift up your humble voice to him, in expressions arising from a purity of heart which shuts out all hypocrisy, and you then shall feel, I may safely assure you, all the comfortable force of those words of confession which you speak from your souls. How will your hearts melt when you set before you that ‘Almighty God’ who, ‘most merciful’ as he is, you scarcely dare to call your Father, from whose ways, although he be the ‘Almighty and most merciful,’ you have heedlessly and presumptuously ‘strayed

like lost sheep, following the devices and desires of your own corrupt hearts,' doing your own pleasure, and 'leaving undone' his, in repeated instances; inso-much that 'there is no health' nor wholeness in you, but you are altogether odious, sinful, and abominable! How passionately will you consider whom you have been offending, and against whom you have lifted up yourselves in a series of disobedience! How warmly will you plead with your heart because of the iniquity that is in you; how devoutly will you resolve against doing any more such great wickedness, and how solieitously, when your heart is thus in heaviness, [will you] look up to your everlasting rock for pardon and protection! You shall then want neither a pressing earnestness, nor a deep humility, when you sue to God for mercy. 'Have merey upon me, O Lord, miserable offender' that I am; spare me, O God, I confess my faults; restore me, I am penitent; restore me, not for my deserts (I am sadly sensible they are nothing) but according to thy promises, declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord. Above all things also 'grant me, O most merciful Father,' that my future life may be, unlike the past, 'godly, righteous, sober,' not to the dishonour but the 'glory of thy holy name.' This will be the faithful language of your hearts, most sensibly affected with the shame, sorrow, and dread of sin.

[Under these impressions,] with how incomparable a consolation will God's sentenee of absolution fall upon you! Arraigned and convicted before the Lord, without the least circumstance to offer in mitigation of the divine justice, how will your heart dance for

joy when the glad tidings of peace and salvation are published to you! [What will be your comfort] when, 'Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,' declares his acceptance of you for the sake of his Son, when he solemnly professeth that he 'desireth not the death of any sinner, but rather that he should turn and live,' and when his minister, by God's authority and commandment, pronounceth 'absolution and remission of your sins' upon 'true repentance and unfeigned belief of the gospel.' Seeing also that so much depends on your true repentance, you will need, under your present penitent circumstances, no argument to lead you to 'beseech God that he will grant it unto you,' that he will 'give you his Holy Spirit' to purify you from all iniquity, both of body and soul, so that the present services you are about to pay 'may please him,' and that the 'rest of your lives,' formerly so miserably sinful, may be 'pure and holy,' and that 'at the last you may come to his eternal joy through Jesus Christ.'

It may not be amiss now to observe, that in as much of the service as hath been hitherto considered, we have been in a very awakening manner called to a fixed and settled persuasion of our sinfulness and guilt, and of God's anger against us in this estate, both which are the groundwork of that part of prayer which consists in confession. We have further been assisted with terms of grief very expressive of such a sense of guilt before God, and extremely fit to confirm such an abhorrence of it on our minds, as can alone make us worthy of God's remitting to us the punishments thereof. Thus the true foundation of repentance

is here established, which makes the necessity of faith in Christ Jesus abundantly evident, there being no other hope of pardon to a self-condemned offender. [Moreover] whilst the wretch, in so fearful an expectation of deserved punishment, cannot but hope for forgiveness as the only circumstance which can support him in so sad a distress, this is largely promised and strongly confirmed to him, from the mouth of that God whose vengeance was so much dreaded. Thus you may observe, how well this office of confession is fitted to give us a high fear of God's justice, which is due to all sinners, to convince every one of us that we are such, and to make us lay hold of eternal life offered us in Christ Jesus—no trifling parts, you must acknowledge, of the Christian salvation.

Set now the avenging God before you, as reconciled to you for the sake of Christ Jesus; as willing to forgive your iniquities, and to blot them out of his remembrance; as having solemnly engaged to you that he will do so, upon your repentance and faith; and you may discover how properly the prayer of our Lord concludes this office of confession. You have been lamenting your wickedness and God's anger, and now he is reconciled to you through his well-beloved: you are now therefore emboldened to call upon him, by the endearing title of *Heavenly Father*, through the gracious promise of pardon now given you, whose name you must needs now desire to 'hallow,' reverence, and adore, earnestly begging that his 'kingdom may come,' and Christ Jesus rule universally in your hearts, to the defeating of all attacks

of your spiritual enemies, and to the establishing of those holy purposes you have now so warmly taken upon you; so that you may be zealous in doing, and patient in suffering, God's will, relying on the assistance of his Holy Spirit for strength and ability, and on his mercy for pardon of past 'trespasses,'—'trespasses,' the remembrances of which are so terrifying, that you cannot but devoutly pray to be delivered from the danger and punishment of them, even to him whose is 'the kingdom' over all things, and who hath alone 'power' to relieve and protect you, and to whose mercy you ascribe the praise and the 'glory' of doing so 'for ever and ever.'

I have now done with the first part of prayer, viz. *confession*, and have shewn in some measure, how excellently the church service answers the end and nature of the duty, how expressive it is of the sentiments of a contrite heart. It was before remarked, that the more intimate consideration of God's excellencies, whilst the mind was engaged on its own imperfections and vileness, afforded matter of confession; but that [these] looked upon in another point of view, and regarded as being altogether lovely and adorable in themselves, become the subject of praise. This it was further remarked,<sup>2</sup> might very naturally follow upon confession; inasmuch as the reflections suggested to us by the incomparable goodness of God, so ready to pardon the great and crying offences of his creatures, must of course lead us to consider more attentively his other perfections, the event of which must

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Walker here alludes to his preparatory sermons on the nature and use of prayer.

needs be the offerings of praise. We surely can never be so well at liberty to exercise our minds in the pleasing duty of praise, as when we are just set free from our solicitude for our sins, by God's gracious promise of absolution and remission.

Praise, then, which naturally follows upon confession, in the progress of devotion, is made to hold the next place to it in our service. But then we do not enter upon this office so abruptly, as if we were capable all of a sudden to leave earth and go up to heaven. No, it takes us with our mouths stopped, as it were with a sense of guilt, and invokes God's assistance that they may be so 'opened, and our hearts' so enlarged, as that both with one and the other, we may 'shew forth his praise.' [Still however] we are supposed to be looking back, with a kind of pleasing dread, on the dangers we are just got out of, and seeing them, as it were, but just behind us, we cannot but still call upon God that he will 'make speed to save us, and make haste to help us,' till at length, being released from the chains of our sins, and being set upon our feet, we address ourselves to the service of praise, with the highest exaltation both of soul and body. Praise<sup>3</sup> was said to be an exaltation and triumph of the soul, on a nearer view of God's excellencies; the understanding being swallowed up of God's immense perfections, the will most strongly engaged to dwell upon and enjoy them, and the affections with a kind of holy violence, struggling to express the exceeding great and awful joy, with which they are

<sup>3</sup> This is again an allusion to the sermons on prayer.

carried forth towards a Being so unspeakably desirable. Let us now see if the service we are considering, doth every way well express and promote this spirit of praise. The business now is to raise the soul to a more noble contemplation of God: how can this be so effectually done as by the most excellent hymn which follows, 'Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost: as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end?' To whom shall we render the tribute of praise, if not to that great Being who was, and is, and is to come; to that eternal 'Father' and cause of all things, who naturally uses his incomparable perfections to do good, whose infinite power is employed in benefiting his creatures? To whom but that eternal Son and Spirit, whose essential goodness, in conjunction with the Father of mercies, first contrived, and does effectually complete the redemption of lost man? To whom but that glorious Trinity, which was from the beginning the song of angels in the morning of creation, and 'is now and will for ever be' the theme of their praise? Whom but that blessed Trinity shall we praise here, which it will be our unspeakable, eternal happiness to adore hereafter? Were it possible to conceive a higher subject of praise, than the consideration of God, the Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier; any thing which might more effectually quicken the soul to a sensibility of God's excellencies, it might have been more properly made use of in this place. But what this hymn suggests is surely the most exalted notion we can view God in:—let this therefore engage us to contend with each other in

‘praising the Lord,’ and by every tongue let ‘his name be praised.’

The first six verses of the Psalm of Invitation, which now come to be repeated, being the lively sentiments of David’s inspired heart, are wonderfully fitted to raise the soul to the exercise of praise. ‘O come’ let us lift up our voices in the assembly, and ‘sing unto the Lord;’ let us with the whole bent of our affections magnify and rejoice in the Rock and strength of our salvation. ‘Let us come before’ his august presence (in which we all now are) ‘with thanksgiving, and shew ourselves glad in him with psalms’ of praise. For ‘the Lord’ Jehovah is a great, infinite, and incomprehensible ‘God and a great King,’ absolute in his dominion, subjecting all the hosts of heaven and earth to his uncontrollable will; he is ‘above all gods.’ ‘In his hand are all’ the distant corners of ‘the earth, the strength of the hills is his also.’ ‘The sea,’ which he binds in fetters of sand that it shall not harm us, ‘is his;’ he created and ‘made it,’ and ‘his hands prepared the dry land,’ to be an habitation for the sons of men. ‘O come’ then, since he is so great and glorious, ‘let us worship and fall down and kneel before the Lord our Maker’ and everlasting strength. The consideration of God’s greatness, supremacy, and power, thus keeps up the spirit of adoration, and enables it to fix itself more nearly on God in those psalms which are, or ought to be, next the employment of our tongues and hearts. It must be observed concerning them, that the most spiritual devotion will find them expressive of its highest conceptions of God’s glory, and the most sluggish cannot

but be affected with some lively, though transient motions towards God in the use of them. We should all of us so join in them, as not only to be ready to shew forth our voice of adoration with the psalmist, but to confirm and enliven the most exalted notions of God upon our minds. They are indeed usually composed on such subjects as abundantly suggest matter of praise; such are the wonders of God's works in the beautiful order and harmony of the creation; the regularity of the animate and inanimate world; the wisdom of Providence in guiding and governing all things; the extraordinary appearances and manifestations of his power, majesty, wisdom, and justice to his people; his especial protection of his servant David. These and the like matters, which afforded occasion of praise to the psalmist, may either equally inspire us with the same sentiments, where they are of general concern, or may otherwise be easily made our own, by an application of them to our own circumstances.

It would be endless to enter into a practical inquiry after the truth of what is here laid down; and it is the more needless, as many amongst you must have experienced, how great and powerful helps these psalms are, to draw up the soul towards God in acts of adoration; and any of you may be convinced of the same by a diligent and attentive use of them. I shall say no more of this part of praise, but only observe that the posture in which the psalms ought to be used is standing, which is as natural a bodily expression of the lifting up of the heart to God in praise, as kneeling is of humility in confession or

petition. The soul whilst it praises God, exalts itself to the highest stretch of its capacity, and the upright posture of the body serves to signify such an inward exaltation. Praise requires such a rapture of the mind as admits of no bodily indolence; and you may observe among the Jews, even dances were thought no improper signification of this animated devotion.

When the mind hath been thus engaged for a while, in magnifying God with a great fervency of affection, which is the proper use of psalms, these being the productions of holy men, when they were influenced with a nearer and more glorious view of the high, the great, the righteous, the merciful, the provident God—when the spirits languish under such exalted meditations, and the soul is no longer able to keep itself on the wing, then another service of a somewhat different kind, but calculated to raise the same spirit of devotion, is made to take place. [At this moment], how fit portions of the Old Testament Scriptures are, to suggest to the understanding the highest sentiments of God, may be easily discovered upon a proper attendance to what is the subject matter of them. That therefore they are to be heard with a solemn, reverent attention, is visible; and when they are so heard, from the wonderful transactions of the historical parts of them; the creation of the world, or the destruction of man and beast in the universal deluge; or the interpositions of the Almighty hand, in the preservations and punishments of Abraham and his descendants; in the chastisement and prosperity of those who rose up against them, as well as from a variety of other particulars, the majesty of

God's uncontrollable power must be fixed upon the soul. The same history also will not fail of giving the most awakening terror to the divine justice, every where so amazingly fearful in its doings, as cannot but make the most self-sufficient heart shrink at the prospect. The time would fail me to speak of that important vengeance upon the whole race of man, except eight persons, who, heedless of God, and thoughtless of the threatened destruction, intent on their pleasures, as uncontrolled by any law, as any modern people may be, and eating and drinking, were swept away by the flood. Nor can I stay to mark out the circumstances of that avenging fire which came down from heaven, and by a general destruction of the wicked people and the polluted cities, made them altogether a great and eternal example of justice. Whilst [moreover] the power and justice of God are made evident in the history of his works, the Scriptures of the Old Testament give us sufficient reason, to conceive the highest opinion of his wisdom and goodness. These are so very plain, in the manifestations of his will from the foundation of the world, in his government of mankind, particularly in the civil, religious, and moral parts of the law of Moses, in the excellency of that virtue recommended in the books of Job, Solomon, and elsewhere, and the exact and most astonishing prophecies, that he who runs cannot but read, in the plainest and largest characters, the high wisdom and gracious goodness of God. After this it will be easily granted, that nothing can give us such affecting notions of the

divine perfections, as the history of God dealing out his excellent qualifications in his transactions with men.

By passages of the Scripture, therefore, you see exalted notions of God may be abundantly conceived, and the intermitted exertions of praise take fire again, and burn with redoubled ardour. Who can see God in the glorious view in which we have now seen the Scriptures representing him to us, without feeling his inexpressible perfections upon the soul, without being caught up by transporting thoughts to the highest heaven, without having every desire and affection upon the utmost stretch to comprehend more of the most excellent divine nature? Then, if ever, with enlivened devotion shall we 'praise God and acknowledge him to be the Lord,' most worthy to be praised. With 'the whole earth,' we shall look up to and worship the 'everlasting Father,' to whom 'all angels cry aloud, the heavens and the highest powers therein, Cherubim Seraphim continually do cry,' 'holy' Father, 'holy' Son, 'holy' Spirit. 'Lord God of Sabaoth thou fillest heaven and earth with thy glory,' and makest us all, even angels and men, happy by thy presence. Then, if ever, we shall boast ourselves in the 'Father of an infinite majesty,' in 'the Holy Ghost the Comforter,' in the 'honourable, true, and only Son,' who 'king of glory' and 'everlasting Son of the Father,' as he was when he took on him to deliver man, despised not the 'virgin's womb,' nor the 'sharpness of death,' that he might 'open the kingdom of heaven to all believers.' Then, in short, will it be the only earnest longing of

our souls, to be numbered with the saints in a nearer enjoyment of God's glory for ever and ever.

Inspired with the same sentiments, may we also take up the song of the blessed virgin,<sup>4</sup> and our souls may 'magnify the Lord,' and our spirits, filled with most glorious apprehensions of God's admirable greatness, rejoice in him our God and our Saviour.

What hath been said concerning the Old Testament Scriptures, may be applied with a still more interesting propriety to the New, inasmuch as in these the great God, represented in the former, is brought nearer to us, and an amazing account of the interposition of all the powers of his divinity to make us eternally happy, are there laid open to us. Good God! what a subject of praise is the redemption and the sanctification of lost, wicked, miserable man! Can we coldly look upon the divine being so mighty, so willing to save? No, surely we cannot be indifferent to so important a concern. All which the gospel records is [matter] of wonder and astonishment; a scene of justice, goodness, power, and wisdom most adorable; a most mysterious scene of humbled divinity and exalted humanity. Hear then the message of salvation, and when you have tasted and seen how gracious the Lord is, you shall instantly shew forth his praise, and find the hymns appointed after the second lesson very expressive of the lively notions you have of God.

With these reflections I leave the whole of this

<sup>4</sup> This occurs in the afternoon service after the like exercise of reading the Old Testament. Mr. Walker might also have noticed the *Cantate Domino*.

part of the service with you, being confident, that if a most affecting sense of God's excellencies has been raised upon your minds, by the most fit means you see the church has made use of to do so, your reflections will fix themselves in a kind of gentle complacency on God's perfections, and you will be ready with old Simeon to depart in peace, now that 'your eyes have seen God's salvation prepared before all men.' Thus if it is possible for any outward means to stir up enlivened sentiments of God, in which the foundation and exercise of praise consist, I hope the daily exercise of public devotion now taken notice of, is qualified to effect that purpose.

It will be proper to observe now, what progress we have hitherto made in the scheme of devotion. When we first presented ourselves before God, we could not but see, feel, and lament the incomparable load of vileness and wickedness, which produced humble confession and deprecation of God's vengeance. While this lay upon us, we were utterly unfit and disqualified for any other part of prayer. God's sentence of absolution was therefore pronounced, and being thus discharged from our sins, way was made for us to contemplate the glorious excellencies of God, and we were supplied with the most affecting arguments to, and expressions of praise in the psalms and hymns, whilst from the lessons new matter was thrown in upon us, to inspire us with, and to keep up the spirit of this vigorous devotion.

Whilst therefore the powerful arguments of praise are warm upon us, let us go on to the consideration of our wants, which were said to be the subject of

the third part of prayer. But first let us remark what was above taken notice of, that a confidence in God (seeing from the reflections we have been just making on his perfections, he appears alone to be the fountain of all kinds of blessings to us,) that he will upon our earnest request, supply us with them, is a most necessary qualification to our petitions. If therefore a faith not only in God's ability, but also willingness to relieve us from the great wants we experience in both parts of us, our bodies and our souls, be needful to make us offer up our petitions, as it is plain to common sense that it is; then the appointment of the creed or belief, in this place of the church service, is a very necessary introduction to the part of prayer we are about to consider. Not only in this respect doth it seem most proper, as looking forward to the petitions which follow, but also as looking backwards to the reading of God's word which immediately went before it, upon which it very usefully follows, whilst the reflections on God's perfections and gracious dealings with mankind, as recorded in the Scriptures, especially in the gospel, are fresh upon our minds. Looking behind us therefore to God's word, and before us to our wants, let us be convinced, that with great propriety we are here called upon to make confession of our faith; that we believe in one Almighty God, who is distinguished into three persons, the Father our Creator, the Son our Redeemer, the Holy Ghost our Sanctifier, by whom we and the whole church may have remission of our sins, and the hope of a blessed resurrection to eternal life. Now, if we are thoroughly convinced of our wants and our

inability to supply them, we must with devout thankfulness, great seriousness, and assured confidence, join in this confession of faith, which it is visible, is the only foundation upon which our petitions can possibly be granted. For, observe in whom you believe—God the Father Almighty, maker and preserver of heaven and earth. Who but this kind indulgent Father can give you what you need? You believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, who lived, died, rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and all to relieve you in your greatest wants. Is not therefore his satisfaction and mediation, the groundwork of all the favours you expect at God's hand, the very corner stone of all your hopes? You believe that you shall be raised again to an everlasting life, either of happiness or misery; it is the Spirit of God can alone qualify you with the heavenly disposition you want to fit you for future happiness, to whom therefore, but this powerful Spirit, can you apply for this necessary grace and assistance? Without a lively faith in the Father, Son, and Spirit, you see it is in vain, it is folly to pray; let us therefore engage you to confirm your faith, by an honest and open profession of these articles of your belief, and let this be the foundation of your petitions being offered up to God, and give you that confidence in him which is necessary to make them heard and answered.

Being well convinced, from the high opinion we have by this time conceived in our minds of God, that he only is able to help us, and having openly professed our belief that he will help us, let us go on now to lay before him the wants which lie upon us.

Now, in these particulars, it was observed,<sup>5</sup> the nature of petition, or prayer more properly so called, did consist—in an affecting sense of our necessities both temporal and spiritual, and a lively persuasion of God's ability and readiness to supply them. Let us remember then that we are coming before God, to plead with him the wretched, miserable, poor, blind, naked condition we are in, and to improve the conviction we feel of our various wants, and our dependence upon God's favour, who is the author and giver of all goodness. I conceive the service of the church will in this particular also help us; viz. to a more perfect knowledge of our wants, and to proper expressions of them to God, very fit to increase our confidence in his support. The priest begins this office in a usual and very affectionate blessing of the people, 'the Lord be with you'—more especially enabling you by his grace to present your petitions to him. This divine presence the people also pray for, to direct the minister in offering up the common petitions both of him and them. After this act of mutual charity and intercession, they both address themselves to prayer, being invited and admonished to do so by the earnest exhortation of the minister, 'let us pray,' yea let us offer up our petitions to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, beseeching him that he will have mercy upon and help us in our various distresses, for the sake of Christ, in whose words, as being taught us by him, and therefore carrying more weight with

<sup>5</sup> In the preparatory lectures on prayer to which reference is made all along.

the Father, we open the great scene of our wants before God.

We have now therefore placed God before us in his most endearing relations to us as Father, Redeemer, and Sanctifier ; we have considered him as the bestower of our daily bread (all things of every kind we need) upon us, and we have made a general representation of our wants, infirmities, weakness, and dependence. These you know are the principal qualifications of *petition*. Let us, therefore, under this persuasion of God's loving-kindness, pour out all our necessities in his presence, lay before him the various wants we experience, and earnestly and faithfully implore his help. We are supplied with assistances for doing so, in the little sentences which follow the Lord's prayer, wherein from an affecting sense of our misery, we loudly call upon God to 'shew his mercy upon us,' and to grant us 'his great salvation,' and deliverance out of the mighty evils we labour under. Particularly we implore temporal blessings, by beseeching the Lord to bless and 'save the King,' and all our magistrates, and always mercifully to 'hear us when we call upon him' for their prosperity. We pray for God's ministers who are the instruments of our spiritual blessings : we intercede for Christ's heritage : we beg the blessing of peace, because God alone hath the direction of great events, and he alone fights for us, and secures us from the violence and cunning of our enemies. Finally, we call upon the divine grace to cleanse and purify our hearts from all iniquity in our addresses, and that he will not take his Holy Spirit from us on so important an occa-

sion. How important the occasion is, will be visible if we do but cast our eye back upon the large catalogue of our wants, already more amply set out to view—our want of pardon at God's hand, of the benefit of Christ's death, of divine grace to comfort, enlighten, and direct our minds—our want of grace to convert us from sin, to rescue us from temptation, to enable us to do good, to bring us to glory, and to beget in us all heavenly virtues, such as love of God, charity, mortification, contrition, sincerity, faith—our want of things temporal, the protection of God's providence, deliverance from our enemies, from God's judgments, from our afflictions, and defence against all evils. Thus we see ourselves beset with wants of every shape; and the collects which now follow, whilst they help us to pray unto God for his protection, at the same time set home upon us these very wants in a lively manner, and lead us to God, through faith in Christ Jesus for relief. We are constantly put in mind of these essential parts of petition in every collect, which is always so framed as to contain an application to God considered as great, or powerful, or merciful, according to the matter of the following petition. Hereby the divine ability to succour us is strongly impressed upon our minds; and afterwards follows a hearty representation of our wants, which we are taught not to expect to be relieved from, but through the merits, and for the sake of Christ, under, and in whom, we have confidence with God that our prayers will be granted.

It would be too large, and after what has been remarked, I hope a needless task, to consider the

weekly collects with this view. Let it suffice with relation to these to observe, that they all contain very earnest petitions to the fountain of all grace, for some grace or blessing of high importance to ourselves or others. My business is to shew that the collects of the daily service are fitted to answer the same end. You may take notice that the sum of all our wants, relating especially to ourselves, is here reduced to two great particulars; viz. *peace* without and within us, and *grace* to resist all temptation and to lead godly and holy lives. Without question, if these were obtained, we could have nothing more to ask for at God's hand; and accordingly these are made the subject of the two first daily collects at morning and evening service. The first of those for the morning, is for outward peace and defence from the assaults which do daily beset us, and this is grounded, you may observe, on God's alone ability to protect us. Let us see now if it be not altogether expressive of such a confidence and signification, and of such a want of protection. We therein address ourselves to God, who by his overruling Providence is the author of peace, and by the excellency of his nature the lover of concord, in a practical knowledge of whom, standeth our eternal life, and safety against all attempts of those who would prevent us from so great a blessing, and in whose service is perfect freedom from all dangers. [We implore him] to defend us his humble servants who flee unto his protection, if not *from* yet *in* all assaults of our enemies, that trusting in his defence, we may 'not so much as fear the power of any adversaries, through the might of

Jesus Christ.' Here the power and providence of God are very naturally called up, to give us assurance that he can help us, and to quicken our faith that he will help us, whereby hope of God's protection, one of the most lively and useful of divine graces, is strongly impressed upon the mind. The first evening collect for inward peace is grounded upon the same principles; it teaches us to look upon God as that divine fountain from whom, and by whom, and by whose grace all holy desires are begotten in the mind, all good counsels and resolutions grow there, and at last bring forth just works, the source of inward peace. It therefore encourages us to call upon him for such firm persuasions of our reconciliation with him, and such comfortable testimonies of our obedience to his will, that we may ever enjoy that peace which the world cannot give; so being inwardly pure, our hearts eagerly set to obey God's commandments, and being defended from the terrifying fear of our enemies, we may pass our time in rest from our foes, and quietness in our own minds through Christ Jesus. This you see is the spirit with which we must sue for inward peace, and this is evidently the most likely means of producing it in us. The third collect for morning and evening prayer was, I said, a petition for grace. We well know by sad experience, that without the grace of God we can do nothing, and that therefore our help cometh of the Lord. What therefore can be more servicable, to confirm upon our minds an affecting notion of our weakness and readiness to fall, than such an address as in the first of these collects we are taught to make to our

heavenly Father, the almighty and everlasting God, for his defence of us by his mighty power, from sin and bodily danger, and that he will take all our concerns and doings of a spiritual and temporal kind into his own governance, so that we may do always that is righteous in his sight? Or how can we better accustom ourselves to a reliance on God's grace, than by daily praying that God would 'lighten' our inward as well as our outward darkness, and defend us in our souls, bodies, friends, and estate, from 'all perils and dangers' for the 'love of his only Son,' Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord. If the business of *petition* be to impress upon us a lively confidence in God's perfections, as being alone able to relieve our wants and protect us from dangers, it cannot be better effected than by such short, earnest, pertinent, faithful applications of the soul to the divine excellencies, as you have now heard. Nor do we want the warrant of comfortable experience, that by a diligent use of this service, the spirit of prayer hath been indeed excited.

Having now provided *ourselves* with the extensive blessings of grace and peace, we are at liberty to intercede and offer up our prayers for *others*. Now, let it be remembered that a conviction of God's alone ability, and of his willingness to give us the spiritual and temporal blessings, we feel the want of, is the foundation of our making request to the almighty parent of all good. Nay, but he who is a Christian feels the wants of other people; he knows that they want the blessings of grace and providence equally with himself; his bowels of mercy yearn towards them;

the image and likeness of God's communicative goodness being formed within him, he is therefore influenced with an earnest desire of their happiness, and does the best he can to promote it, by instantly recommending them in all things to God's protection. The business of intercession then is to implore all temporal and spiritual blessings for others; but these are ordinarily sent down upon men through the ministration of persons appointed of God for these purposes. It is through the hand of temporal governors that temporal things, and spiritual governors, that spiritual things are usually derived upon men. When therefore we do entreat God's wisdom and goodness, by his unerring counsel to guide and govern the hearts and affections of these, we make the best general application we can possibly do, for the supply of what other people stand in need of. Now, the law of charity, which does universally open our hearts unto all men, does more especially interest us by many considerations, human and divine, in the happiness of those who are of one church and nation with us. These reflections will serve to shew us, not only with what propriety the collects for the King, Royal Family, and Clergy, have the first place in our intercessions, but also with what latitude they are to be understood, and consequently what spirit of love to others they proceed upon. When therefore you offer up your prayers for the King as you are now taught to do, you will not forget that from your more affectionate love towards him, you are making application for the whole people of the land, beseeching God to bless them with all temporal good, and that you make such request known by praying,

especially for the King, through whom Almighty God sends these blessings upon us. Hear the substance of the prayer itself. 'O heavenly Father, high and mighty,' who sitting upon 'thy throne beholdest' with a providential eye, 'all the dwellers upon earth,' look with compassion, and behold the people of this land, and for their sakes bless the King with the 'grace of thy Holy Spirit,' that in governing us 'he may walk in thy way,' which can alone direct him to make us prosper; give him gifts 'from above,' that he may be fitted for the administration of so great a charge; visit him with 'health, and wealth, and victory,' and grant that in all things he may so acquit himself of his high duty, that he may at last be eternally happy through Christ Jesus. In the following prayer, looking forward to the necessity there is that the temporal blessings derived upon us through the King, should be continued to us by a like channel, we humbly recommend the Royal Family to God for the same blessings, and the same gifts. Thus we have done our utmost, and given abundant testimony of our love and fellow-feeling of wants, to those who are kindred with us, in interceding with God for all temporal happiness upon them; still their spiritual and much greater wants demand our most earnest prayers.

We cannot but be highly affected with the misery of sin, and the excellency of God's goodness in establishing a means of deliverance from it; we cannot but earnestly wish that all men were made effectual partakers of that victory, which overcometh the world through the grace and power of Christ Jesus, and

therefore for the sake of such inestimable spiritual blessings, we proceed to invoke that Almighty power, by whom only so great and difficult a work as the conversion of souls can be completed. We humbly beseech him, that since he hath in so marvellous a manner declared and defended his glorious gospel of liberty, he will by the same mighty superintendence, even now make the same effectual, by pouring down upon the ministers thereof, through whom the people are to receive the spiritual food, the saving spirit of grace to fit and dispose them for their important office. [We also pray for] his blessing, that their labours may be successful in bringing the several congregations committed to their charge, to a zealous walking in all piety and godliness, so that the honour of our advocate and mediator Jesus Christ may shew forth itself in the lives of all professing themselves his disciples among us. So having before recommended our brethren to God, by praying for all temporal blessings upon them in the person of the King, we are here helped to plead with him in their behalf, for spiritual blessings in the persons of the ministers of his word.

We are now discharged from our confined applications to God for others, and love is now at liberty to give itself full scope to commiserate the various miseries of our fellow creatures, and to recommend them all in one unlimited intercession to the divine mercy. There is something incomparably noble in the charity we are here called upon to exercise: to look round upon the wretchedness of the whole human race, and to feel so unbounded a distress, carries

a majesty and dignity of heart with it, which I shall by no means take on me to describe. How greatly does it express itself in a most affecting appeal to God; how strongly, yet how humbly doth it plead for the wants of miserable man! It hath taken now upon it to speak unto the Lord: O let not the Lord be angry! Lord, thy goodness hath made, and thou dost preserve all these thy miserable creatures, wilt thou not also bless them with all spiritual blessings, shall not the Lord stretch out his healing wing over all nations, and make his gracious ways known unto them, which we find so unspeakably comfortable? Here, if ever, the genuine spirit of intercession is expressed in all the humility of reverential fear, all the importunity of brotherly love, all the confidence of lively faith. And let us take care that our hearts be formed to such an universal feeling of human infirmities, as this devout prayer proceeds upon. Let us see how the world stands in need of God, and let this engage us to offer up our petitions for all conditions of men, without and within the church, however afflicted and distressed, that God of his compassionate goodness will graciously deliver them.

Thus *petition*, as arising from a sense of our wants, and grounded on God's power and willingness to relieve us, hath been exemplified in this part of the church service, which I am confident hath appeared not only fit to express such our wants, but also to raise them upon our minds, and to [lead us to] rest ourselves upon God for a discharge from them; and this not only in our own particuar cases, but also in those of others, who either labour under one common bond of

necessity with us, or want those rich blessings we enjoy.

I now go on to the last part of prayer, and also of our daily service, viz. *thanksgiving*, which was said to be the expression of a grateful heart, upon reflection on the great blessings, both temporal and spiritual, which it had experienced at God's hand; the use of which, besides the returning to God the thanks so justly due to him, and the increasing our love and reverence, was observed to confirm upon our hearts a faith and hope, and confident resignation with regard to God's future dealings with us. Look back now on the supply which God has given you of your various wants; consider yourselves as brought into the world a helpless infant, more helpless than the meanest creature, and look what you now are in the ornaments of body and mind. Remember that through an uninterrupted course of watchful providence, you are become what you are; but reflect more attentively on your hopeless state as an eternal being. You were a miserable, sinful, lost creature, of whom it might be said, it were ten thousand times better you had never been; but now an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven, a present possessor of great and precious spiritual blessings which you could have no prospect of. Tell it then to every faculty of your soul—this hath God done, all this is his gracious work; proclaim it aloud within you, till every desire and affection of your heart be on fire, to return to God with the warmest thankfulness. Then you shall find that a joyful and pleasant thing it is to be thankful; then shall you enter into the spirit of that excellent form

of thanksgiving, which the church service calls on you daily to make before God. This form of thanksgiving suggests the highest arguments to thankfulness, whilst it helps us also to express our grateful sentiments with an honest sincerity. Here we are put in mind to look upon 'Almighty God' as the 'Father of all mercies,' and to increase our obligations to ourselves as 'his unworthy servants,' altogether unworthy of any favours at his hand, and therefore more forcibly obliged to offer to God the 'humble and hearty thanks,' which are due unto him. Here we are instructed to 'bless' him for the temporal mercies he hath shewed us—'creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life,' but 'above all' other mercies, 'for the redemption of the world' from utter vengeance by 'our Lord Jesus Christ,' for his word and sacraments and other 'means' of conveying 'grace' at present, and for the 'hope of glory' and immortality at the last. Here, in short, we are informed that the highest return of gratitude is a debt upon us for such amazing blessings, even an 'unfeigned' thankfulness in heart, a joyful expression of it with 'our lips,' and a 'giving up ourselves' entirely to God's 'service,' so as to 'walk before him in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life.'

Judge now, whether any thing could be so well contrived to stir up a sense of gratitude, as this general thanksgiving, every word of which presents to us a new, and still more incomparable instance of divine goodness! But doubtless many among you have experienced the fitness of this prayer of thanksgiving, to express the overflowing of their hearts towards

the Father of mercies, beyond what I can describe. To such as are insensible to the blessings God hath bestowed upon them, nor are warmed with sentiments of gratitude, I can recommend nothing so properly as the constant and attentive use of this form, in order to awaken in them a becoming return to the divine love. After all, let us set ourselves to bless God for his abundant kindness towards us, and let us endeavour that our hearts may prompt the lively expressions which our lips utter, so shall we find thanksgiving to be not only a most useful, but also a most comfortable exercise—inspiring us with a lively faith in God's promises, an assured hope of his favour, and a resigned submission to his will, who hath already directed all things so graciously for us.

We have now seen the several parts of prayer presented to us in a very natural order, and with such a propriety of sentiment and expression, as cannot but engage us highly to esteem the church service, and most carefully to make use of it. The sum of the whole is in the last words of the concluding prayer of St. Chrysostom. We must so enlarge the notions we have of God, and so represent them before him, that God may mercifully accept the 'desires' and longings of our souls after him, and 'fulfil our petitions' for the things we stand in need of, so that the knowledge of God and his truth may be growing upon us, and we may thereby become daily more fit for, and draw yet nearer and nearer to the life everlasting.

If this whole service hath been gone through with becoming attention and devotion, if we have been in earnest in what we have been about, and really laid

ourselves open before God in all integrity of heart, nothing can be more comfortable than the blessing which God graciously gives to quiet, cheer, and support us. This being, as it were, God's answer of acceptance to our faithful prayers, must be received with all reverence, the people in the primitive church being directed to bow their heads when it was pronounced unto them. Let us then receive this prayer of benediction with all joy and thankfulness, and let us add our hearty Amen, thereby to make it our own, so that 'the grace' purchased for us by the death 'of our Lord Jesus Christ' may procure our pardon, the love of the Father may put his seal of acceptance to that sacrifice, and 'the fellowship,' and communication of the graces 'of the Holy Ghost,' may perfect our sanctification; and that all these may 'be with us now,' and continue with us 'all evermore.' To which ever blessed Trinity, even the Father, Son, and Spirit, be ascribed all honour and obedience, 'world without end Amen.'"

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The effect of this exposition of the daily church service, delivered with all the power and energy peculiar to its author, and subsequently lent for private reading to the associate Christians of Truro, must have been incalculably beneficial in promoting that union of heart and feeling in worship, on which our reformers set so just a value, and so well knew how to excite and cherish. Ministers too seldom devote their thoughts to the elucidation of the ritual in which they are engaged; and the people, untaught to

appreciate the forms of their prayer book, do not understand, and therefore cannot fully enter into the nature of its admirable adaptation to the various uses for which it was compiled. Perhaps a more spiritual flock than Mr. Walker's never existed, and the cause of this may be in a great measure traced to their enlightened acquaintance with a series of spiritual services, so well calculated to keep alive a frame of true piety. Wherever those who adhere to the forms of our church, are wisely instructed by devout teachers in their nature and design, an effect may be expected similar to that produced at Truro. A high tone of spiritual feeling will rest upon ministers and people, while a neglect of this necessary instruction will generate the flat and unprofitable condition of congregations, so often justly complained of. The indiscreet manner in which some clergymen of eminent zeal, unquestionable piety, and certainly of extensive, but not of unmixed usefulness, overlooked the value of the forms, and despised the discipline of our establishment, during the days of the revival of religion in this country, produced evils only to be remedied by the line pursued at the present time, by men not less devout in heart but more judicious in practice. If any thing can restore the primitive affection for our establishment, it will be the consistent and enlightened churchmanship of those who now form its brightest ornaments, but who desire not to move out of their own orbit, though they are anxious to shed their light as far beyond it as possible.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE LITANY—BAPTISM—THE LORD'S SUPPER— MATRIMONY.

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#### *The Litany.*

BISHOP BRAMHALL well observes in his answer to Milton, that they who do not use forms in public prayers, direct them more to their hearers than to God; while others that read a liturgy, have their affection more at liberty, not being yoked to the search of words. We have already seen in Mr. Walker's excellent treatise on the Morning and Evening Prayers, how admirably our Reformers provided for this important part of congregational worship; but he was not less successful in directing his followers to understand and appreciate the most affecting service in the world—

#### THE LITANY.

“A Litany is said [in the rubric] to be a *general supplication*—i. e. of all the people under the pressing sense of some evil. The litany now under consideration is chiefly taken from an old office of this kind, which was drawn up at a time when sickness, war,

and universal calamity overran the church; and it is evident at first view, that this service is altogether expressive of the earnestness and importunity with which a nation, under the visitation of God's hand, would with one voice call upon him to compassionate their miseries, and turn away his wrathful displeasure from them. The impatience for deliverance naturally expresses itself in broken sentences, at every turn interrupted by the loud cries of the distressed. Were you one of a miserable multitude, ready to sink down into the depth of the sea, what, think you, would be your general address to God, but 'Save Lord, we perish!' Would you not contend with each other in calling upon God, and in the very expressions of this litany, beseech God to hear you, to deliver you, and spare you from the dreadful ruin? But now, if every Christian be in more imminent danger than one in a sinking vessel, or in the midst of flames, or shut up in a city where the plague, pestilence, or famine raged, and death spreading resistless dismay, was ready to lay hold of him—if the Christian's danger be not only more imminent, but his deliverance of incomparably higher importance to his happiness, there may be seasons when the litany before us may be exceedingly proper. And doubtless there are seasons when, although public calamity ceaseth, and all things are calm and at quiet without, yet within is an insupportable weight of misery, humble dread of God's vengeance, and despair of escaping it. The soul [being thus] compassed with the sorrows of death, and the pains of hell having already laid hold upon it, with what vehemence will it call upon

the name and power of the Lord, in the words of the psalmist and of this supplication, ‘O Lord, I beseech thee deliver my soul, thou graeious, righteous, and merciful God!’

Again, there are seasons of security yet more to be feared, when the soul feels nothing of its danger, and the heart is so obstinately hard as to go down without any sensibility, and as it were willingly and triumphantly to its utter destruction; a state of all others the most dreadful, and which we cannot too earnestly nor too devoutly beseech God to preserve us from, and to deliver others out of. Should the grace of God, as it sometimes does, at one glance open the eyes of such a miserable man, when he had now begun his last step; should the first notice of eternity be given him, when he was now already falling into everlasting damnation, how loudly, how passionately would he cry ‘good Lord deliver me!’

There are seasons also wherein, through the especial goodness of God, with a full assurance of faith, we lay hold of eternal life, and in a manner take possession of immortality; so lively are our hopes, so sanguine our expectations, [that we feel] as if all opposition from the enemies of our salvation were in vain, and we were now past all danger of falling or coming short of the prize, we seem even now to have laid our hand upon. But anon<sup>1</sup> all this exultation of heart may be utterly excluded; we may find ourselves shamefully giving way to the meanest temptation—

<sup>1</sup> A good old fashioned word, which it is a pity should have been superseded by the unmeaning expression *by and bye*.

what then can we do but call upon God, that he will arise, help, and deliver us for his mercies sake.

There is therefore a variety of seasons besides those of public calamity, when we may have reason in our various circumstances, to come more particularly to God with this supplication; and were we well aware of the importance of our warfare, of the subtilty and power of temptation, and that we have a party within us always ready to receive and support it; did we know the vengeance we do indeed already deserve, and should God enter into judgment with us, we should be quickly convinced that not a day or hour passes over us, in which we may not well call upon God to pardon and defend us. Suffer me then to lay this matter a little more largely before you, inasmuch as an affecting sense of your danger, and utter want of divine protection, is what must give you the true spirit of this general supplication, and enable you to bear a becoming and profitable part in it. The end of our being is to honour and serve God, and our business in this life, is to become qualified for such service, i. e. to acquire such a temper and disposition of mind here, as will fit us to find our eternal happiness in honouring and serving God hereafter. This temper and disposition is in one word *love*, or such a bearing of the whole soul towards God, such a constant conviction of the understanding, such a bias in the will, such a vehemence in the affections, as will make us like and admire God, long after him, and find incomparable delight in serving, pleasing, and enjoying him. Without this temper, we are unfit for God and unhappy. Now such is our natural

corrupt estate, that we have nothing like this disposition of mind within us, no knowledge of God, no desire after him, nor pleasure in him. On the contrary, we are entirely engaged in the things which the world presents to us, we eagerly desire, and are very busy and warm to obtain them. All within us is blind and obstinate self-will, self love, pride, vanity, envy, and lust; all without a horrid scene of wickedness; and when we do but make one step towards enlarging ourselves, under the power of Christ and the guidance of his Spirit, from this tyranny of sin, instantly all is alarm about us, and the world, the flesh, and the devil are in arms to contest with us the matter of our deliverance. Nor when the deformity of outward vices hath been discovered, and we renounce and abhor them, will it be a less difficult task to reform the soul, and to bring every affection and desire to a total submission to the law of love. We may stop whilst our work remains unfinished: nay when we are upon the point of attaining, and have tasted and drank deep of the heavenly gift, being made partakers of the Holy Ghost, we may after all fall away, and suffer the deserved wrath of God in eternal misery. From this very important representation of the work we have to perform, together with the difficulties both from within and without we have to contend with, and the infinite importance it is to us we should be successful, it may be easy to discover how great reason we have to engage the divine assistance, to guard us from so many evils that threaten us, and how earnestly we must needs call upon God to interpose his almighty power with great might to

succour us. The amount of the whole is, that when we are oppressed with the load of temporal or spiritual misery, when we dread the punishment of our sins, or shrink at the difficulties and dangers which beset us in our Christian course, we cannot but flee unto God for deliverance. Now, under any such a sense of misery, or dread of danger, the litany helps us to a most passionate and affecting address to Almighty God. It begins with an invocation above any thing proper, not only to set our vileness before us, but to kindle our hopes and quicken our faith, whilst at the same time it enables us to plead with God, in such terms as are incontestably most apt to engage him to hear us. ‘O Father of Heaven we are thy creatures, thou hast made and dost preserve us; have mercy upon us in this our misery. O God the Son, who hast redeemed us and purchased us by thy own blood, have mercy upon us labouring under the miserable effects of our sins. O God the Holy Ghost proceeding from the Father and the Son, thou sanctifier, have mercy upon us miserably holden under the power of sin. O holy, blessed and glorious Trinity, three Persons, Father, Redeemer, Sanctifier, each apart and altogether one God, have mercy upon us miserable sinners.’

Having now called upon God, in a manner incomparably fit to induce him to have compassion on us, we begin to open in many particulars the misery we labour under. Seeing we fear God’s anger for the sins of our forefathers and ourselves, we beseech our kind Redeemer that he will turn away from us, the punishments we have deserved, that he will not give

us over to follow our own heart's lust, but that he will deliver us from all evil—from sin and temptation thereto, the craft and assaults of the devil, and from their fatal consequences, the wrath of our judge and everlasting damnation. But especially [we pray to be delivered] from all inward sins of the heart, viz. spiritual blindness, pride, vain glory, hypocrisy, envy, hatred, malice, all uncharitableness, and from all outward sins in the life, such as fornication, and all other damning deadly sins, and all the deceit and wickedness of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Thou who hast subdued all these, Christ Jesus deliver us from them! Deliver us also from God's judgment, most justly due to us; from temporal visitations—such as 'lightning or tempest, plague, pestilence or famine, or battle, or murder, or unprepared and sudden death;' also from 'sedition,' or any such like grievous calamity. Above all [deliver us] from 'hardness of heart,' as insensibility to our sins or our punishment, and such a wicked life as may lead to a 'contempt of thy word and commandments.' From all these various and most terrifying evils, dearest Jesus we importune thee to deliver us. By all thou hast done and suffered for our salvation, deliver us; by 'thy incarnation, life, and precious death, by thy resurrection and ascension, and by the coming of the Holy Ghost.' According to thy truth and mercy, deliver us from the hand of God's wrath 'in all time of tribulation,' deliver us from ourselves 'in all time of wealth and prosperity.' 'In the hour of death and in the most awful day of judgment, good Lord deliver us.'

I shall not stay to recommend the vehement earnestness of this appeal, to the great circumstances of the history of Christ, nor to mention with how much consolation the afflicted soul must recount the various triumphant sufferings of our Lord, and ground upon them a lively confidence of its own deliverance. Let it suffice to observe, that the dread of evil cannot be expressed or prayed against, in a more affecting manner than we have now heard it.

Thus we have done all we can to remove our fears and our dangers, by putting ourselves under the best protection, even that of Christ Jesus, who is able to save us to the uttermost. We may now therefore recommend others to the same powerful protection; and this we are taught to do in the following intercessions, beseeching Christ to hear us for the universal church, and especially for the church among us; and herein for the King, that he may be holy, pious, and prosperous, and for the Royal Family; the Clergy, that they may be devout and exemplary: the nobility, that they may be religious and prudent; the magistrates, that they may be just and upright; the whole people, that they may be happy and safe. Nor are we suffered to stop here, but our prayers are offered up for all sorts of men; for their unity and peace, for a universal spirit of love, fear and obedience towards God, increase of grace, humble hearing of the word, and bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit in us all, even in all mankind. [We pray also] for the conversion of those that be in error, the confirming the strong, and aiding and comforting the weak; for all people in any kind or degree of misery; for all conditions of

men in general, and especially for our enemies, and for all the sons of men, that God would bless us all with every thing needful for the body, and that he would supply the wants of all our souls by giving us repentance, remission, and reformation.

Having now laid before God the great scene of human wants, and pleaded with him for ourselves and for others, we cannot upon the whole, from a view of so general a need of divine protection, but redouble our entreaties. ‘Son of God, we beseech thee to hear us!’ ‘Lamb of God, who by the sacrifice of thyself takest away the sins of the whole world, grant us thy peace,’ even the peace which thou hast purchased with thy own blood—have mercy upon us and all mankind in this our misery. ‘O Christ hear us,’ thou anointed of the Father, hear our supplications. O Father of mercies, ‘O Son of God, O Holy Spirit, pity and forgive us.’

Remember now that you can no way come unto God but by Christ, nor express your petitions so effectually as in his words; present therefore all these your supplications to God, in the prayer your Lord hath taught you. Beseech your heavenly Father that you may henceforth hallow his name, that his kingdom may come upon you, his will may be done in all his dispensations, that he will give you the daily blessings of this life, but especially that he will forgive your trespasses, nor lead you into temptation of falling into sin, but deliver you from the evil and punishment of it.

We have now but one thing more to do before we conclude this excellent exercise of devotion, which is,

that seeing we have besought the removal of present evils, we may endeavour to obtain favour with God for the preventing future. Here then we begin humbly to beseech God, that he will not henceforward 'deal with us after our sins, neither reward us after our iniquities.' This we more largely entreat in the following prayer, wherein looking up to God, our merciful Father, with sighing, contrite, or sorrowful hearts, we pray not only that our supplications may be heard, in all troubles of mind and adversities of body, but also that all evils, which men or devils contrive against us, may 'be brought to nought,' so that we, unhurt by any kind of persecution or distress, may evermore come before God's presence, with thanks and praise for our safety and protection. If your sense of danger and misery hath been any thing lively in the foregoing litany, you will not fail to back this request by your own hearty application to God in the words which follow, and call upon him to help and deliver you for his name's sake. Nor will you cease your importunity, till you have again and again called upon him with a vehemence of desire, only to be expressed in the short sentences which follow. 'Lord thou hast done great things of old, deliver us for thine honour.' Glory be to thee, Father, Son, and Spirit! 'Defend us, O Christ, from our spiritual and temporal enemies, and we shall be safe; we are in great distress, look graciously upon us; behold with pity our sorrows, and we shall be comforted; mercifully forgive our sins, and we shall be at peace.' At length this eagerness of supplication being, as it were, run down and tired, the mind is instructed to give

itself up to God, and to repose upon him in a most gentle, humble, and resigned prayer, that God will pity our weakness and ‘look mercifully upon our infirmities;’ that he will ‘turn from us all those evils which we have indeed most righteously deserved;’ that he will give us grace in all our troubles, to ‘put our whole trust in his mercy,’ so that we may evermore serve him in holiness and purity of life, to his honour and glory, and our peace and comfort, through Christ Jesus.

We have now seen the most lively method, whereby to remove or prevent any misery which may fall upon or threaten us, and also a most lovely exercise of the highest Christian virtues, faith, hope, resignation, patience, and charity. Let this induce us all not to pass over so admirable a service, with a cold insensibility and an unaffecting indifference, but to join in it with fear and trembling, yet with assurance and faith, that our addresses to God may be as warm and lively as our necessities are urgent, and that we may find rest, when it can only be had in making our requests known unto God. May he so enlarge our hearts in the use of this most excellent duty of prayer, that by a constant communion with God, we may be transformed into his likeness, and prove by our own experience what is that good, acceptable, and perfect will of God. Now to that eternal almighty God, even the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost be given all praise and glory, and thanksgiving for ever, Amen.”

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While this indefatigable pastor most anxiously endeavoured to instil into his people, such a sense of the

nature of our public services, as might tend to produce in them an earnest desire to join, when assembled before God, in a united outpouring of kindred aspirations after his promises, and sympathetic breathings for true holiness of heart and life, he did not forget to convey to them instruction on the design and administration of the church's ordinances. In his lectures on the catechism, he enters fully upon the subject of *baptism* as the first sealing ordinance; nor is there to be found in the works of any other writer, a more profitable treatise on that sacrament. It is not however within the province of this volume, to enter on the abstract question of baptism, but to shew how Mr. Walker enjoined its celebration, with a view to the spiritual advantage of parents, sponsors, and children—in fact to describe, as was proposed in the outset, his mode of working the machinery of our church, with a view to illustrate its power and value.

He instructed his followers, that the sum and substance of their duty under the baptismal vow, was “solemnly to deny sin in the life, and reject it with the heart;” the evident obligation of those, who had publicly expressed their engagements of *renunciation, faith, and obedience.*

With regard to the choice of sponsors, Mr. Walker advised parents to be guided solely by this rule, “*who will be most helpful to me in the Christian education of my child?*” He thus guarded against the carelessness of selection, that has caused this interesting custom to degenerate into a mere form; by which one of the loveliest bonds of Christian society has been

loosened and rendered almost useless. "The only thing in view," he further urged, "is the procuring such godfathers and godmothers, as in all respects are judged fittest for helping to bring up the child like a Christian, without regard had in any means to interest, convenience, or grandeur. This is plainly the duty of the parent upon this occasion, and were this but duly done, the disgrace which this prudent institution lies under, would soon be removed, and it would quickly vindicate itself from such objections as have too justly arisen from the abuse of it."

He likewise reprobated the unbecoming practice of making the day on which this ordinance is administered an occasion of festivity. "It were altogether needful," he said, "that all due moderation and decency be used, in the entertainment of friends upon such solemn seasons; and a very solemn thing it is truly. For tell me, I pray you, do not you dedicate, present, and offer up the fruit of your body to God, to be made partaker of God's mercy through Christ? Do you not call upon God to receive him into the ark of Christ's church, to wash him and sanctify him with the Holy Ghost, that he may be delivered from God's wrath; and do you not earnestly plead with God, that he may be stedfast in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in charity; that he may so pass through this world as to come to everlasting life? Are not these matters of more serious concern to you, than how you may acquit yourselves in the entertainment of your friends, which, it is likely, too much engages your thoughts at these times." "Baptism you may be sure," he continued, "is no trifling mat-

ter, although as it is now contrived it seems to be much dwindling into a matter of form." It is in truth the decay of the spirit of outward observances, which prevents their usefulness in these times, as well as in the days of Mr. Walker. It is the custom to charge unsuitableness to the age, upon offices whose value we never put to the test, instead of clearly explaining their intention and looking to their operation on society. We suffer our weapons to rust, and then proclaim that their edge is not sufficient for our present warfare.

The communicants at Truro, appear to have been constant objects of their minister's deepest solicitude. In his exposition of the design of the Lord's supper, he cleared away those clouds of mystery, in which men's imaginations had involved it, and made its nature and use plainly intelligible to all orders of people. There is scarcely any part of parochial duty more trying, than the constant necessity to combat false notions, rebuke carelessness, and remove fears as to this delightful sacrament; the most excellent sign to exhibit, the simplest mean to convey, and the most appropriate seal to confirm covenant blessings. All instruction given to Mr. Walker's hearers, was in accordance with the simplicity of the truth as it is in Jesus. In order that they might know the obligations, resting on such as had received the emblems of a Saviour's dying love, he taught them :

1. That every person communicating, doth make public profession of Christianity.

2. That he doth hereby give hearty assurance of the spirit of love abiding in him, and make pro-

mise of all the offices of it to his fellow members.

“I am first,” said he, “to shew you that communicating is making profession of Jesus Christ. The word sacrament signifies an oath, which the Roman soldiers were used to take when they enlisted themselves under their generals, by which they owned themselves to be soldiers in the cause of their leaders, and engaged to stick to them at all adventures of hazard or fatigue. Because of the likeness of the thing, in our public avowal of Christ for our leader and head, in the two instruments appointed by him for that purpose, these instruments have had the name of *sacraments* given to them. Consequently, in the use of these instruments, there is an actual profession of Christ, and engagement to cleave to him as his servant and soldier. A man taking the sacrament, the oath of a Christian soldier, doth in the most direct manner engage himself to be loyal to his Lord, and publishes to the world that he belongs to the service of the Lord Jesus. Now that sacraments are indeed such badges of profession—badges which he who takes not, doth not indeed profess himself a Christian, nor ought he to be so accounted of by others, and by which he who takes them lays himself under the most solemn, awful, and public obligations to act as a Christian—is evident from what St. Paul saith—‘*are not they which eat of the Jewish sacrifices partakers of the altar?*’ Do not they thereby profess themselves Jews, and own the obligations of the ceremonial worship? Who can doubt it? In like manner (for in proof of this the matter concerning Christian and Jewish profession is here intro-

duced) should you see people eating in a heathen country of idol feasts, would you have any question that they were idolaters, that they professed the belief and service of their false god? Should you indeed see one of them who drew back and forbore to eat, you would suspect and hope that he was not of them, but his joining and eating, would quickly convince you that he professed idolatry. There is therefore, you see, a profession of Christianity in partaking of this our feast; and this it was needful to remark, not so much to prove the thing itself, as to intimate to the absent that they are not even professed Christians, do not profess themselves such, and also that the solemnity of the engagement there taken on and professed, might more evidently and importantly appear to all those who approach unto it. A man communicating, doth profess Christ to be his Saviour and Lord, doth profess himself to be his servant and soldier, undertakes his service, and engages in his cause, and doth publicly declare this in the face of men, whether friends or enemies to his master, and before angels, whether of light or darkness. He doth declare and desire that, henceforward, he may be regarded as Christ's servant, as one ready to all the toils and all the works of a Christian. He doth, as it were, say aloud—'hear ye this all the things in heaven and earth—I am a Christian, as one of your body, as one ready to join you in every work of godliness, and labour of love.'

Having thus declared that coming to the sacrament is a profession of Christianity, Mr. Walker desired further to illustrate the nature of the Christian vow,

“ seeing so many,” as alas every minister does, “ who had bound themselves by this very oath of loyalty and service, the communion, did either not understand it or not observe it.” He therefore proceeded, in a strain of forcible and heart-searching language peculiar to himself—“ hear what ye profess my brethren, when ye eat this bread and drink this cup. Ye profess yourselves the enemies of all your master’s enemies—professed enemies of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Attend to the things ye profess while I lay them before you ; and may every soul of you approaching this feast, find his heart joining with and consenting to this profession, answering within him even thus, ‘ by the grace of God I have, and do, and will renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh.’

Ye profess yourselves enemies to the devil ; that ye will not side with the devil, denying your Master’s kingdom, notwithstanding all the present advantages, honours, and indulgences he may artfully contrive to offer you ; that when he shall say to you (as he will surely say it often, and in the most cunning, pleasing language, labouring that you see not the proposal comes from him, but concealing himself under the fairest, seemingly most prudent, and most innocent appearances, wherewith he will lay his snares in your way) when he shall say to [each of] you, all these things will I give thee, this preferment, that enjoyment, that gratification, that worldly honour, that increase of wealth and happiness all thy days, that fair character and worldly reputation, ‘ if thou wilt fall down and worship me,’ you will stoutly refuse the offer. You will stoutly and continually do it, even

though poverty, injury, shame or death should be the immediate issue of your refusal, saying in the words of your Lord, 'get thee behind me Satan, for it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.'

You also profess that you do and will renounce *his works*, even all of them—every work of Satan. *Pride*, which seeketh its own glory and its own will, nor will endure the correction of God, nor the opposition of man. *Envy*, which repines at the greater happiness, excellence, or worth of other. *Malice*, which delights itself in the fall of adversaries, and in the sins of men. *Stubbornness*, which cannot bear God's government, and secretly kicks against his laws, his providence, and his vicegerents. *Resentment*, which cares not to forgive, and *revenge*, which eries for satisfaction. *Rage*, which utters blasphemies and revilings, and *persecution*, that cries continually 'away with such a fellow from the earth, for he is not fit to live.' These and all other devilish works you profess to renounce; that however violently they may be stirred up within you, and however trying or provoking the outward occasion which kindles them in your breast, yet you will not submit to them, nor follow their powerful solicitations, but utterly and always act contrary to them, however mortifying it may be to you, however mean and dastardly it may cause you to appear in the eye of the world, or whatever shame it may bring upon you. You cannot indeed avoid the various temptations which may serve to raise these works within you; you cannot keep off the suggestions which the adversary will not fail

to make upon occasion of such temptations; and while a sinful nature abides in you, the love of yourselves, and jealousy for your own cause, will be apt to give weight to such suggestions. But notwithstanding all this, your profession is to renounce, to fight, not to submit, in opposition to all the contrivances of Satan, and all the mighty pleadings of your own heart. You must act the hero upon yourselves at all adventures, oppose and counteract the cry of every devilish work in your soul. Let me mention to you an instance. You have been, you judge, injured; you find yourselves strongly moved to revenge, to demand satisfaction, the wrong rising upon your minds in the glaring forms of ingratitude, insolence, and worst of all, slight and neglect. Something you find within you, which would not endure the thought of submission, which always rejects reconciliation, cares not at least to move a step towards it. Now here your profession is, when you are hunted by such a devilish work, and are holden of so sad and dangerous a trial, to give up all thoughts of revenge, of satisfaction, of submission to be made to you, to desire, from your very heart to desire reconciliation, and in contradiction to all the high things within you, to seek and labour for peace, and to take every step which may serve to promote it. Truly in such a case you shall find the truth of what Solomon saith, 'he that ruleth his spirit is better (I will add bolder and more courageous) than he that taketh a city.' Judge from hence how you undertake to deal by the other works of the devil, which oftentimes beset your soul.

[Every one of you who communicates professes himself] an enemy to the world, to all the pomps and all the vanities of it; one in *affection* to be parted from all the gay, and all the great things of life; that neither the wealth nor favour, the interest nor honor, the custom nor countenance of the world shall enslave his heart; that when one and another of these shall propose themselves to you (and they will be continually soliciting you,) you will labour to keep your hearts disengaged from them, utterly rejecting them when they become competitors for your hearts, or solicit an interest there in the least degree prejudicial to your Master. My brethren, you profess yourselves men, who are not to be overawed by the frowns of the great, nor deterred by the dread of singularity, nor swayed by the fashion of the times, nor led by the multitude, nor ensnared by the traps of interest, nor frightened by the tongue of reproach—men upon no earthly consideration to be drawn into any thing which contradicts, or to be hindered from any thing which may promote the interest of Christ, and the salvation of yourselves and others. You profess yourselves men who shall be above the world, who will crucify the world unto themselves, and themselves unto the world, reject the baits which it offers, and oppress and kill the desires of the heart after them. If you thus profess to renounce the world in *affection*, how much more in *conduct*? Not to give yourselves up to a wordly life, not to lose yourselves in the pursuit of wealth, in the chase of honour; not to follow the multitude into vanity and pleasure; not to sink into a state wherein God is forgotten, and

few, if any, projects reach beyond the grave—God left to the heavens, and eternity lying at a distance, which the eye of faith seldom reaches to. Such a life as this you profess to renounce; yea, you voluntarily swear by the oath, and by the faith of a Christian soldier, that in heart and conduct you renounce the world.

You profess yourselves enemies, too, to the sinful lusts of the flesh—that *idleness* shall not ensnare you, *ease* shall not lull your soul asleep, *excess* shall not drown and choke you, *filthiness* shall not abuse you. All these sinful lustings of your flesh you renounce. You profess yourselves those who will keep the body in subjection, who will not indulge in its cravings, not spare it when it refuses labour, not pamper it when it longs for delicacies, not hearken to it when it demands excessive sleep, not gratify it when it would be wanton. You will have none of your members instruments of lust. You will turn away your eye from vanity, nor shall your hand be made the servant of your belly; your feet shall not carry you to places of indulgence, nor your tongue be the detailer of the levity or lewdness which lust may suggest to your heart. By profession you are to mortify the flesh with its affections and lusts, to deny all its unreasonable desires, and to treat it with due severity, that these desires may be less frequently stirred up, more faint when they are so, and more easily rejected.

Now, having renounced the devil, the world, and the flesh, each of you professes himself a believer of all the articles of the Christian faith. One who hath

so humbled the pride of human reason, and his own worth and worldly expectations, that he firmly believes the strongest mysteries and things that he hath never seen. One who is confidently assured, because he hath God's word for it, nor will by any means be moved from such a belief, that in the incomprehensible Godhead there is a Trinity of persons, the Father the Creator, the Son the Redeemer, the Holy Ghost the Sanctifier of the world. One who will be content to live in, and rest his everlasting soul upon this faith, turning to God as his maker, Lord, and portion through the all-sufficient Jesus, by the power of the Holy Ghost; herein contenting his soul, expecting from hence all needful supplies of grace in this life, and waiting for resurrection and glory hereafter. Upon this faith he professes to rest his soul. This he would be understood to make his confidence, and hereof he avows himself not to be ashamed. Whenever this his faith is combated, he professes that he will own, will defend it, will act after it. Though the will of man should deride him, though the unbelief of his heart should suggest doubts to him, though Satan should ply one and another to move him, yet here he will rest his soul. He professes that he will not disown what he believes, will avouch his faith in the congregation, and in the face of unbelievers; will labour to form every action of his life according to it, that all the world may see this his faith in his practice, in his steady refusal of every action and thing which is contradictory to it, and in a bold and open course of conduct formed upon such a scheme of faith. He engages that in word and deed, before

infidels, in the face of insult and mockery, though persecution or death threaten, both in word and deed he will make confession of this faith. This is the profession you undertake, you oblige yourselves unto in the solemn act of communicating.

Lastly, you profess that you are, and will continue to the end of your lives, the servants of God, that you will keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of your lives. You profess the will of God to be your rule, and the word of God that which you will continually take to declare that will unto you, neither adding to nor taking from it. That you will have no other guide but God's will declared in his word, and that it shall be your business to fashion yourselves in heart and life according to it; not consulting the will of your own flesh, nor turning aside after the devices of men, but studying to approve yourselves to God in all holy obedience, neither doing what you know to be forbidden upon any consideration, nor neglecting what you find therein commanded you. This continually you will do, not murmuringly but gladly, not suffering a hankering eye to abide with you after what God hath prohibited, nor judging that to be grievous which he hath laid upon you. Herein also you will diligently use all the gracious means God hath given, and shall continue to you, whereby you may be enabled to walk with him yet more perfectly. In a word (for there were no end of enlarging here) you profess yourselves God's servants, and engage that your whole care shall be to please him, and to walk after his will in all circumstances, whether relating more

immediately to him, or wherein you are concerned in the business of life, or have any intercourse with mankind.

All this now is the profession of a Christian, and this every man undertakes and vows to discharge, by one and the other of these sacred oaths or sacraments which Christ hath ordained, whereby his followers may make profession of him. The former of them, baptism, becomes our oath when we take it upon ourselves, and thereby declare and avouch our Christian profession. The latter hath the same use, and the same authority, and serves, by its frequent repetition, to confirm a nearer union between Christ and us, more loyalty on our parts to him, and more observance on his part to us. What shall we say then is this very large and extensive vow, which we solemnly swear, which we profess before the world, and which we engage constantly and firmly to execute, whenever we approach the sacred feast? In truth it is no less than all this, even this renunciation of sin, this faith, this obedience we profess, when we receive the pledges of Christ's love and of our loyalty, when we make this public avowal of being the soldiers and servants of Jesus."

Mr. Walker thus eloquently instructed his communicants, as to the public profession of Christianity, our church considers her members as making, when they attend the table of the Lord. This act however he described, as having not only reference to our duty to God, but to each other as fellow Christians. It was in his view of it "an assurance made mutually to one another of an inward and Christian spirit of love,

and as a pledge given for the performance of all the offices of Christian love to fellow members." "What" said he "do we do at our common tables? Are they not the places where those of the family, by a daily sitting down together, are most nearly united to each other, and signify their relation, friendship, and readiness to all the offices of civility and kindness? This perhaps may not have been reflected on; but certain it is that eating and drinking ordinarily together, is the chief cement even of family love. Or what doth any when he maketh a feast; whom doth he call but his friends; doth he invite his enemy, or would that enemy come if he were invited? In short, is not a feast a badge and signification of friendship? Even so the family of Christ meet at their master's table, meet as a family in love and peace, meet there to be known one to another that they are of one heart, and mind, and work, to assure each other of Christian friendship between them, and to tie that knot faster and closer by the eating and drinking together, upon the sacred memorial of their common master. The master prepares a feast, provides the best provision that was ever brought forth, his own body and his own blood, invites all his followers, bids them come, not each separately, one at one time and another at another, but altogether, because they are all his family, he the head to each of them, and each a member of him, and therefore they are members one of another, as being the same relation every one of them to him the common head, and being all partakers of, and animated by the same spirit, having all the same faith, the same warfare and engagements, the same hopes,

the same promises, the same Father. They must all come together, that they may be known to be members one of another; they must eat and drink together in token of their relation and their love; they must eat the same bread and drink out of the same cup together, that by the very action of remembering and receiving Jesus Christ, each to his soul's comfort, they may be enforced to signify their unity in the faith, and the love of brethren, giving and receiving tokens and assurances of their mutual love in the very same action, wherein each of them is made partaker of the master and head, the Lord Jesus."

On the occasions when Mr. Walker delivered these striking sentiments, concerning the nature and use of the sacrament, he used to enlarge on the temper and offices of Christian love; but it is not necessary to introduce his observations here, as the subject will be found to be treated in all its bearings, in the five sermons on brotherly love, which will be given amongst the selections from his remains. Such instructions as these, both in public and private, could not fail to check the rash or inconsiderate, to alarm the thoughtless, to encourage the faithful, and to lead all who engaged in this holy ordinance, solemnly performed according to the sublime ritual of the church, to consider the true meaning of those memorials of salvation, which Christ instituted as pledges of his own atonement, and his people's devotedness.

The following excellent letters on marriage, will complete the interesting series of ministerial exhortations contained in this chapter.

TO MISS —, ON HER INTENDED MARRIAGE WITH  
MR. —.

*Truro, August 18th, 1756.*

DEAR MISS —,

I promised Mr. R. to write you a letter, nor can I ever do it on a more important occasion. That state you are about to enter into, is not only of the utmost moment to your present happiness, but your eternal also seems to be in near connection with it. It is with the greatest pleasure, and hope of your well doing, that I reflect on the gracious steps you, and my dear William, have been enabled to take towards this honourable estate. And it should be remembered by you with great thankfulness, that while others about you are hurrying into that holy estate, from views merely worldly or carnal, you should have been led on to choose one another, from principles of so much more excellent a nature. It is grace has endeared you one to the other, that heaven-born ornament which will grow more beautiful with age, and will render you a comfort the one to the other, superior to all the other blessings God may give, and will support you in every distress that may attend your married condition. I beg you, be sensible to whom you owe it, that at your age grace should be so precious to you. Look back and see what you were, that you may own the distinguishing goodness of your God in thus disposing your heart, and thereby delivering you from the greatest curse in this world, an ungodly

husband, which had not God wrought graciously with you, it is but too probable would have been your lot. It is this will engage you to enter with confidence upon that state, which has so many duties and trials peculiar to it. The former of these (the duties of the married state) I doubt not you have maturely weighed, before this time, in the word of God, and in that office of matrimony where they are well put together. I wish you to be perfectly advised of them, before you venture to make that solemn vow, you do at the time of matrimony, for the discharge of them; and the example of the spouse's conduct to Christ, by which the apostle, under divine direction, illustrates your matrimonial duty, may give you a most clear and comprehensive notion of it: and the substance of that duty as far as it shall regard your husband, may, I think, be shut up in this word, a willing subjection to him in the Lord. Beside this, you will have other duties in this new relation; as to be a follower of godly matrons, to look to your house, and to take care of your children. You have informed yourself in all these points, and will be ready to make your solemn promise in the fear of the Lord, and with a good conscience. The more solemn you are in the transaction itself, and the more diligent to impress on your heart the obligation of your matrimonial engagement, renewing it also in your next approach to the Lord's table, the more influence it shall be likely to have upon you. And it may be of singular service that you make notes to be kept by you, of what your present views are of the matrimonial vows and duties. So awful a procedure now will probably have a good effect

upon you ever after, besides which you shall find it of singular service, to keep your heart against those temptations, which the ease and other delights of a newly married state bring with them, and by which I have usually seen the minds of the most serious a good deal hurt. Nor can I only wish you to take due care respecting the duties of a married state, but that also you make now a reasonable estimate of the trials and troubles, which must or may attend you in it. Such as the sickness or death of your husband before you; the want or loss of children, together with the possibility of their turning out ill; disappointments in worldly things, &c. &c. You know not how God may please to try you in this state; but in this as well as every other, you must make account, you shall be tried: of all which circumstances, you will likewise be put in mind, by the very words of your matrimonial vow. Such a casting up the cost, may possibly have a happy effect on your temper and conduct in all sorts of trials and troubles.

I wish you carefully to correspond with that great design of matrimony, the being a helpmate for your husband, which imports not only a helping with your husband in his labours, trials, and troubles, but also with his soul. This is a glorious aim in the married state, and shews the truest love, and has regard to the promoting his real and everlasting happiness. Let not this ever be lost sight of; watch over him in love, warn him continually and without reserve, do not think him so established, as that he shall not need greatly your watchful eye: this will endear and keep you dear to him. There should be the greatest confidence

between you, and in that view I particularly beg you will be faithful in keeping all his secrets.

I have thrown together such hints as occur. I pray God they may be any way serviceable. You know how peculiarly I am interested for you and William. That benediction which the priest shall say over you when you are married, is my earnest supplication and hope concerning you. "God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, bless, preserve, and keep you; the Lord mercifully with his favour look upon you, and so fill you with all spiritual benediction and grace, that ye may so live together in this life, that in the world to come ye may have life everlasting. Amen."

To this I can add nothing.

Your's affectionately and faithfully  
in the Lord Jesus,

SAMUEL WALKER.

TO THEM BOTH.

*Truro, September 22, 1756.*

MY DEAR — AND —,

I have not time to say much, but do you love one another? How do you know that? Your souls I mean. Is Christ the bond of your love? Is it his image you love in one another? or is your love too much carnal? Do you watch over one the other's heart, with a loving jealousy? Are ye free, unreservedly so? What, every day, letting nothing pass? I would have you begin well. Open your hearts every evening, I beg you will. It will be a blessing to you a thousand ways. Methinks, I should

esteem such an opportunity the greatest blessing of a married state. Well, but do you also pray for one another, aye, and do you pray with each other, yourselves alone? Have you done so often? do you delight to do so; also are ye seeking God's glory in this state, and not your own pleasure? Are ye aware of the danger ye are in from *enjoyment* and *independency*? There is nothing more dangerous than the latter, because it is so agreeable to our *own* will, and especially dangerous upon a change, when from being dependent we become our own masters, and that most especially when we are first become so.

I could say much more, but this is enough for once, and I am just going to church. If I mistake not, there is no one more cordially yours than

S. W.

## CHAPTER VII.

CONVERTED SOLDIERS. BACKSLIDERS. ZEAL AND  
PATIENCE OF MR. WALKER.

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### *The soldiers' sermon.*

THE close of the year 1756 presented the zealous minister of Truro, already overburdened by his various employments, with a new field of useful labour, on which he entered in his usual spirit of benevolent energy, though his physical powers were in a great degree unequal to the additional task. A body of soldiers were sent into his parish for winter quarters, and at once became the object of his pastoral solicitude. He began by addressing a sermon to them on the Sunday afternoon, which went by the name of the "soldiers' sermon," but had at first great difficulty in prevailing on them to listen to him; for though they were under orders to attend church in the morning, and were conducted to it by their officers, they used even then to turn off at the door, and as may naturally be supposed, shewed no disposition to be present in a place of worship on the after part of the day. Mr. Walker, however, was not disheartened; he set his pious members of the society to work, and by their diligent and affectionate intercourse with the soldiers, a few of them were at length prevailed on to come. Thus "helped by the dear people of his society,"

whom he called his *press-gang*, Mr. Walker soon enjoyed the happiness of seeing the number of attendants greatly augmented; and such was the effect of his faithful addresses, that within the short period of three weeks, no less than "a full hundred" of them went to his house, to speak to him in private on the state of their souls. In a letter to a friend, he describes "the effects as very striking," and says, "one or two of the whole only excepted, you would have seen their countenances changing, tears often bursting from their eyes, and confessions of their exceeding sinfulness and danger breaking from their mouths. I have scarcely heard such a thing as self-excusing from one of them; while their desire to be instructed, and uncommon thankfulness for the least pains used upon them by any of us, have been very remarkable." These fruits were not all destined to ripen; many of them withered and fell off, but even these seemed awed into a greater degree of outward good conduct than before, and were often present at public worship. Those who gave evidence of a real change of heart, were formed into a class which was called "the soldiers' society." They had also the privilege of uniting with the members of the association at Truro, and by these means Mr. Walker considered they were "much established." They were mostly found to be ignorant of the commonest truths of Christianity, which their minister attributed to the "superficial use or entire neglect of catechising amongst the English clergy of his day;" and he observed that seven of them better informed, were six of them Scotch, and an English *dissenter*.

Mr. Walker's exertions in the regiment at first met

with great opposition; the captain publicly forbade his men to go to him for private instruction, though no less, at last, than two hundred and fifty of them sought the "over-tired" but persevering servant of Christ for that purpose. Those also whom religion had separated from the sinful habits and company of their unawakened comrades, were much derided, but grace enabled them to stand. A great alteration, however, took place; punishments soon diminished and order prevailed in the regiment, to a degree never before witnessed, and the commander at length discovered the excellent cause of this salutary change. Genuine zeal had now its full triumph and its rich reward—the officers waited on Mr. Walker in a body, to acknowledge the good effects of his wise and sedulous exertions, and to thank him for the reformation he had produced in their ranks.

These interesting men left Truro on the 19th of January, after nine weeks' stay. The parting scene was indescribably affecting. They assembled the last evening in the society's room, to hear their beloved minister's farewell prayer and exhortation. "Had you," said Mr. Walker to a friend, "but seen their countenances, what thankfulness, love, sorrow, and joy, sat upon them;—they hoped they might bring forth some fruit; they hoped to meet us again at the right hand of Jesus in his illustrious day. Amen." It was an hour of mingled distress and comfort: the hearts of some were so full, that they clasped the hand of the beloved instrument of their conversion, and turned away without a word. They began their morning's march praising God for bringing them under

the sound of his gospel; and as they slowly passed along, turned round to catch occasional glimpses of the town as they gradually lost sight of it, exclaiming, "God bless Truro." They saw their spiritual leader no more on earth, but were consoled by the hope of a triumphant meeting in the armies of heaven.

Two letters were preserved by Mr. Walker, as precious memorials of this labour of love. The first was written by a man who, when he came to Truro, "knew little more of Christ," to use his minister's expression, "than if he had lived in China." It shall be given in all its genuine simplicity, without any correction to destroy its interest.

*Dated at Dock, January 17th, 1757.*

DR. FATHER IN THE LORD,

Since I left you, I have had great trials, and is likely to have daily. But still I trust to Christ for to enable me to withstand them all; for on our march here, each day religion was thrown in my teeth by calling me methodist, and saying that I had made confession of all my sins to Mr. Walker. I made answer, and said they might say what they pleased, but the day would come when they must confess to a greater than he, that is the Lord Jesus, in whom I trust for help to withstand all the temptations of the devil, the flesh, and this wicked world, which I have to war against. But Christ has promised to assist them that trust in him for aid, which is my great comfort, for I always pray to him, and hold him in view as my Saviour and Redeemer. And I hope the God of all glory will be always with me, to enable me

to fight on my good fight to salvation, and when the great and terrible day of the Lord shall come, I may be found acceptable in his sight, and be received into that heavenly kingdom which is purchased for me by the blood of Christ, and all poor condemned sinners; me the worst of all, deserving nothing but damnation and the heavy wrath of God for offending him, and breaking his commands, and making his sabbath a day of sport and drunkenness. Yet for all my great offences, transgression, and sin, I do sincerely believe that Christ's righteousness is able to save me and nothing else, by still applying to him, and praying to him as a poor miserable condemned sinner, hoping he will wash away my sins through his blood, and by giving me a new heart, I may be made a child of God through Christ Jesus. Amen.

I find my heart inclined greatly to the ways of the Lord, and ready to obey his commands; but when I left you I was under some dread of falling, but I find the contrary, thanks be to God. And although my parting was sorrowful, yet I hope we shall meet again with joy in the kingdom of heaven, never more to be parted, but to sit together singing praise to God and the Lamb, for ever and for ever, Amen. And may the God of all glory bless you, and all my dear brethren, now and for ever, for, under God, you was the means of bring me to salvation. I desire your prayers always, as mine is for you night and morning, weak as they are. Pray remember me to all my dear brethren. Let Mr. Burnet know I had the book he sent me, and I return him thanks. Pray remember me to Mr. Rusel and Mrs. Rusel, and I pray God reward them, and

my prayers is never wanting for them. I write to Mrs. Roberts the same time, and my wife likewise. I hope in my next you shall have the news that we are met in our little society together. All my dear brethren desires to be remembered to you, and all these brethren in the Lord. John Roberts and I is comarads in the Barick. Drect to Henry Robinson, Granadeer in Colonol Anstruther's reg. of foot, in the upper baricks number 11. So I conclude, being all from your affectionate child in the Lord,

HENRY ROBINSON.

Excuse all I have said amiss, being wrote at a barick table with 14 men.

The Rev. Mr. Walker,  
Minister in Truro,  
Cornwall.

The second of these letters was addressed to a member of the Truro Society, and the names of two of the soldiers, seemingly men of tolerable education, are appended to it.

MY DEAR FRIEND IN THE LORD,

When I consider the value you put upon me, one of the unworthiest of God's sinful creatures, I cannot but be ashamed and lie low in the dust; and especially the more, when I consider what a regard you had, and have for the salvation of my precious and never-dying soul, and that when I seemed to have but very little concern for it myself. I cannot but be under the ties of gratitude to you, and especially to worthy Mr. Walker, all my life long, for having such

a concern for such as I am. My sudden removal is no small heart-break to me, and that because I did not employ my time better than I did when I had the means, which now the Lord in his providence hath been pleased to deprive me of. I confess that it was rightly done that the Lord should remove me, and all those who are like to me, unto a remote corner of darkness, because I was not more mindful of that which belonged to my everlasting peace; but now I may say it is in a manner hid from mine eyes. I am much obliged to you for your encouraging [me] to bestir myself, in a life of universal usefulness among my brethren soldiers, and you may be assured whatever lies in my power to do, I shall most willingly and heartily do it under God; but alas it is the fewest who seem to have any concern for their souls' salvation amongst us, and my speaking to them must be in vain. I judge no man: many would desire to die the death of the righteous, that would not desire to live their life; and [I] know that has been my case. Serjeant Moore for ever blesses the day that ever he saw Truro, and we both hope in the Almighty God to see it again, and to hear the glad tidings of salvation as formerly. But if it hath pleased God that we should not see it again, we trust in the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that the seed sown there by the faithful servant of our Lord, shall not be as water spilt on the ground; and although it seems just now to lie under clouds and storms, that one day or other the Sun of righteousness will be pleased to shine on it [by] little, and little, till he brings it to the powerful day. For ever blessed be [God] that you

was a means appointed to bring me to Mr. Walker, Mr. Painter bringing me [to you], for which I did not really love you at first, because such a life was entirely against my sinful and wicked nature, and we may both say it was good for us to be here, that the Lord was in it and we did not know it, for we may say that with you we had a Saviour, and a pardon, and eternal life preached in the name of Jesus. And surely if we do not accept of it, merey shall not excuse us, because it did take pity on us, if we did but forsake sin; I mean in sparing us and bringing us to a place where we had so much conviction of our sins and misery; but I hope that we may have it to say that there is a balm in Truro, and a physician there. Therefore it must be all our own faults if we perish, for we indeed own and acknowledge that we had the way of God expounded to us plainly. I would advise my brethren soldiers<sup>1</sup> that are with you not to neglect the means as I did, especially those who seem to have any concern for their souls; for if they do they may come to repent it, as I am just doing now. In case we are to stay here, I shall, if possible, God willing, see you in a short time; [if not,] you may be assured it is not for want of a good will, but for want of opportunity. Therefore, being in haste, I conclude, and so does Serjeant Moore, with our kind compliments to worthy Mr. Walker, our father in the Lord, not forgetting you and all the rest of our brethren that shall humble themselves so far as to [inquire] [after] us.

<sup>1</sup> A detachment that came into Truro on the same day the first party left, with whom Mr. Walker and his good people were equally diligent during their short stay.

We wish [well for] all that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and they are in the prayers of us who are

Yours, with esteem and regard,

JOHN MURD.

and

ROBERT MOORE.

These simple expressions of gratitude and Christian affection gave real joy to Mr. Walker, and will be read with pleasure by all those, who know the happiness arising from the consciousness of having been honored of God, by such seals to their labours of love.

The good minister of Truro experienced the pain, that every one in like circumstances is called to suffer, from constant backslidings among those who had commenced a course of religion. In him, however, every emotion, whether joyous or grievous, was productive of some valuable result; the scorching fire of trial and the refreshing dew of the divine blessing, seemed equally to fertilize his well cultivated mind. The fruit of his sorrow, under the frequent declensions he was called to witness, was a most valuable help to the discovery of symptoms of drawing back in the various states of spiritual progress. He divided the Christian life into three distinct stages, *Infancy*, *Youth*, and *Manhood*, and depicted the forerunners of decline in each, that the awful danger might be detected and avoided.

SYMPTOMS OF BACKSLIDING AND THEIR REMEDIES, IN  
THE THREE DIFFERENT STAGES OF THE CHRISTIAN  
LIFE, AS POINTED OUT BY MR. WALKER.

“First. In its state of *Infancy*, when the eyes are first opened to a serious view of the importance of religion, and to an unwonted solicitude about salvation; when the terms of wrath are discovered, and the soul is humbled with such a sense of its vileness, as to come (in the Scripture expression) in dust and ashes before God, crying to him for pardon, and resolving upon an entire change of life. Such a scene as this all persons must experience, though not all in the same degree, except those few happy people who, through the care of pious parents, may be said to have been born again from their cradles, and to have been brought to a hatred of sin, and flying from it in their tender years, and who withal have never fallen into any indifferent or wicked course afterwards. Your safety is in a growing conviction of your sin and vileness in such a state of infancy. I would desire you particularly to consider therefore, whether you find your sorrows and uneasiness lessening, before your sins are subdued and heart changed? Whilst temptations plead strongly with you, your grief and dread are your only security. Whilst you are truly humbled and afflicted, you may be tempted, as no doubt you will; you may fall too in some measure, though not as formerly; but whilst the sense of sin oppresses you, you will be as safe as people in so dangerous a situa-

tion can be. But if your fear and trembling begin to wear off, when yet you are not a match for your trials, you are not far from falling back. Your sorrow being removed, your care will proportionably lessen, and your calls for grace and pardon will be still weaker, till you give up the whole pretence you had to a religious life; your views of eternity will fade, your resolutions languish, and you will quickly run with your old and a worse insensibility, to the company of the former partners of your sins. Now if the sense of guilt must be kept alive till the custom of sin be worn out, it will be no difficult matter to preserve such an afflicting persuasion of your present state, of the eternal fire before you, and of the glorious heaven you have now become a candidate for. Think of the dying hour, and the sick bed, and that you know not how near the one and the other may be to you; think that the present call of God's grace may be to prepare you for them; think of God as your Creator and Lord, your Redeemer and Judge; think of him as having no pleasure in you. Should you fall away, think of your past life with all attention, and call up the blackest circumstances of it, the days and years you have spent denying God, and ruining your perishing soul; let your thoughts be much upon this, and never imagine you have discovered enough of your iniquities, for indeed you have not discovered the smallest part of them. And to all these your constant thoughts, add as earnest and as frequent prayers to God as you can, and avoid all other but sober and religious conversation. Do this, and you shall not need fear but the sorrows of your heart shall be

enlarged, till God shall deliver you out of your sins and your troubles together.

*Secondly.* Religion in an advanced state is as a time of youth, wherein men are, in a good degree, set at liberty from the power of their sins, and are free and active to bestir themselves, in gaining a more complete victory from day to day over their hidden iniquities; a state in which we may adventure with some degree of boldness to resist unavoidable temptations, whereas before we must fly from them for safety; a state in which sin having been avoided for a good season, it is notoriously not only unpraetised but really hated and abhorred, and we begin to look upon it with an indifference we were before unacquainted with; [a state] wherein we can hear or see the follies and vanities, which formerly engrossed all our souls, with dislike rather than with indifference, and very coldly pass by the doors where our old sins dwelt, without having any secret temptation or desire to enter into them; a state, in a word, wherein we begin to taste the reasonable, peaceful comforts of our freedom, and find our pursuits and prospects directing all our conversation towards spiritual and heavenly things, being renewed in the temper of our souls. Now in this more advanced state, I suppose we may find the distressing terrors of guilt removed, and that our hopes have prevailed over our fears; and I suppose likewise that in a while, the violent spring which the soul took in the new satisfactions and gratifications it is now become [more] acquainted with, may by degrees grow weaker, and in the mean time the sensible comforts of godliness may improve themselves into more

gentle but more reasonable ones. And here, when we are neither so greatly terrified on the one hand, nor so highly transported on the other, but our passions seem to be settled and cooled, so that we may with more attention make use of the victory God hath given us, the danger is, lest finding ourselves neither driven by terror nor hurried by joy, we grow indeed indifferent and tired of a religion which is not enough sensible. Would you know the first symptom, which, if suffered to possess you, benumbs all your holiness, and causes you to draw back with hasty steps to a heedless, if not an abandoned state, your private duties will give you notice of the growing indifference. If you find that you are not only cold, but careless about them, that you can leave them for a time without much contention about them; if when you set about them you discover yourselves secretly wishing they were ended, and that you do not put forth all your strength when you meet God in those chosen seasons—then you may be assured that you are drawing back. The hours of devotion being thus abated, your godliness having nothing to feed upon, your sense of God and of your duty will decline. Sin will no longer appear so very odious; you will see yourselves for a while like dead men, inactive and void of life; serious meditation will be a stranger; you will no longer meet God in your walks, nor be inclined to converse about him with your chosen friends. Perhaps you may be soon tempted to think you have been labouring for nothing, or that holiness needs not so much care and thought as you have laid out upon it. When you are come to this, you are not far from

destruction. Be convinced that you must soon fall into a carnal, or what is more dangerous, a formal state; a kind of middle way between heaven and earth, just doing no ill, nor any good, a fearful sleep of conscience and of holiness with it. The first symptom by which you may infallibly discover this too frequent state of indifferenee is, I say, heedlessness or the neglect of your secret devotion. Then it will behove you to take the alarm, to set before you how the soul of God will have no pleasure in you, if you are neither hot nor cold; and how intolerable must this thought be to you, to bethink you that to serve God as you are now likely to do, is to hide your talent in the earth, and to expect nothing for so poor a service, but the slothful and unprofitable servant's wages; to bethink you that the service even of angels is unworthy of God, and how much more the imperfect service of man, when his whole heart and soul are buried in it. [In this state] you must mortify your body, and remove the weight it casts upon the soul, by abstinence and fasting in a religious and solemn manner; you must be more particularly attentive to the word of God, and above all things force upon yourselves, however unwilling, the exercises of public and private devotion. If you can give yourselves leave to neglect these, you are entirely lost; you are drawn back, and God's soul will have no pleasure in you. This now is the great symptom of a declining state in the second stage of godliness; and indeed in any stage of it, it is highly to be feared, and the more so in the manhood of religion, or the last stage of holiness, if such declensions may be thought consistent therewith—but

*Thirdly.* This last degree of religion hath symptoms of drawing back, which are more peculiar to itself, as well as the other two former ones. Now this last stage is a state, wherein having obtained confirmed freedom from the dominion of sin, we have all imaginable leisure and strength to contend against the remainder of sin dwelling in us, and to improve our graces with a fervent zeal both towards God and towards man. You will observe that when we are arrived hereto, it is very plain that we cannot form any judgment of drawing back, by attending to our not falling into gross and wilful sins, for these we are freed from. Should any one conceive that he was improving in the love of God and of man, in humility, patience, and heavenly-mindedness, because he was neither a drunkard, nor a cheat, nor a fornicator, he must needs deceive himself by so strange a conclusion. Nor again can we determine our drawing back or not, by any outward practices or exercises of religion; these we have discharged, it may be, with an equal diligence for many years, and it is not in any neglect of these, that the first symptoms of drawing back will appear in the advanced Christian. But the proper employment of one arrived at this manhood in holiness, is to improve in his graces, and to root out the remainder of sin dwelling in his heart. Wherefore, if a man be the advanced Christian he takes himself to be, he will perfectly know the state of his soul—will know what graces are imperfect, and what sins are still dwelling in him. These always will be found to act directly in opposition one to the other, so that the degree of imperfec-

tion in any grace, is discoverable by the remains of the opposite sin prevailing in us. For instance, just so much as I am defective in humility, exactly so much I have of pride; just so much as I am under the influence of anger, to that very degree I want patience; exactly in proportion as I love this world too much, in the same measure I love the other too little. Suppose now, in this advanced state, you would discover the first symptom of drawing back, set before you with constant and great attention, that remainder of sin which does most prevail against you. I make no question you are perfectly acquainted with what it is: you know if you are most prone to pride, or envy, or self-will, or the too great opinion of the world. For example, let us imagine it to be anger that is most prevailing with you; keep yourselves very attentive to the power it hath over you. Do you find yourselves to bear rebukes, and insults, and mockeries, yet with more calmness, or do you discover that you give place unto wrath? Should this be the case, you are evidently drawing back; if you give way ever so little, your fretful temper may grow into a violent one, your violence may produce hasty expressions, these hard censurings, and an innumerable train of injuries you dare not think of, nor can think of without horror. By the like just judgment, you might discover the first symptoms of a declining state, were the prevailing evil temper of your heart, lust, or worldly-mindedness, self-will, or envy. Do you see that you give way therein never so little, you may be assured that you only want temptation, to cause Satan entirely to prevail against you in every instance. Be ready

therefore evermore to take St. Paul's advice along with you, and forgetting those things which are behind, press forward to those which are before, to the victories you have not yet gained, in the pursuit of the high prize of your calling in Christ Jesus."

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Notwithstanding all the vigilance and care of Mr. Walker, he had perpetually the mortification of witnessing declensions among his hearers. The truly Christian feelings, with which he regarded this awful proof of the corruption and infirmity of man's nature, are apparent in a short letter to one who mourned over the backslidings of those who had professed themselves disciples of Christ, but now walked no more with him.

DEAR WILLIAM,

You must learn to stand by a little, and leave the head of the church to manage his own matters. It is a mournful sight indeed when any fall back, and go no more after Jesus. Yet this ought not to make us fret and repine, as if all were over. A sad view I have before me every Lord's day: a multitude blind, and I fear past feeling: I speak, but they hear not; nevertheless I cannot but acquiesce in the justice of the divine procedure, yea and be sensible that my unfaithfulness deserves much more, and wonder at the salvation God is working. What I mean is, you ought not to murmur against the ministrations of the Spirit.

\* \* \* \* \*

With love to all,

Yours, S. W.

To Mr. Wm. Rawlings, at St. Columbc.

The holy resignation and subdued temper of Mr. Walker proved no hindrance to his activity; he knew how to combine calm submission with the most fervent zeal. When the fruit of his ministry seemed to wither, he was patient; but how anxiously he laboured for its ripening, appears in the following advice to a young Christian just entering the University.

DEAR SIR,

I might be thinking of pleading some excuse that so many of your letters lie by me unanswered, did I not know how too ready you are of yourself to think favourably of me, and how well persuaded you are, that I am no way desirous to neglect you. Whenever I can gain half an hour from a multitude of business, which you as well as myself think to be of the greatest importance, I shall think it well and agreeably employed in your correspondence; but I will not promise that this shall be so often as you may wish, though it shall be as often as you seem to me to need it. And now that I am writing, you must take things as they occur, and not expect that full answer which I must, on many accounts, defer to the time when I shall have the pleasure of seeing you. You have given me so many reasons to be assured of your sincere attachment to the cause of God, that I will freely tell you, I have not the least doubt upon me concerning it in your present circumstances. However, as I observe from your whole manner of address, that you are constitutionally warm and lively, we must have care, that that which is quickly heated do not suddenly cool; that holiness may have leisure to fix itself into

temper and habit before we adventure upon hazardous trials, and I must honestly assure you that the university will afford you abundance of them. Holiness in its first outset is usually full of heat and joy too; both the newness of spiritual objects, when now discerned in a new and spiritual manner, and no doubt the spirit of grace giving encouragement to the new born Christian, conspire hereto. But we may reasonably, as well as being taught by experience, expect that by and by these lively views will subside, the heats of transported religion will flag, leaving the soul to a more substantial, rational, and manlike exercise, it may be without much of this stir in the affections. When this season comes, unless there be an *habituated* choice of the will for God fully obtained, all is in danger. And till any one hath found by more than a trial or two, that he is a match for the present difficulties which the world administers to him, it seems not prudent he should adventure upon new and greater ones. You must endeavour to gain strength (as I see you do) by exercising yourself in fighting against the customs of the world, which offer in present circumstances. This, at once, is a due improvement of divine grace, and a building ourselves up for severer conflict. Fear of men is the great enemy of him who appears in a public character, with a commission under Christ. The discharge of plain duties, which are ill thought of, will prove the likeliest means of rooting out this fear, and the Spirit, if applied to, will co-operate. Suppose then you should at a proper time ride again to \* \* \* \*. Do you find any

reluctance when you read this intimation? If so, it points out to you the fear I speak of and the remedy. Observe I speak of such a thing as a duty; and verily I think it such, when circumstances are weighed, and reasonable allowances granted, and opportunities for convenience and prudence consulted. I think it, under these qualifications, a duty to seek for a more edifying hearing of the word; and this I mention lest you might think it advisable to run yourself into trials uncalled for by Providence or duty. This is rash, and being of our own seeking, will end in our disgrace. Notwithstanding I am much pleased with the little attempts you have made for the young ladies, with your answer to your master, and your strictness in sabbath duty. These are plain Christian exercises: we may not decline such things without lukewarmness at least, and they will be found to add strength to our graces. You have been making a proper use of my papers, suitable to my design in transmitting them to you, which is solely your own benefit or improvement. Pray if you write to any one but me, or some other in whom you have like confidence, be sparing of your Latin; it is capable of a bad interpretation. Keep yourself out of debates; they hurt the mind; and labour not to be disturbed about names given to you or others by unthinking men. Your particular sentiments about the affair you mention in your last are altogether right, and the condemnation you pass on yourself relative to one circumstance of it certainly just. You will not now be hasty in coming to any engagements of that sort which seem at

present to clash with your views. Believe me very sincerely,

Your affectionate and faithful,

S. WALKER.

Though this careful minister had often to mourn over the awful defections of many who gave promise of steadfast faith, at times he had the joy of seeing prodigals return—"there were," says he in one of his letters, "many wet eyes last Sunday among the backsliders; this is encouragement."

While Mr. Walker thus sedulously laboured in his more immediate sphere of duty, he was prevailed on to endeavour to enlarge his field of usefulness, by publishing his admirable course of sermons called *The Christian*. Prefaces have been written to this excellent work by two clergymen eminently entitled to the name it bears, Mr. Adam, of Wintringham,<sup>1</sup> and Mr. Simeon, of Cambridge. The latter of these devoted men had not begun his laborious course when Mr. Walker entered into rest, but the former, as has been before noticed, was his beloved adviser and friend. The service done him by this judicious fellow labourer in those days of darkness, is alluded to in the following letter to one dear to him in the bonds of piety.

Dec. 16th, 1755.

DEAR WILLIAM,

Since you will have it so, I send you my letter to Mr. Browne, which if you please (I mean as

<sup>1</sup> Who can read his *Private Thoughts* without feeling assured of this?

far as the scheme<sup>2</sup> goes) I shall be glad [if] you will transcribe, but send to no one till the whole be finished. You may do well to make him some apology on my behalf for writing so freely and abruptly in a first letter.

I have a letter from Mr. Johnson, but shall not be able I believe to answer it till after Christmas, because of many engagements. I send you back his letters to all [of] you, as his to me gives me light enough. He is exceedingly honest. I love him much, and will gladly try to serve him.

Dear Mr. Adam hath sent me a most judicious, smart, and explicatory preface to my sermons, which will greatly assist them. Would God such a man were among these young fellows! But he is a *rara avis*.

We have continually letters from T. and G. which give us a good deal of content. They are in a barren land, and will need your prayers. Poor young men, it is well for them they are together, and especially for your favourite that George is with him. Nothing [can be] more providential; he is so suited [to him,] I know no other so fit for him. They are lovely youths. I have the greatest hopes for them. If they stand their ground, they will be both diligent and useful. They have both their temptations, and both their excellencies. Tom will be in danger of over rashness, and George of over caution. George will make the greater figure, and Tom will be the most liked. Should they be associates in a cure,

<sup>2</sup> The scheme, I presume, of private instruction which has already been given in these pages.

nothing would seem more desirable. Well, you never forget them. Their well doing is a matter of great importance to the world, for I am either so fond or so foolish as to think they have not many equals.

Remember me in the most affectionate manner to the dear little Doctor, and the young ladies with yourself; and all with you that belong to Christ are near the heart of

Yours,

S. W.

The youths mentioned in this letter, by the familiar appellations of *Tom* and *George*, were destined afterwards, as their friend with his usual perspicacity foretold, to be able and zealous ministers of Christ. The first was afterwards Dr. Haweis, the well known chaplain of Lady Huntingdon, and the second, Mr. George Burnet, became an eminent clergyman, and assisted the excellent Mr. Venn in his labours at Huddersfield, who gives the following decided testimony to his valuable services in a letter to Lord Dartmouth. "I am greatly relieved and comforted by the presence and help of my dear fellow labourer in the kingdom and patience of Christ, Mr. Burnet; a man made to reprove the lightness of my mind, quick to discern, and bold to admonish, of unseemly carriage, yet with such unaffected humility and visible tenderness, as to make his reproofs like a polished shaft. I have great reason to adore that Providence which has brought us together, and if I do not pervert the grace of God, his joining me will further much the prosperity of my soul." "The dear little Doctor" was a young gen-

tleman of piety, on whom his pastor had bestowed this title, in that innocently playful spirit which gives the freshness of a summer's breeze to the path of children of the day.

## CHAPTER VIII.

MR. WALKER'S DISCIPLINE OF HIS OWN MIND.

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### *His diligent self-scrutiny.*

WE have hitherto been engaged in considering the character of Mr. Walker, as a consistent minister of the established church, discreetly and successfully labouring in his proper sphere, according to prescribed rules. In order, however, to discover the mainspring of these effective movements, we must follow him into his closet, in the retirement of which, he so devoutly communed with his God, that he came forth, like Moses from the mount, to shine before men. All the discipline he recommended to others, was first practised upon himself; and his knowledge of the secret idols of the human heart, was the result of a diligent search, under the guidance of gospel light, into the hidden recesses of his own bosom. In order to the full developement of his character in this instructive point of view, it will be advisable to follow the train of reflection constantly before him, in the still chamber of self-examination, prayer, and penitence.

One of his first objects seemed to be, a constant desire to cherish a recollection of his days of unfruitfulness, with a view to humiliation before God, and to

stimulate himself to more zealous exertion. It was a point which, he told Mr. Adam, he "could never think of without great self-abhorrence." He felt ashamed that "conceit and interest" had guided him to Truro; that "by his worldly mindedness and ignorance of vital religion, the service of Christ was prostituted, the souls committed to him starved, and he feared many of them perished; and that he had sought his own glory in the very pulpit where he was placed to proclaim the Redeemer!" "I know not," he says, "how to endure the reflection: mourning over this scene, I shall go to the grave. It is not a lost case indeed; we have an advocate with the Father; but I can never undo the wrong I have done to God and man." This was not a vain expression of morbid feelings, tending to damp the joy of a soul reconciled to God through Christ; he fostered the impression for a definite purpose, and like a true believer, remembered that no portion of experience is valuable which has not a determinate use. "I reap," he observed, "great benefit from it." The remembrance of my unfaithfulness humbles me, though not as it ought, and as I desire, stirs me up to diligence and to labour more abundantly; and what I chiefly rejoice in, serves in some measure to repress that conceit, wherein my desperately wicked heart would needs swell one thing upon another." Such recurrences to our condition, before conversion, cannot fail to be extremely profitable, while a whining effort to drown the joyous feelings of a hope full of immortality in the slough of a past life, is both injurious and intrinsically wrong. Repentance will form the daily exercise

of a true Christian; but if he is under guidance from on high, he will make a practical use of it. Every tear which falls not into the stream that sets in motion the machinery of love, is shed in vain.

Mr. Walker was extremely attentive to the manner in which his mind was influenced by the opinions and conduct of men. "I feel," he said in his diary, "a lurking desire of man's esteem, mixing with the natural timidity of my constitution, which makes me inwardly draw back from any approaching trial, in which I am to look in the face of persons of an angry and violent temper." He was however enabled in a great degree to conquer that feeling, by "the mighty influence of the Spirit of God," and had grace given him to persist "in the discharge of his duty in opposition to this secret enemy." He was anxious also not to be wanting in honest indignation against sin, without ruffling his temper or experiencing injurious perturbation of mind. To this end, he cultivated the grace of compassion for the offender, recollecting what was said of our blessed Lord—*he looked about upon them with indignation, being grieved at the hardness of their hearts*; yet upon a review of the occasions, when he had been thus excited, he could, in the year 1756, only remember two instances, in which he had "been angry without plainly seeing sin." It is impossible to conceive a more lovely desire than this to follow the steps of our Redeemer, or a more exemplary instance of self-scrutiny.

A sense of the presence of sin in all that he did, was a leading characteristic in Mr. Walker's notices of his own experience, and he caused it to act as a

beneficial pressure upon the injurious buoyancy of his feelings. "I have most zeal," he remarked, "and least wild fire, when I am most humbled in the sense of my sins;" and to this observation he added a fervent prayer for the grace of humility. "Lord," he exclaims in one place, 'for thy mercies' sake, make me vile in my own eyes.'" He marked all the uncharitable feelings, all the forward, peevish, and impatient workings of his mind; he battled with the pride of his heart, seeking the enemy diligently, that he might overcome him; he noticed and guarded against his wanderings in family prayer, and his indevotion in public worship—in short there was not an action of his life which he did not examine for the purpose of improvement, caring not how deep and painful the probe, if it did but reach the bottom of the wound, and extract the poison of the sting of sin.

He not only cultivated a consciousness of the presence, but a sense of the sinfulness of sin. In one of his journals he writes, "I was striving much in prayer, last night and this morning, for a sense of the sinfulness of sin. My heart seems to have been quickened by it through the day, to keep a little close with God." No one knew better the difficulty and the necessity of walking with God, and of truly fervent and heartfelt prayer. He expressed himself to a correspondent on these subjects, in the most powerful and striking manner. His words are—"O what an important thing it is to walk with God! What a comprehensive phrase—what a lovely part both of our duty and privilege! But alas! how many diffi-

culties and obstructions do the enemies of our souls lay in the way. Unbelief draws a veil before our eyes—sin builds a wall across the road—the world spreads a thousand snares to entangle our feet—the devil attacks us with his fiery darts, and self, wretched self, joins issue with them all, and either gives or takes occasion against us continually. When I reflect how many they are that rise up against me, how weak my best defences are, and what a treacherous party I have, as it were, within the walls, how many things there are that amaze me, I am surprised to think that I am upheld, that a spark of divine grace is still preserved in me unquenched, amidst an ocean of sins, snares, temptations; and yet I am alive, and trust to live for ever, for he who is the truth hath said, *because I live ye shall live also*. O blessed be God for Jesus Christ. When I look to myself, what do I see but sin and misery—but in him I have righteousness and strength; in him I have life and peace. O my friend, let us daily learn to go out of ourselves, and look unto him, lean upon him, live upon him. *All fullness* is there; emptiness, yea worse than emptiness is here. In short, with respect to myself, I find both comfort and crosses, feasting and fighting, in the experience of every day. A body of sin and death constrains me to cry, *O wretched man*; the knowledge of a better righteousness enables me to sing, *I thank God through Jesus Christ my Lord*. O what a mine of comfort is comprised in that last verse of Jeremiah, *I have loved thee with an everlasting love*.

“I was exceedingly pleased with my last visit to my London friends, and hope it was attended with an

exchange of blessings, and that we are mutually helpful to each other. These serious interviews, between those who are cemented by the double ties of grace and friendship, are among the happiest seasons of this frail life, but yet they are short and changing. We meet only to part; blessed be God for the hope of meeting hereafter in a better place, upon better terms, and to part no more.

“I am, my friend, still a prisoner, it is true: thanks to the tender mercies of God, my prison is both a Patmos and a palace. His gracious presence is with me night and day. O! he is good, is good indeed, and it is good for me to be afflicted. It is equally good and pleasant for me to be in Gethsemane’s garden, or mount Tabor, or tossed up and down by the storms of this world, so I can but see his countenance and hear his voice saying, *it is I, be not afraid*. Happy for us that a throne of grace is always accessible to poor sinners; and secret prayer is the one great thing in experimental religion, the mainspring (if I may so say) which if not kept in order, the whole movement of vital, heart religion must grow faint and languid. On the contrary, shut me in a dungeon, or fix me on a mountain, let me see neither men nor books, (if such a situation was my lot, not my choice) provided my heart were enlarged to call upon the Lord, I should be no loser. On the other hand, if I spent every day in reading the best books, in hearing the best preachers, in conversing with the best men, if secret prayer was not carefully kept up, and every other means watered and improved by this, my soul would starve in the midst of plenty. Union and com-

munion with Jesus is the greatest mercy on this side eternity, and that perfected is the heaven of heavens. May you and I have an abundant entrance therein through our precious Christ. Amen."

This letter most powerfully depicts the devout longings of a believer after God, and the grief with which he views the barriers sin has cast in his way to a throne of grace. Mr. Walker's harp however was not always on the willows; its chords often swelled with the harmonious raptures of a "heart much drawn up to God, and approving his service and presence." He most carefully analyzed all his emotions in prayer; and once when conscious of more fervency during a week of trial, than he was after it had passed away, he asked himself this searching question, "am I driven to Christ by necessity, or drawn by love?" As to his exercises, he feared they "were rather meditations that warmed his heart, than devout supplications." Still he could speak of the "steady believing frame," and this more particularly when he "regarded only his wants and the promises of God." At another time he would say, "I get a glimpse of God in prayer, and lose sight of him again as soon as prayer is ended;" he even confessed, and how much every Christian must feel the force of the confession, "I scarcely ever keep him in view through my devotions." He found himself, he says, "greatly defective in actual communion (*out* of prayer at least) and whether he sought God's face in prayer for *his glory* was not quite clear"—"this," he adds, "is plain, I do not seek his face so importunately as I ought." All this mingled cloud and sunshine, is the true experience of a Christian who is con-

scious that the brightness of heaven's pure light is never rendered dim to the eye of faith, but by the mists that rise out of the sinfulness of his own nature. To the true believer, however, there will often appear a bow in the darkest cloud, to indicate the presence of the sun of righteousness; and when he cannot enjoy sensible assurances, he will derive comfort from the tendency of his desires and actions. This was eminently the case with Mr. Walker, who remarks, "while I seem to have no sensible delight in God, I am not however without some evidences; particularly I would improve opportunities of serving Christ, in the conversion of sinners." On another occasion also after the sacrament, he observes, "I am not returned rejoicing. My frame has been somewhat disordered, yet I think I have not been careless. Sure, I deserve no favours; so I will endeavour to be thankful for, and to improve what I have received, a composed purpose of heart to serve the Lord, in opposition to the desire of my heart of men's esteem." After all, this was the most satisfactory indication of his state before God, inasmuch as habitual devotedness can only arise from a genuine spirit of love.

The last remark of Mr. Walker on his feelings after leaving the table of the Lord, naturally leads to the consideration of a striking portion of his private experience—constant inquiry into the use he had made of the ordinances. The institution of the Lord's supper would be much more valued than it is, if it were celebrated, by every Christian, in the spirit with which this exemplary minister prepared for it, and inquired into its effect on his religious comfort and

advancement. All that he recommended to others, in the address quoted in a former chapter, he strictly attended to himself, and the consequence was, that the eucharist became to him an overflowing channel of the richest covenant blessings. On one occasion his words are, "Sunday next is sacrament Sunday. My thoughts have been somewhat drawn this way by the exercises of the week. I am much called on to lament my little profiting by the last supper, and little desire after this. What a tendency has my heart to pass over duties in a customary manner." This is indeed a tendency common to us all, but Mr. Walker's vigilance prevented its gaining the advantage of him. On the Sunday, just before going to the sacrament, he says, "last night my heart did not cordially acquiesce with God's sentence against sin; and though the matter be pretty well cleared up to my mind, yet I ought to seek carefully more light upon it. I would go to the table like a pardoned rebel, who is *still* half a rebel, with great humility and thankfulness, to remember the great means of salvation represented in this ordinance." Such was his preparation for the solemn privilege of communion; and though not always finding the happiness he sought, he seldom returned without some solid consolation, indicative of steady perseverance in the sure though varied path of life. "Just returned from the sacrament," he wrote<sup>1</sup> on May 29th, 1757, "where I met an unwonted rebuke; the enemy had great advantage of me, taking occasion of the fewness of the people present, espe-

<sup>1</sup> Vid. *Wills's Spiritual Register*, vol. iii, p. 20.

cially of the society, to raise up reasoning mixed with resentment, when it was suggested whether the society people did not dislike coming with others, and were influenced by pride. I could get no deliverance from these thoughts, though they were earnestly prayed and contended against, till the last people were receiving, and was in a manner prevented from the exercise of every grace. *Yet in the midst, I could see the Lord gracious, and thought I could justify him.* I have been confessing my sins, and seeking the cause; but see no special reason, being in every thing sinful." How many ministers are thus embarrassed in the sanctuary, by the provocations of their favourite people; but too few, it is to be feared, are able to subdue their emotions even at the last moment, or are led to charge home the painful effect upon their minds to its real cause, the remains of sin within themselves. The lesson conveyed, however, by this description of Mr. Walker's state of mind, when annoyed by the carelessness or wrong spirit of his people, is not applicable only to ministers; it should teach those who have derived benefit from their labours, to be more attentive to such appearances as promote their tranquil enjoyment of the appointed means of grace. Happily for the pious curate of Truro, he was not always so tried; he had his seasons of real delight in the communion. He thus declares his peaceful frame of mind—"by the endurance and goodness of God, I am alive this day, and have been enabled, without disturbance, to renew my covenant of grace. Praise be to God, my mind was clear, my conscience quiet, and with due deliberation, and with-

out distraction, I was before the Lord. I must bless him also that the ordinance was with comfort. Faith seemed in exercise more than usual, to see, receive, and in some measure to appropriate Christ to me in communicating. Though always I have cause to complain of the hardness of my heart, yet now I could in some sort mourn and love. I found heartiness in my purposes of serving the glory and interest of God in Christ, and was forward to make full surrender of myself, depending upon divine grace. It has been a day with me signally marked with divine favour. Notwithstanding the insensibility and unbelief of my heart, I am returned rejoicing." While the dark seasons of his pilgrimage were enlivened by an occasional beam of hope, the dazzling splendour of his brighter moments was wisely sobered by the shading of a humble fear. "What now," says he, after this keen enjoyment just alluded to, "shall I render unto the Lord? *It may be some greater trial than ordinary is at hand.* Let me be mindful therefore of the vows I have this day made." Such is the true use of the gospel ordinances, instruments simple in themselves, but alike suited to the spirituality of our religion, and the material infirmities of man.

The reflections of Mr. Walker, when attacked by sudden illness, are remarkable proofs of the piety and wisdom of his truly renewed heart. When visited by a violent disorder during the night, he learnt from it the following valuable lessons—the importance of every hour he lived; that the dying bed is not for the work of religion, which must be the business of our healthy days; the necessity of not permitting the

things of this life to veil eternal interests from view. To borrow the idea of his equally experienced friend, Mr. Adam, God never put him into a great fire, for a little one was always sufficient.

The uncertainty of human existence was constantly before him, and the awful thought that "in the midst of life we are in death," suggested these beautiful observations, in a letter to an afflicted young man, who was high in his esteem. "It shall be well if any dispensations of Providence confound that atheistical tenet of our nature, which perpetually suggests to us the confidence of living. I remember Bishop Hopkins spends a good half of a funeral sermon, in proving by various arguments that we shall all die; and in the view of the confidence of life that is in us, it was judiciously done, though I confess it made me wonder at first reading, and no doubt many of his audience thought he was upon a needless employment. We have been told of death and seen it; it has been seldom hid from us a month together; it has come into our houses, and taken away a father, wife, child; but has all been enough to shake our stated confidence of life? For a day, perhaps; but the habit has remained. Yet you cannot find any thing by which the world is so much strengthened as this. While this remains, every present thing has great importance; let this be taken away, and what force have riches, pleasures, reputation, reproach, afflictions? We read in Isaiah of those who had "made a league with death." We all do so naturally; it is a covenant of peace, that death shall not come nigh us, and so we enjoy ourselves at ease. This covenant, God,

in merey, is always aiming to break, by pressing the sound of death continually in our ears. But though God does this, we shall be never the better, nor our confidence of life be shaken, unless his grace also go along [with it.] Of this David was made sensible; else he had not called on God to teach him to number his days, that he might apply his heart unto wisdom. O my friend, could I but live in that expectation of death, which both the certainty and uncertainty of its coming demand, and consequently in the immediate view of an eternal judgment, what manner of man should I be! How above and dead to the world; how diligent and active in my Master's work; how undisturbed by a thousand things which now disorder me; how quiet under all afflictions; how content in my station, &c. &c. Surely to learn to die is a lesson hard, yet most needful to be learnt, else God would not so discipline us in it; and who will say he has got this lesson so perfectly as to need no further teaching? If not, is it not a mercy in God to be still instructing us in it? Is it not stubbornness in us, if we do not hear the instruction? Comfort us, you say—think of death and what lies behind. By the grace of God, bring yourselves near the departing hour. It will shew you what you are and should be, and will suggest the plainest way in the world of improving your present heavy trial."

Another delightful characteristic of this good man's disposition was, that though most keenly alive to the frailties of human nature, he felt kindly towards all men. His penetration never disturbed the charity of his heart; he discovered imperfections only

to pray over and forgive them. The glance of his piercing eye caused no man to dread him as an enemy, while it awed into a fear of doing wrong. He prayed for "a charitable temper, to endure with meekness" the outrages of the violent, "the prejudiced mistakings" of the ignorant, and the calumnies of the slanderers. "O my God," was his fervent petition, "give me all needful direction, that I may speak boldly and prudently among them, without pride or resentment"—a desire worthy indeed of one whose conversation was in heaven. He seemed to discern the spirits of all who approached him—the hypocrite and the open foe were equally unconcealed from him. Yet he could kneel before the throne of grace and pray over them all with hope, pity, and endurance, only desiring that the same grace which had infused into him this heavenly forbearance and loving kindness, might also be communicated to their souls. There is no finer evidence of the power of religion, than a sagacious perception of what is in man, qualified by pure benevolence.

Mr. Walker was eminently vigilant over the tone of his conversation. Once he says, when on a visit, "I resolved to be silent in the company I was to meet, if I might not be serviceable, and have found this evening the need and difficulty of being so." He was, however, careful that this reserve should not arise from a proud or morose spirit, or from the too common desire of many good men, to be idolized by and to awe those with whom they associate. This is evident from his adding to the last sentence, "God, grant me the spirit of meekness and charity." When the

conversation took a pious turn, he also marked its real tendency, and found it sometimes "rather about religion than religious;" and he well described those discussions which frequently take place between serious people, as "love destroying debates." His sensitive mind, when once unstrung, was not easily attuned again. He describes himself on addressing his people, as "carried away from his attempts to say much to the purpose, by the insignificance of conversation," and even after talking about non-important things with his sister, he found it to be injurious to his spirituality. It is clearly impossible to prescribe any positive rule for the conversation of ministers, inasmuch as what is only cheerfulness in one, would become frivolity in another; and that deportment which would have an appearance of vanity, display, levity, domineering, or moroseness in some, would, in differently constituted individuals, be received as charming communicativeness, delightful animation, powerful talent, and admirable self-possession. The chief thing is always to aim at doing good, and to examine carefully, in retirement, the motives, character, and effects, upon our own experience, of our mixture with society.

The great labours of Mr. Walker brought on a nervousness of temperament which occasionally destroyed his comfort, but over which he was very watchful, although probably ignorant of its real cause. He guarded against the peevishness and impatience it engendered, with the most exemplary care; and whenever he had given way to a hasty feeling or expression, he mourned over it in secret, and prayed for grace to conquer the propensity. When about to collect his

offerings from house to house, the custom of Truro in those days, he asked himself—"am I prepared for a repulse? I should be careful neither to indulge anger or disdain." When preparing to meet the vestry, he inquires, "when shall I be able to look the world in the face? Surely, while possessed of such animal fears, I am in perpetual danger of disgracing my profession." When those who came to him occupied an unreasonable portion of his time, he was grieved at being impatient—"my heart was rising to impatience when I was kept longer than I expected; it seemed to humble me." His struggles for self-command were not unsuccessful, as is plain from the brief but important remark, "was opposed, and I was not uneasy"—a frame of mind to be attained only by the means he daily used. Few persons can pray as he did—"Lord turn the fear of men's faces into a love of their souls." From the high degree of self-knowledge he acquired, by his unceasing search into the inmost depths of his own bosom, he was enabled to estimate every grace, attainment, and experience, at its proper value, and never, to use his own idea, put them in the place of Christ. He rested not his hopes upon the sense of his own condition, when his frame was satisfactory, nor suffered a conviction of his unworthiness to obscure his faith in the atonement; "to be humble," he observes, "in the sense of my vileness, and to believe the sufficiency of Christ, I find the two hardest things I have to attain." Again he says, "God has removed some trials I have been under, yet I would remember that Christ is our peace;" and he rejoiced that "his salvation depended not on himself but *Christ, the*

*same yesterday, to day, and for ever*, though he was so changeable." Here we have a forcible example of the true end of watchfulness over the state of our minds—acquaintance with self leading to a more accurate view of the all-sufficiency of our Redeemer, and bringing faith into its most powerful exercise. Much fruit is the true evidence of abiding in Christ, the vine, and not our own notion of the languid or free circulation of the vital sap, over which we are too apt to rejoice or mourn, in a manner that impairs our entire dependance on a union with him through his Spirit, both for living principle and abundant produce. All Christian experiences, like the changes of nature, are useful if they lead to fruitfulness and faith; but whatever destroys our activity, leads us to forget the sufficiency of a crucified and risen Saviour, or removes us from a humble posture at the foot of his cross, is detrimental to the soul. Hence the whole character of Mr. Walker's private communion with his own heart, invariably terminating in a removal of his thoughts from himself to Christ, is a most important lesson, to those who desire to possess the only satisfactory proof of the genuine work of divine grace in their souls. We are apt either to over-value, or not to rate at their true worth, the frames of a renewed spirit; and each of these habits is fraught with equal danger, the first leading to legality, the second to carelessness. The happy medium was attained by the wise and spiritual subject of these pages, who tried by every available test the reality of his Christian character, but never permitted either a sense of deficiency on the one hand, or a pleasurable experience

of consistency on the other, to remove his eye of faith from the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of a guilty world. Whether his bark was tossed upon the furious waves of life's agitated ocean, or sailed in peace upon its tranquil bosom when the storm had passed away, his trust was in one pilot, one star, one helm, one anchor, one rock, and one builder and preserver of the work of his own hands. The pages of his diary were not swelled with the nauseous symptoms of religious hypochondriacism, and the fancies of a fitful temperament, but contained accurate and careful notes of the changes in Christian experience, in order to check an enthusiastic, and stimulate a languid state. He however applied no human sedative, used no temporal excitements, but went directly to Christ, and sought his happiness and strength in him alone. The assurance of his humble faith, the emotions of his love, the shadows of doubt, the wrong workings of perverted reason, the pride of his heart in preaching, conversation, or exercise of influence, the character of his private devotions, were all tried by the standard of divine truth, and were cherished or corrected according as they appeared satisfactory or injurious. His grateful soul was not a desert that drunk of the dews of heaven and produced no verdure in return, but every cloud seemed to drop upon it fatness and fertility, so that each season of spiritual enjoyment was followed by some instance of zeal for the glory of his Redeemer. His piety was such, that like the rose, he breathed forth sweetness of his very nature, and that not the sickliness of fulsome profession, but the healthy perfume of a tree the Lord had planted, and was nurturing to his own glory.

Eminent as was the piety of Mr. Walker, he did not escape those evil suggestions of the enemy of man's peace, which are occasionally permitted to ruffle the holy calm of a believer's acquiescence in all the revealed purposes of God. At times, as has been before mentioned, he felt a want of full consent to the sentence denounced against sin, and painful hesitation as to the perfect goodness of the supreme being; but their ultimate effect was only to lead him to right views of divine things; so that, like the forest tree, whose roots are forced deeper into earth by the tempest which agitates its branches, he became more firmly established in faith. When thus tried he said, "I must seek more light," and it soon broke forth in his bosom "like the morning," and his spiritual health, to use the beautiful language of the promises, "sprung forth speedily." Right reflection discovered to him the impossibility of man's reasoning on his Maker's will, as if he were a creature; and that all the fundamental propositions he might lay down with truth of a finite, would probably be wrong when applied to an infinite Being. We cannot fully understand a single attribute of Jehovah, nor form any more comprehensive idea of that vast system he is pleased to carry on in the universe, from the small portion of it before us, than we could of the immensity of our globe, from a single blade of grass gathered from its surface. In this our imperfect state, we have only to receive what is in mercy made known to us, and to remember, that as a reluctant will must obey the commands of God, so a reluctant reason must receive his revelation, not because of the *matter* but of the *author*, whose in-

scrutable designs will be developed to the new faculties of our glorified souls, when the glass through which we now see darkly shall be withdrawn, and heaven's pure light shed upon the mysteries of godliness, become to our admiring eyes, the interpreter of its own designs. With views such as these Mr. Walker wisely observed, "Were I incapable of answering ten thousand objections which do not affect the main doctrines of Scripture, I should not doubt the truth of them." He also found his faith greatly strengthened by reflecting on the applicability of the gospel to his own wants: "I see," he remarked, "such discoveries of God respecting him to *me*, as just that very Being I would desire him to be." Such were the springs of his faith, and of his daily works of love: thus he polished his breast plate, sharpened his sword, and strengthened his buckler, and came forth, in the shining panoply of a Christian, to "endure hardness" as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and to wage a successful warfare against all that was opposed to the honour of his Master, and the best interests of his fellow men.

## CHAPTER IX.

INTERCOURSE WITH DISSENTERS. DEATH AND FUNERAL  
OF MR. VOWLER, CURATE OF ST. AGNES.

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*The star in the west.*

INSTRUCTIVE as the ministry and private experience of Mr. Walker may have appeared in the preceding chapters, it will now be shewn, that in his liberality towards those who differed from him in opinion, he was not less an example of the spirit which ever must be manifested by the true Christian. His united firmness of principle with an excellent benevolence of feeling; for the grace of God had so expanded his affections, that there was a place in them for every brother, who loved the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth. One of the most interesting friendships upon record, was that which subsisted between him and the pious Risdon Darracott, of Wellington, in Somersetshire, whose light shone in the midst of darkness with such a heavenly brightness, that Whitfield, a man not given to compliments, after a visit to the scene of his labours, called him the "Star in the West."

Like his tutor Doddridge, this guileless nonconformist could rejoice to look upon the crystal stream of life flowing in channels not his own; nor did he and his associates desire any other result, than the

fertilizing irrigation of a dry and barren world. The hearts of Doddridge and Darracott were as warm as their gifts and graces were brilliant; and the sound of Zion's trumpet in the church made them exult in a hope, that it would rouse from the sleep of death many slumberers, who had long been beyond the reach of its awakening voice. When writing to his friend at Wellington, Mr. Walker observes, "I have not your warm heart; Doddridge was not my tutor;" and in a letter to a Cornwall correspondent, he remarks, "O! what an excellent spirit was that of Dr. Doddridge! No writings are like living epistles." When the Curate of Truro and the Independent minister of Wellington came together, their only design was to burnish into a brighter lustre the living image of Christ in their hearts; in their letters,<sup>1</sup> they wrote only to encourage each other in the true faith, to tell of souls rescued from Satan's bondage, and brought into the liberty of the gospel, or to lament their own deficiencies and falls, and obduracy among their people. Mr. Walker congratulated Mr. Darracott on the piety of dissenters at Wellington; and the latter expressed his joy at receiving tidings of good among churchmen at Truro. They had only one subject of emulation—who should be the most faithful servant of the Redeemer, and who might count most trophies of victory over the spiritual enemies of God and man; and this not in envy, but with true pleasure in each at the greater success of his brother. After a visit

<sup>1</sup> Vid. An interesting series of letters in *Bennett's Life of Risdon Darracott*. London, 1815.

to Wellington, Mr. Walker wrote to Mr. Darracott, "Well, I hope I got a little spark among you, and that something like zeal is enkindled in the coldest heart in the world;" and yet he never once deviated from that "*regular* course," on which he said he perceived the "divine blessing eminently rested."

In general the friendships existing between the most active conformists and their dissenting brethren, in the days of religious revival in this country, were of a very interesting and truly scriptural character, and did honour to the principles, piety, and sincerity of both. A constant remembrance of our own liability to err, should make us view with leniency what we consider to be the mistakes of others, especially when the various paths we tread meet in the same end. Inferior differences among men may be of little estimate in the infinite mind of the Supreme Being, if a pure desire of truth has conducted to them. The remark of Lord Bacon on this subject, is worthy of being deeply impressed on every reflecting mind—"a man that is of judgment and understanding, shall sometimes hear ignorant men differ, and know well within himself that those which so differ, mean one thing, and yet themselves would never agree. And if it come to pass in that distance of judgment which is between man and man, shall we not think that God above, that knows the heart, doth discern that frail men in some of their contradictions intend the same thing, and accepteth both?" An entire unity of thought is no proof of great illumination, because all colours agree in the dark, when there is no sun to impart to them their proper hues; but in days of much light, the

great thing is to discern between those which are injurious to the eye of faith, and such as are only points of opinion or order, based on equal good intentions. This was certainly the ease with the pious clergy and dissenters at the æra which now occupies our attention, though in some the overflowings of love and zeal let a spirit of unity degenerate into detrimental laxity. Nothing of this kind disfigured the consistent friendship of Walker and Darraecott; firm adherence to the course prescribed by their understandings hardened not the sensibility of their hearts, nor did mutual admiration and Christian affection cause them to yield one iota of rooted principle in thought or action.

From the earliest dawn of the present day of light in our establishment, a similar spirit seems to have actuated its most learned and amiable divines, and was continued down to these times, without a suspicion that there lay a serpent, coiled in the downy folds of profession of love in many non-conformists, waiting only a convenient, not a fitting opportunity to dart its sting into the vitals of our church. Happily however this unchristian demonstration is not universal among our dissenting brethren; there yet remain those with whom may be enjoyed the same friendship and unity, which adorned the days of Secker and Doddridge, of Walker and Darracott. It is not fair to charge the whole body with the errors of a part, even though a large one. Secker, when Bishop of Oxford, wrote thus to Doddridge in the truest spirit

<sup>2</sup> Vid. *Doddridge's Correspondence, &c. by his Son*, vol. iv, p. 272. London, 1830.

of candour and affection<sup>2</sup>:—"The dissenters have done excellently of late years in the service of Christianity, and I hope our common warfare will make us chiefly attentive to our common interest, and unite us in a closer alliance;" and when elevated to the province of Canterbury, he maintained towards him a like admirable feeling. Dr. Sherlock, Bishop of London, adopted the same kind and conciliatory tone to this excellent man. "Whatever points of difference," says he, "there are between us, yet I trust that we are united in a hearty zeal for spreading the knowledge of the gospel, and for reforming the lives and manners of the people according to it. I have lived long enough to know by experience the truth of what we are taught, that 'there is no other name by which we may be saved, but the name of Christ only.'" He prays also that "God would bless their united endeavours to make his ways known."<sup>3</sup> The same holy flow of kindness took place almost every where among the pious, but in some cases it unhappily ran over; yet the darkness of a world, enveloped in a night cloud of indifference and sin, will plead the lasting excuse of those somewhat erring but devoted children of God, who, unlike the divines just mentioned, suffered co-operation to become incorporation, and thus laid the foundation of many dangers, though they unquestionably effected much good.

As the happy spirit of concord increased between zealous clergymen and pious non-conformists, there seemed only to be wanting definite centres of union in

<sup>3</sup> Vid. *Doddridge's Correspondence*, &c.

which they might associate for the common purpose of doing good, merging minor interests and opinions in the all absorbing object of spreading a knowledge of divine truth. Such presented themselves in the progress of time, and have gone on with various fluctuations to this hour; but what sort of spectacle does the conduct of those offer to the world, who profess love on the religious, and hostility on the political arena, who are to-day declaring affectionate co-operation on one platform, and the next proclaiming a wish to annihilate the essence of our system, on another!

The question is then, what should be the conduct of the clergy at this trying period—assuredly to do nothing in haste; to make a wide distinction between those who in a Christian spirit agree to differ with them, and such as do not; to wait and see if opposition will not pass away; to strengthen the union of their own ranks, to redouble their diligence in their own spheres; to outlive, to outshine, and to outbuild the dissenters, that our church may rise in its due majesty and strength, and her lofty spires not be hidden, in the clouds of controversy, but reflect the beams of the sun of righteousness in the clear heaven of light and love. If hostility should increase, it will be necessary to withdraw within our boundaries in peace; but we must labour in patience, argue with calmness, and do good to our opponents, not striking hastily if assaulted, because the second blow makes the contest. We should likewise earnestly pray for a return of the peaceful season, when friendships such as those just recorded, (which are not extinct, though perhaps

necessarily diminished) may again adorn and dignify the Christian world, the only contest of whose different members ought to be, the one fabled of the vine and the olive, which should be most fruitful.

Fortunately for us, the moment chosen by those who would remove the cords and posts of our sanctuary, is that of the greatest illumination of its altar, and the most diligent devotedness of its priesthood, and when their own ranks are being thinned by the numbers who return to the renovated bosom of the church—indications of God's presence with us, which Watts, Doddridge, Darraeott, and their contemporaries would have witnessed, not with jealousy, but delight. They have also selected the period of a readiness to reform those things that have unavoidably degenerated by time, and even to curtail some of our own borders, where they have accidentally encroached on the natural field of others. We are placed in a difficult position, are surrounded by men who are ready to invent, to amplify, and to believe every possible slander, and to pierce with false accusations, names illustrious for truest virtue, relying on a multitude's credulity, that "adamant of lies;"<sup>4</sup> and who, artfully interlacing with professed zeal for public interests, private ambition and personal discontent, profess to be involuntarily carried on to their desire of innovation by the current of time, a stream let them remember, which bears the disaffected to change, the wise and good to perfection. The consequence has been

<sup>4</sup> Lord Bacon says, *Magnes mendacii credulitas* : credulity is the adamant of lies.

that in communities presided over by leaders of this stamp, policy has usurped the seat of spirituality, violence of Christian meekness, evil speaking of dignities, of the charity that hopeth all things, but—*this wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish ; for where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.*<sup>5</sup>

Before this brief digression, Mr. Walker was seen moving, in the peace and loveliness of true charity among those who were strangers to his division of the Christian camp, though guided by the same cloudy pillar as pilgrims to a better region ; we will now follow him again into the circle of his own beloved friends and coadjutors.

The following letter will shew what a privilege it was to have him as a friend, and how he felt and improved his bereavement, when he lost a brother in the ministry. It was addressed to a happy pair, whose union was cemented by the love of God in their hearts.

*Truro, August 6th, 1758.*

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I have little to say and less time. My greatest trouble is with a very bad heart, overrun with selfishness, which contends for indulgence that way, and I am too ready to gratify it. I approve a living simply to God's glory in the world, and in a disregard of ease, interest or esteem, to maintain an interest in Jesus' kingdom. But my conduct is too much on the defen-

<sup>5</sup> James iii, 15, 16.

sive, and wants abundantly that zeal which seeks and uses every opportunity. O Faith! Faith! 't is this works all, by beholding a glorious, gracious Governor of the world, and therein one worthy to be served, and fit to be depended on for time and eternity. You are all joining in my complaints, but I am ready to think you have not my reason for it. I want your conversation, yet I deserve it not, because when with me I make so little use of you. We have much to blame ourselves for this way all of us, and particularly that [we] have spent so many hours together, without coming to a proper Christian freedom in giving and receiving advice for correction, edification, and encouragement. But the blame lies most at my door because of my office. I beg we may come nearer, [and] have proposed it to —, who gladly consents; and now it lies only on you two, to be willing and forward to our passing weekly together an hour in prayer and free conversation. May the Lord dispose all our hearts, and increase this best token of love between you both while you are absent. Poor — is certainly an eminent saint: I am greatly reproved by his deep abasement of spirit. O pride of knowledge, life, learning, station—'t is very hard for the rich of any sort to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

I called the society together last night, and spoke to them from Vowler's death. The hints were Acts vii, 59, 60; the account of Stephen's death and burial.

Observation 1. His profession of Christ in his life.

2. His comfort in Christ at death.

3. The loss and lamentation of the church.

Mr. Vowler's life ye know ; his end as much as I knew of it was thus. Monday, July 29th, 1758, at two o'clock, he was suddenly brought into the nearest views of death, concerning which he told me when I came to him (by which time he was revived) that he had found it an awful thing to go into eternity ; that the thought at first shook him, but that he was soon supported. I asked by what ; his answer in substance was, " the righteousness of Christ." I spoke a good deal from Scripture on that head, and then asked if he had any thing on his conscience. He told me shortly, with an evident content on that head, he had nothing. We had frequent short discourses during the day, wherein he appeared to be quite composed, joining in prayer with calmness. Next morning at two, I was called to him, and found him near his end, but tolerably in his senses. His head was hurried, yet he employed his last use of reason in a solemn surrender of himself into the hands of Christ, in the deepest expressions of his vileness, and the most importunate requests for mercy. He ended thus in David's words, as the whole in a manner had been, " Why art thou so heavy, O my soul, and why art thou so disquieted within me ? Put thy trust in God, for I will yet give him thanks who is the help of my countenance and my God." There was an inexpressible force in his manner of saying *my God*. After this he panted, and then fell into an act of thanksgiving, as the other, in Scripture phrase. I suggested a Scripture or two, but he was too far gone to give attention. This I believe was his last use of reason : he said he would compose himself, but soon fell into

a delirium, in which he continued either raving or speechless (but when he raved always evangelically) till half an hour after nine that morning, when he expired.

Use 1. Let us live in the thought of death.

2. Let us hold fast faith and a good conscience.

3. Let us lament the loss of so useful a minister.

4. Let us be thankful for the gospel while we have it.

Did I tell you — has accepted the curacy of St. Agnes. You set out to be sure next week. My Christian respects to the ladies and all friends.

Yours in the only bonds,

S. W.

Mr. Fowler, whose last moments are described in this letter, was one of that small but faithful band of ministers who entered into all Mr. Walker's projects of usefulness, with a kindred spirit of zeal and piety. He was summoned to his account in the prime of life, after a short though effective career of labour; but his memory was long cherished by hearers who profited under his preaching, and friends who were united to him in that intimacy of heart, which is felt only by those who love the brethren for their work's sake. A weeping throng crowded to his burial, and many tears were shed upon the coffin, wherein lay without voice or animation, the frame they had often seen exhibiting the energy a love of souls inspired, while it pointed to the Lamb of God as their only sufficient sacrifice and availing intercessor. The opportunity was like all others, improved by Mr.

Walker, who described the mutual obligations of a pastor and his flock, in the following admirable

### FUNERAL ADDRESS.

My brethren, on such an occasion we may pass over the ceremony of a text. Look on this coffin; look on the countenances of one another. I need not tell you what has brought us together. Discharge me, I beg, from speaking to any particular Scripture, that we may have more liberty of improving the awful providence under which we are assembled.

The remains of your departed minister lie before you; his better part is, we trust, with God. What blessed sights do departed spirits see the moment after their separation from this vile body! Ministering angels, that waited for their dissolution, joyfully receive the souls set at liberty, shew them the way to the heaven of heavens, to paradise, where Jesus dwells attended by the numberless [multitude] of holy, happy, rejoicing spirits of just men made perfect. What do they then see, when the attending spirits have conducted them to the unknown world? Ah! my friends, the soul of our minister is among them! By this time he is grown acquainted with his new companions; and what think you, he is there doing? Why singing the song of heaven to God and to the Lamb? But what, nothing more? Think you he has forgotten you; "those for whom he travailed in birth till Christ should be formed in you?" Impossible! Oh, how is he now praising God for one and another of you! What, has he forgotten to love you, now that he is made

perfect in love? Should some attending spirit have made him acquainted with what we are now engaged in over his corpse; surely in that case he is adding his prayers to mine, (alas infinitely weak upon the comparison,) that his God may be with us even now. Ah, my friends, could you be so cruel as to wish him back again? Rather hold fast your crown, and let your departed faithful minister be your guide to glory.

The remains of your servant for Christ's sake, lie in that coffin; the remains of the man who was wont to speak to you from this place. I, unworthy, must now speak in his stead; he can speak no more. Ah! how little did I think of being called to such an employment for my deceased brother; I, so much older than he in years and infirmities; I, for whom there was so much reason rather to expect he should have done this friendly office. "Thy way, O God, is in the sea, thy path in the great waters, thy footsteps not known, thy judgments unsearchable, thy ways past finding out." For who would have thought that the Lord should have sent his servant here; by him should have roused the consciences of those who dwell in this place; brought many of them to seek the things of their peace; and then, at a stroke, have removed him from the midst of his work, when it seemed in the most promising forwardness! Yet it is the Lord's doing, therefore absolutely right; as we shall all see it to be, in that day when the mysteries of providence shall be explained. And who that believes in God will now dare to say, however heavy the stroke, what doest thou?

Here he stood, and hence he spoke; you know bet-

ter than I, with what earnestness, what importunity, what longing for your souls; how he withheld nothing of the whole counsel of God, and was content to be spent for you. But however I loved and valued him, it is not my meaning to enter into his character, farther than may serve to your improvement of his death. To do more were needless, since you all knew his worth; to do less were injurious to you, as otherwise we could not make a profitable use of the loss endured. Without, therefore, the least design of making compliments to my departed friend, I will speak to you upon this mournful occasion in the following manner, in order to the improvement of it.

I. I will exhort you to be humbly sensible of the loss you have suffered.

II. I will exhort you to make this great loss your gain.

III. I will say something by way of caution, direction, and motive.

I. I exhort you to be humbly sensible of the loss you have suffered in the death of this your minister.

You cannot but own it is the hand of God; and may easily be convinced his hand, in this case, is very heavy upon you. If we look no higher than second causes, and lose sight of God's disposing providence, in the various circumstances by which our dear friend was brought to his end, we shall make no use of it at all. A sparrow, much less a man, does not fall to the ground without God! And when we see it is God that doeth it, we are sure it cannot be without a design that is infinitely wise and good. Part of it is obvious, viz., to humble us before God. Yet we can-

not be humbled under it, farther than we see our loss in it. Permit me to say then, that in this awful providence and judgment, we have all sustained a great loss. I say all of us have sustained a great loss.

The death of every saint, much more of a laborious, zealous, experienced minister, is a loss to the whole church of Christ. Such as act in the more public character of dispensing the mysteries of the glorious and everlasting gospel, are eminently the lights set on a hill, making the truth known, reproofing the works of darkness, manifesting a way of salvation, and bearing witness to the reality of it.

A good minister is a great light, and therefore his departure a great loss. He cannot be a good minister, unless he has learned to live by that faith which he preaches, and be influenced thereby to a zeal for his Master's interests and the salvation of souls, which lifts him above every mean view of this world, and will not suffer him to be biassed by its interests or its frowns; but filling his soul with unconquerable charity, hath made him bold to reprove vice without sparing it, to tell every man the truth of his case without fear, and to set the whole power of the gospel against the custom and authority of a sinful world in the very face of it, and amidst that variety of clamour, opposition, and dislike, which the mistake of some, the ignorance of others, and the love of sin in the impenitent sinner shall surely raise against him. Such a one is a vast blessing to a sinful world; and in this view it is, that I mostly feel the loss of our dear brother, whose conduct speaks for him that he was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; that he loved it,

longed for its enlargement, and to bring sinners to it as the Lord should bless him, and whose loss therefore is a very touching one to the whole church, and will be deeply lamented by thousands that never saw him in the flesh, who loving the Lord Jesus Christ, and being heartily concerned for the success of his kingdom amongst us, will humbly acknowledge the severity of a blow that deprives the church of an able faithful minister, from whose years there was reason to hope a long continuance of usefulness, and from whose uncommon success, it was so abundantly manifest that the Lord was with him. But besides the general loss in the death of this man of God, we all have particular reason to humble ourselves under God's hand in it. Wherefore,

Should we not also be sensibly concerned for the loss of his relict, the partner of his love and cares? Great indeed is her loss (not unlike that of the prophet Elisha, when God took away from him his excellent master) [in being bereaved of] so good a guide, one so highly favoured of God, one at whose mouth she doubtless received all direction and all comfort. From this poor widow, God has at a stroke taken away the desire of her eyes, the friend as well as the husband, the Christian friend, one that loved her soul and watched over it, one so able as well as willing to advise in every step of the heavenly road. When all these comforts are gone from her, comforts so substantial, comforts never to be regained, shall we not weep with her and be afflicted in all her great tribulation; with her drop a tear over a departed husband, while we look upon that infant, the pledge of

their love, deprived of such a father? Well, O God, thus thou dealest with those thou lovest; thus we oblige thy fatherly love to take the rod! We deserve it, we need, we could not prosper in the work of grace without this, even this so bitter a correction. O make our dear sister sensible, humbly sensible that, it is thou thyself that hast done it; let the thought of what she deserves, convince her of thy righteousness in it, and suppress every murmur; let faith in a covenant God, compose her spirit into a peaceful dependence upon thy care of her all the remainder of her days, since having thee she can want nothing; let hope of the joy that shall be revealed compose her to wait till her change come, and the happy resurrection hour unite the saints together in a bond never to be dissolved; let the graces manifested in her departed consort be ever in lively remembrance upon her heart, nor one of his good words fall to the ground; let her behave as a mother in Israel, and bless her endeavours to bring up her child in thy faith and fear, that he may never find the want of his other parent. O be a God to her and satisfy her soul in the perpetual sense of thy favour and love, for thy mercies' sake made known to us in Jesus Christ.

This whole parish has received a sensible loss, and ought to be greatly humbled under it. Think you not, my dear friends, your loss great in being deprived of a minister who loved your souls, longed for your salvation, would have had every one of you, old and young, rich and poor, high and low, brought to the knowledge and obedience of that faith, without which not one of you can be saved; a minister that laid out

himself in all his strength to do you this greatest, most substantial good; a man who, as he was set to watch over your souls, to rescue you from the slavery of sin, and the curse of endless damnation that is the consequence of an impenitent state; to shew you the way of life, and to display all the fulness, freedom, riches, and glory of it, encouraging and inviting you to accept it; to disclose the deceitfulness of sin, taking off the false coverings of formality and mere morality; in short, to present you as chaste virgins to Christ Jesus; thought all his time lost that was not employed in rendering you one and another of these good offices. He was a man who, as far as was in his power, would do you good, though any of you should be angry at him for it. That he would leave none of you quiet in your sins, let this pulpit witness, and let every conscience witness. He spoke plainly, reprov'd you freely, warn'd you diligently, lost no opportunity; stood up manfully against you all, if need were, when in any thing ye walk'd not according to the gospel of Christ, when your souls were in danger, and yourselves but too willing to be left to your own destructive way. Such a faithful and affectionate minister you have lost. And all of you should be deeply humbled under it. What, is it nothing to have lost such a father? In regard of your souls, what more to be lamented could have befallen you? You will hear no more his loving reproofs that made sin tremble upon its throne, though it had been long settled in the dominion of your heart; the most hardened could not be easy, conscience would speak, dread rose up and inward terror; the drunkard, the

swearer, the sabbath-breaker, lost his old peace and found it no more. No, poor sinners that would not submit, that would not hearken to the voice of God and conscience, that are still the same unregenerate creatures, wallowing in your own lusts, drunkenness, company-keeping, and other abominations, still aliens from God, without hope (I appeal to your own hearts) without the least hope in another world, heirs of hell, to which ye have been hastening these many years, though we should have believed you the happiest people in the whole earth, who were not for being melancholy, who have been wantoning over the mouth of the bottomless pit, like a mad man dancing upon the pinnacle of a tower, or a blind man that has lost his way, and is come to the edge of a cliff, with his foot lifted up to fall over upon the rocks that lie a thousand fathoms below. I say, you will hear no more his reproofs and persuasions by the terrors of the Lord. Ye may be at rest in your sins. Ye faithful souls, also, will hear no more his mouth explaining the gospel, and pouring in comfort upon you. Especially ye have lost, who were partakers of his private instructions. He can counsel, correct your mistakes, and give his tender advice no more. Be sensible of your loss; I too desire to be sensible of mine.

II. How shall this loss be made your gain?

1. Be sensible you have had a prophet among you.
2. Humble yourselves in the thought, that ye have not improved under him, both the best and worst of you.
3. Plead the blood of Christ, and return under such a judgment.

4. Practice those things which ye have heard from him—Repentance towards God, and faith towards Christ, which were his support at last.

III. [Lastly I will add a few] cautions and motives [to repentance.]

1. Be not discouraged: your help standeth in God, not man. Therefore,

2. Be on your guard against sloth in prayer; and watch the first approaches of sin.

3. Do not let your love for this minister cause you to despise his successor.

4. Above all things mind the things which belong to your peace.

[The] motives to repentance through grace are—

(1.) You must render an account of all you heard from this your minister.

(2.) Your time is drawing on: he warns you to follow him.

(3.) All your interests lie in the other world.

May the Lord make you all faithful, and grant you to see the salvation of God.

## CHAPTER X.

PASTORAL ADVICE GIVEN BY MR. WALKER.

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*The wisdom and piety of his counsels.*

WHAT has been already said of the character of Mr. Walker, will have naturally led to the expectation of some instances of his zeal and discretion, in confidential intercourse with those who appealed to him for pastoral advice. His scheme of private instruction has made us acquainted with the searching nature of his conversations with awakened persons, who were disposed to lay before him the state of their minds. During these interviews, he fully explained the scriptural doctrines of conviction of sin—of man's misery and helplessness—of a knowledge of Christ's sufficiency—of true faith and repentance—of the conflict between two opposite principles, grace and the remains of sin, in believers; and of a spiritual growth of the love of God in their souls. The remembrance of these interesting moments have, with both minister and people, passed into the oblivion of the grave; but there yet remain letters to his friends, containing valuable records of the discretion and piety of his secret counsels. The extracts from his correspondence, about to be given in the present chapter, will shew how well qualified he was to be the guide of such as

enjoyed the privilege of communicating with him on the momentous topics of Christian experience.

He wrote, in the following decisive terms, to a pious young man, whose religion had involved him in that great trial of Christian sincerity, parental opposition. "I am favoured with yours, and have communicated it to your good friend. We both approve the steps you have taken, and desire you to expect opposition and difficulties in the work you are about. To say the least, the various interests and views of people will make a diversity of judgments, and throw difficulties in our way. How far these may be concerned in the oppositions which meet you, is not very material, since at least no reasonable and religious motive hath been proposed, which had any ground to weigh, to the laying aside your purposes. You are most certainly to have an especial eye to salvation in every earthly transaction, much more in the general scheme of your worldly business; and in pursuit of this you are to be swayed by no destructive advice whatever. Perhaps you have not a greater trial to contend with, than the disapprobation of near and well affected relations. I think the honour due to parents is not implicit and blind; it means submission to this one purpose, that children may be made the better children of God. Where therefore there is an interference herewith in parental injunctions, disobedience does not dishonour them; nay parents ought to be unattended to, even in much younger persons than one of twenty six. How far your views are religious and prudential withal, your conscience must determine for you; but be abundantly careful that whilst you judge for yourself, and differ-

ently from your friends, you be actuated by a meek and filial disposition, shewing a more peculiar tenderness in all your expressions and carriage." After a few remarks on an affair of business, he proceeds, "I must wish you to be aware of impatience and resentment under the opposition you may meet with at this time; nor let the contention of others drive you to an over hastiness, to expedite that which demands much cool thought and attention. Pray let it be your nightly care to recal the workings of your heart in this view, with earnest prayer for direction and strength."

He offered this beautiful congratulation to a good man on the birth of his child:—"I certainly rejoice in all your joy, and pray that all your comforts and crosses may be sanctified to you. Your trust increases; see that your grace does also. Every child added, gives so much additional weight to the arguments of the world in the heart. There is a new idol to engage the affection, and a new care to solicit anxiety. Strive hard, my dear friend, as you do, to keep your heart unspotted from the world, and excuse the affectionate fear of one who is a friend, though he desires not to be accounted a father."

After receiving a complaint of deadness of religious frame, he wrote, "you complain of your frame. The fault is in your heart; and that not so much in the want of sensible affection (which having been much used to, and having found very pleasing to yourself, you know not how to be without) as in the unbelief, murmuring and unthankfulness that seem to have too much place in you. It is the hardest thing in the

world to be satisfied with and in the perfect righteousness and atonement of Christ. We are always ready to look for a Christ in us, rather than a Christ in heaven, and to be easy, not so much because of what we find in him as for what we find ourselves. My dear William, are you sure there is perfect redemption in Christ? Doubtless, you say. If so, why are you not satisfied, inwardly satisfied, in whatever frame you are. Christ is able to keep you, but you are not enough persuaded of it. That persuasion should lie at the bottom of your heart, as your confidence and only confidence in your highest frames (else you rest on them rather than him) and then the same confidence would be your satisfying support when in the lowest frames. And I am sure, this way you are always and only fit for service and improvement."

He thus excited a convert to steadfastness and patience when attempts were made to shake him by reproach. "Stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved. Your friend is too much concerned about his interests, yet I hope not a little concerned about his soul. Stand still, and you shall see the salvation of God. Leave all your matters with him. Indeed it is no wonder he is moved when all the world is railing at you. Nevertheless be assured he thinks you right, and values you the more for it at the bottom, though he be teased by the impertinence of ill tongues, and the fears of his own heart, to be a little unguarded and hasty. A man awakened, and yet not master of the lusts of his heart, is the greatest object of pity and prayer."

On the death of a friend of his correspondent, Mr.

Walker writes, "I cannot but look upon it as a rare act of a gracious Providence, that your friend should die here in your arms, and desire you not only to make the serious reflections which so awakening a circumstance demands, but to bring them as near as possible to the present state of your soul, and that it may not slip you to commit to writing the purposes you now find possessing you. These are excellent days of grace when properly improved; and may God give the due influence of such a warning to your own heart, and direct you in applying it to others. I am apt to hope it will be peculiarly useful to his brother, but perhaps am too mistrustful, when I suggest my fear that you will soon see the girls as usual. If you prevail with them not to seek for ease and comfort under their present circumstances, in trifling and unprofitable company, you may hope something. But press upon them the wickedness of a life of amusement, endeavour to shew them the danger of pleasure, and engage them to keep out of it for a season. They know not the sin or danger that lies in the abuse of innocent things. As you speak of their compliments to me, this is the most useful service I can offer them, with my kindest service and pity. You know that you are at all times at full liberty to make any thing of mine your own, as far as you may judge necessary: but as to what you say, I think your address should be general, while you speak of the excellencies and consolations of the Christian salvation, especially as exerting themselves in the dying hour — O my friend, I was near the borders of death but a week ago: suddenly seized, in danger of a hasty summons. God hath lengthened

my days : but how unequal am I to fulfil his good purposes of various sorts herein ! He that bade me live, says ‘ my grace is sufficient for thee.’ Here will I hope.”

When requested to see a person who desired advice upon apparently defective evidences of a state of genuine conviction, he thus expressed his kind acquiescence. “ Mr. — I shall be glad to see, and will deal freely with him, God helping me. I am really concerned for him : but you may learn from his case the wide difference between awakenings and humiliations, between a fear of God’s wrath and a deep true conviction, between a sight of sin, and a sense of its sinfulness. I wish there may be not very many, who are in a way of coming to nothing through this mistake. I think I have known abundance, and wish it may not be the fatal mistake of the poor Methodists. A clear and distinct sense of the evil of sin, not merely as we are, but as God is affected by it, is the main thing ; which not obtained and maintained, there is no saving work done in the soul. The ruling principles of the heart are still selfish, notwithstanding the most vehement terrors or joys ; and there is not a jot of that resolute calm abiding choice that God rules in the heart, and over the world.”

We have an instance of his deep acquaintance with the devices of Satan to destroy our faith, in what he says upon a trying case submitted to him for advice. “ I heartily pray God to bless your endeavours with the poor woman at Padstow ; her case is truly lamentable, but not rare. The advice you have offered is such as I think right, and that upon this ground espe-

cially, that she seems not quite void of faith, though it be very weak, and the evidences of it altogether hid from herself. The contrivance of the devil is evidently, in such cases, to drive from the means by terror, and thereby to lead into carelessness, debauch, &c. The counterplot of his device is this :—to select some two or three chosen promises, such as, ‘the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin,’ &c. wherein the word of promise is evidently without deduction, and seen as soon as attended to ; then to press them home in a peremptory way, such as ‘you dare not say, you will not have the boldness, the confidence to say God cannot, is not willing to forgive you ; I rest it with your own conscience ; speak, dare you say so ?’ I have seen such a peremptory way suddenly to shake and confound despair, i. e. to put Satan to some shame, and to gain an immediate acknowledgment that nothing was wanting but the sinner’s return. But though this desired end do not evidence itself upon the spot, yet it will work afterwards, and frequently recur in the agitations of the troubled mind. [It is proper] to enjoin a strict observance of means, arguing from the mere possibility of salvation, and to warn in an especial manner, against idleness, vain company, and flying to any sinful course for relief, to which there is most cause to fear the party may have recourse according to circumstances. Suppose your next letter were an attempt in the peremptory way first proposed.”

To a zealous but much opposed young Christian he wrote, “the various opposition you meet with ought not to discourage you ; rather, knowing from what quarter it comes, to make you comfort yourself that it

is a proof of some shock given to the kingdom of darkness. Blessed are they who are instruments in this cause; yea God's blessing evidently attends their labours, insomuch that even opposition is made to further their undertakings. This I evidently collect from your representation; and what would we more than to be servants of Christ, though suffering ones? O, my friend, neither our labours nor sufferings deserve our Master's notice, yet they shall be gloriously owned one illustrious day. Opposition is apt to warm us, and that warmth to render us imprudent, and to make us grow, as it were, desperate. Be cool and patient; steadily, meekly, and silently pursue your project."

Mr. Walker's love of order has often been adverted to in this work: the following caution to an active layman is an additional proof of it. "There can be no objection made to your meeting, by persons of common sense; but you see what the world is waiting for, that they may be able to blame you that you should undertake to preach. God hath so remarkably blessed our *regular* scheme, that from thence, as well as from the unjustifiableness of any other, we can never keep too clear of the imputation lying upon the Methodists, that they set up lay preachers. I would beg you to use all imaginable caution, that no one may have the least ground of insinuating this, from any thing you may do; and to this end, when you are at your meeting, that you be confined to reading, prayer, and psalm-singing—psalms rather than hymns. While we go on regularly, we shall be able to vindicate ourselves, and what is more desirable, leave it still

in the power of clergymen to countenance us whenever they may be disposed to it ; whereas if we grow irregular, we take away that power from them."

The next letter was written for the comfort and encouragement of one of his most attached and pious correspondents, Mr. W. Rawlings of St. Columb; and the observations it contains are most worthy of the attentive consideration of every one, who desires the spread of truth amongst men, and the growth of vital Christianity in his own heart.

MY VERY DEAR SIR,

I will beg leave to put you in remembrance that Christ's kingdom is not of this world ; and therefore we must not expect that it will succeed by worldly influences. Too apt many have been to fancy, that could such a leading man be brought over, his authority would prevail much ; so it would to make hypocrites, for those who would be prevailed upon by *his authority*, it is plain could not at the same time be prevailed upon by the power of the gospel. [Yes,] my friend, Christ is able to support his church ; he needs no human props to help him out ; when we look for them we distrust him, and when they have been gained, it hath been soon seen, that the strictness of Christian walking hath been quickly relaxed. But while we are eagerly looking for such worldly influences, do not we mean ourselves more than Christ ; to screen ourselves from the battering of tongues, and to save our interests which seem to be at stake ? I believe this is commonly the case ; and then I think we must be upon the brink of denying and renouncing

Christ. Let us leave him to manage his own matters. All we have to do, is to do our duty without warping; making no compliances with our own hearts. This I am sure we shall do if we be truly in the faith. Let me transcribe a passage of the sermon I have been just writing for the morrow. (2.) The second grace which accompanies faith is *love*. The believer sees the heavens opened and Christ sitting at the right hand of God; sees the wounds he freely endured for man's salvation, owns his available pleadings for sinners, confesses his dominion for ever and ever, and that in life, in death, at the judgment, and to all eternity, he is able to save. And what, hath he no esteem for, doth he set no value upon Christ? Yes truly a higher value than upon the whole world or ten thousand worlds. Christ is to him all that he can want, and infinitely more. He would not be without Christ for all the dung and trash of the earth, for so he reckons every earthly thing in comparison of him; nay he holds Jesus at so high a rate, that he cares not much what he be without, so he be not without him. To be without ease, wealth, reputation, liberty, life, this he can endure: but he cannot endure to be without Christ. He hath [parted] and doth willingly part with any of these things for Christ; he hath sold all to buy Christ. And why all this? Truly he cannot do without him; if he have not Christ he is undone, he must perish everlastingly, he can never get free of sin and Satan, he is without peace and without hope. "To you who believe," saith St. Peter, "he is precious." It is faith sets the true value upon Christ. When a man believes in him he *must* value him. That which

makes a man believe in Christ, makes him value too the all-sufficiency of his power and love. Where faith is, there is spiritual marriage and unity, saith St. Paul, between the soul and Christ. The soul chooses him, setting her love upon him. The longer this marriage subsists, the nearer this union grows, the *better* the soul is acquainted with Christ, so much the more pleased she is in him, so much the more abundantly she loves him. Is it an honest marriage in the sight of God, where there is a joining of hands and not of hearts? Such are all pretences to faith, where Christ is not valued, and loved, and preferred before the whole world.

If such hints may minister any comfort or courage,  
I shall heartily rejoice, being

Most affectionately yours,

S. W.

My heartiest love to the dear little Dr. His letter is very agreeable. I commend him to God's grace and his own prudence. He shall hear from me soon.

TO THE SAME IN DEEP AFFLICTION.

MY POOR DEAR FRIEND,

Yours indeed came near to me. It is the Lord, I said, and his ways must be mysterious to me, because I cannot fathom his infinite wisdom. They are good, though I see not how. The great difficulty is to believe them *his*. My dear friend, cry hard for that faith, that you may stedfastly believe it is the Lord's doing; unbelief does not allow that, and it is

not so easy as we think to believe a providence ; the most rather *suppose* than *believe* it, so they get no good by God's dispensations. Are you sure, unquestionably sure, that notwithstanding all second causes, dear ——'s disorder is from God, and that every pang and every respite of it is by his immediate direction ? Gain this point, I mean obtain it by grace, and you will be self taught about the rest. You will see it a *loving correction*, and say, ' see God shews his kindness to me, and his displeasure at my sins ;' so you will humble your soul. You will see it is a *special warning*, and say, ' is my interest in Christ clear ? how stands my faith ? and is it proved by love ? You will see it is a *gracious preservative*, and say, ' my God saw my comforts to be dangerous, and so dashed this bitter potion into my cup.' You will see it is a *needful purgation*, and say, ' I wanted so severe a discipline to refine my graces and mortify my earthly affections.' Affliction cannot be received as it ought, unless we see God's hand in it, for without that, it can neither humble nor purify.

At such seasons, accusations of conscience are wont to add to the load. You must be sure to hear them, yet never to loose sight of Christ's righteousness ; for Satan will be busy with your unbelief, and if yielded to, turn godly sorrow into undutiful despondency. It is alike faulty not to bear the rod, and to murmur against it.

The most trying circumstance in troubles is the uncertainty of the issue, and the delay of its coming. This puts faith and submission to the stretch in a peculiar manner, and is singularly mortifying to self-

will. To be able to say, not only ‘as thou wilt, but in what manner, and at what time thou wilt,’ is what I earnestly beg the Lord to bestow upon you on this pressing occasion. It will mightily stay your heart. I am persuaded that now you have a special occasion given you to honour your master, and to shew forth the power of his religion to his glory, by an exemplary exercise of the silent graces of meekness, quietness, and submission.

If dear Mrs. Rawlings be alive, as I will still hope in God she shall be restored to you, I need not tell you what to say to her. Only this I will say, endeavour to help the exercise of her faith in God through Jesus, by dropping a seasonable Scripture. If she have any doubts because of a low frame, or inability to pray, or fix her thoughts, make her sensible that faith is deeper than these, and that in such a case it is the very office of faith to support her under and against them. Remember she wants help, and as is convenient, speak a promise to her.

O my dear friend, the Lord will make all work for your good. He is the kindest father, and the nearest friend. I commend you to him most inopportunately, being most affectionately,

Yours,  
S. W.

*Truro, Feb. 5, 1759.*

TO THE SAME. A STRIKING DESCRIPTION OF THE ENMITY OF MAN'S HEART TO GOD, AND OF THE WORKINGS OF THE POWER BY WHICH ALONE IT CAN BE SUBDUED.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

I am glad to catch a moment's leisure, and to employ it in writing to you. Let me speak without particular design, and apply it if you are able. What do I find within me? Principles most unreasonable, neither directing me to God, nor consequently to happiness. Principles which have debased my understanding to an aptitude only for the mean regards of the world. Principles which tend alone to gratify something in me I call *self*; a monster that ungodd God, and will have the whole of creation at its command; a haughty monster, big with self-sufficiency; a monster that knows neither pity nor gratitude; pregnant with envy, rage, revenge, that bears intent of murder to every opposing man or woman; a lazy monster which would have all nature sacrifice to its indulgence. Principles, atheistical because self-idolatrous; which deny the blessed God to have either justice, mercy, holiness, wisdom, or truth; which confront his superintendence and government with the most determined hatred; which demand an eternal separation from every thing that is called God, because they cannot endure submission, and the thought of parting from the present scene. Miraculous love divine sees and pities such a wretch. Grace infinite

interposes to rescue me, however unwilling to be delivered, restored, made happy. I see and approve the sufficient contrivance that reconciles such a God to such a monster; that inspires the glorious principles of liberty, the only liberty, that of serving God. Man, a creature, must be a servant: how much better to serve the Most High, than to be a slave to lust! That gives me eyes to see this my deformity of heart, to lament this my misery; that furnishes me with an arm to overmatch this accursed God-dishonouring *flesh*. But how hard to apply this remedy! Either I seem not to want it, or I dispute its sufficiency, when I discern my helplessness. When I have taken it to me a moment, and am pleased with my deliverance, suddenly it is gone; the inbred monster awakes, scatters darkness over my eyes, disputes, contends, insists on gratification; the pleasing scene is departed, I am confusion, I am robbed of peace; I startle, and would return to God and comfort, but intercepting objects step in between, or unbelieving suspicion makes my darkness greater. I reflect what I am; I look in and charge my native corruption; I complain to God; he sets me free; but I am not safe a moment, and expect the clouds again.

Happy the ease of those who are gone to the better country! For this happy above all, they have dropt the flesh in the grave! Why then shrink at death, when death only can make my freedom perfect, unchangeable, eternal! Ah! faithless flesh still hangs upon me. Come Jesus deliver me now, give me this freedom, that I may long to be free indeed and for ever. I do not know what you will make of this rhapsody.

sody, but I love to write to you at my ease, being sincerely,

Yours,  
S. W.

The solemn views entertained by Mr. Walker of the ministerial office, and how seriously he urged them upon others, may be seen in the subjoined extracts from his letters of advice to a young man just about to take orders. "I remember," he says, "the week before my ordination, I spent with the other candidates, as dissolute, I fear, as myself, in a very light indecent manner, dining, supping, drinking, and laughing together, when God knows we should have been on our knees, and warning each other to fear for our souls, in the view of what we were to put our hands to. I cannot but attribute the many careless ungodly years I have spent in pleasure since, to this profane introduction; and believe me, dear Sir, the review shoeks me:—while I write, I tremble in the recollection of the wounds I then gave Jesus. Were I to pass that awful transaction again, I hope it would, I am sure it would be, in a very different manner. I would be, as much as possible, alone in prayer and humiliation. If I could find none deeply impressed with the ordination, I would have nothing to do with them; or if I could find any, I should still take care to be mostly alone. I would, again and again, pray over many passages of Scripture relating to the ministerial office, particularly the epistles to Timothy and Titus, and also the ordination offices, both of them: I would pass two days of the week fasting; I would

commit to paper all my present views, that I might after have recourse to them. I would seek to obtain the most distinct and lively impressions of the importance of the ministerial office to God, myself, and others; in short, I would do nothing the whole week, but what would dispose me, with all seriousness, sincerity, and heartiness, so to undertake the office, as I should wish I had done when standing before the judgment. I would therefore recommend such a conduct to you; and would observe that your steadiness herein, in opposition to the reproaches it may bring upon you, and the risings of shame in your own heart contending for compliance, will be the best proof you can have of faith, and a happy ground of hope that you will not afterwards be ashamed of the gospel, when you shall be an ambassador for Christ. The case will be the very reverse, if you comply."

What appeared to him to be of more immediate moment, for the consideration of one just about to receive authority to become a messenger of Jesus Christ, he comprised "under these three points."

"1. A right sense of the importance of your office—as it regards Christ who honours you with so distinguished a station in his church, and commits to you, in so interesting a degree, the care of his gospel, which will be abundantly disgraced, or as you may reasonably hope, be glorified through you, as you are faithful or otherwise. The titles which will belong to you as a minister, do awfully display this. The Scriptures term you 'a servant of Christ'—'a watchman'—'a steward'—'a shepherd'—'an ambassador,' &c.; titles which greatly shew, if duly considered and at-

tended to, in the full scope of what such expressions signify, how much Christ entrusts with you.—As it regards the souls to whom you shall minister, and the whole church of Christ, as far as your influence shall reach. The souls of the people, especially your own, will be in an awakening connection with your diligence, faithfulness, exemplariness. Your own people at least will hearken to none but you: for the most part they will depend entirely upon you; and if you feed them not with the true word of life, if you be backward to stir them up out of their dead sleep of security, and to promote and forward them with all readiness and diligence, they will even be content to perish; and in such a case you cannot too seriously consider at whose hands their blood will reasonably and certainly be required.—As your own soul is concerned in it; and this it is ultimately, for the ministry will be your calling, and what you must be accountable for at the day of judgment. God grant that you may be able so to demean yourself, that you may be able to say on that day, ‘I am free from the blood of all men.’ But it is a thought deeply to be weighed, that the sin of unfaithfulness in a minister (and unfaithful he may be and quite beside his office, though a very decent sober man) will then appear with these three terrible aggravations—that he hath neglected his calling—that he hath signally betrayed the interests of the Redeemer’s kingdom—that he hath been the great instrument of the ruin of very many souls; indeed he shall hardly think how many that day will reveal.

“2. A due consideration of what your conduct must

be, if you will be a faithful minister. Your conduct will regard your preaching and example.—As to preaching, taking it in a large sense, as reaching to all your ministrations of the word, whether public or private, it will only be needful at present that you be determined to preach nothing but God's word, i. e. what you believe in your conscience, after the most simple inquiry you have been able to make into God's mind in the Scriptures, and what you will be contented, as far as you see, to rest your own soul upon. This may seem easy to resolve upon at first view; but indeed it is no easy matter so to have our hearts disinterested to our own reasonings, and those of others, as simply to be willing that God should teach us, and others by us. As, for example, you are to go before others in all manner of Christian godliness, of which you must be the great promoter, support, and encouragement; especially in the whole of your conduct, you must shew others what it is to live by faith, letting them see there is a power in the religion you teach them, which sets a man above the world, and brings down something of heaven upon earth. But most signally must you endeavour to lead them, by your example, to renounce the devil, world, and flesh. They must see you, not seeking the favour of the rich and great, not courting esteem by any wrong compliances, nor desirous of praise by what you are doing, which is to renounce the devil. They must see you above a covetous, worldly temper; that you are not anxious about getting preferment; that you seek not theirs but them, cheerfully waiting on Providence for a subsistence, and in the choice of a place where you

are to minister, considering rather where you may do most good, than where you may get most money. Then, as to the flesh, you must set them an example of temperance in meat and drink, and recreation. You must teach them industry, by not indulging a slothful way of life in any thing ; and sobriety, by not mixing with them in their sinful pleasures, and by withdrawing from all company where is excess.”

“3. How you are disposed to your office in both these views of it. It is plain, that such is the importance of the office, and that such a ministerial conduct ought to be. You will try your heart, whether, God helping you, you are desirous to engage in it, such as it is. If the answer of your conscience on your knees before God be, that you are willing and ready, it will be a great encouragement to you ; and you may answer that you verily believe you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to undertake it.”

Thus completely did Mr. Walker, as the “guide, counsellor, and friend” of those who sought to derive benefit from his wisdom and experience, dedicate all his energies to the concerns of religion. He was in truth a genuine Christian, and having, to use his own description of that character, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, “the holy influence shed itself through the whole man, and every thought, word, and action, bespoke the inward change.”

## CHAPTER XI.

MR. WALKER'S LAST SERMON AT TRURO. HIS ILLNESS, AND REMOVAL TO BRISTOL HOTWELLS. HIS KIND RECEPTION IN THE HOUSE OF LORD DARTMOUTH, AT BLACKHEATH.

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### *Decay of Mr. Walker's constitution.*

SUCH as has been hitherto described was the course of Mr. Walker; but in the unfathomable mysteries of Providence, his sun was destined to go down while it was yet day; and never did it beam forth rays of more celestial loveliness, than just before it was for ever hidden from human eyes in the shadow of death. His unwearyed labor and perpetual anxieties, had long acted with an injurious pressure on his frame, and for some time before the final wreck of his constitution, he found it giving way under the weight of daily toil. He felt at times so unequal to the arduous task before him, that he contemplated a temporary cessation from it, but was urged on beyond the strength of a too willing spirit by some, who for his sake and their own, ought to have recommended him to seek a renewal of vigor in repose. On the 27th of April, 1760, his voice for ever ceased to proclaim the mysteries of salvation, from the pulpit of the church at Truro. Though unconscious that he should never again speak to his beloved con-

gregation, there was in his manner of address an unusual degree of emotion, and he seemed filled with joyful anticipations of his own rest from all trials, and with even more than ordinary longing for the souls of his people. The Sunday before, his subject was the exaltation of Christ to the right hand of God, and his last sermon was on his coming thence to judge the earth. He described with all the feeling of one prepared to meet his God, those triumphant expectations of the Lord's second coming, which animated his own pious breast, and accompanied these declarations of a hope full of immortality, with most solemn warnings and exhortations to the careless and impenitent.

“I mean,” said he, with a glow of joy that seemed to cause forgetfulness of all bodily infirmity, “to express my hope, expectation, and waiting desire of that day. I regard it as the day of my Lord's eminent triumph, when he shall come in the glory of the Father with great power and unequalled majesty, attended by the hosts of heaven, and all nature bowing before him; when by the working of his mighty power, the dead shall arise from the various distributions of their dust, and with the assembled living, stand, a vast multitude which no man can number, before his seat, to own and honour, whether willingly or not, the once despised Lamb. When the fallen angels too shall be brought up to adorn his appearance, and receive their final doom from his mouth; when he shall be admired in all them that believe, because of the adorable work he shall have wrought for them and in them; and upon such as would not obey his gospel, he shall get

himself glory infinitely surpassing that, when he destroyed so many of his haughty enemies in the depths of the Red Sea. When every eye shall see him, and they that pierced him shall own that he is no other than the crucified Jesus; when by his royal word he shall pronounce the sentences never to be recalled; by his omnipotency shut up the damned in the caverns of hell for a miserable eternity, and bid a new heaven and earth to come forth, furnished and provided with every circumstance of greatness, glory, and beauty, to receive for ever his happy saints. Can I think of this day so honourable to him whom my soul loveth, without longing and wishing for its appearance? And when I consider that his people shall partake with him in the glories of that day; hearing his voice, shall come forth victorious over death, the last enemy, decked in all the brightness, strength, and glory of a spiritual body; with their own eyes behold their Lord avenging himself upon his enemies and theirs, by an utter destruction, and hear him say to them these ravishing words, never to be recalled, *come ye blessed of my Father*—can I do other than say, *come Lord Jesus, come quickly!* Surely I should rejoice to see and be for ever with the Lord; to behold his beauty as the express image of his Father's person: to contemplate with endless and insatiable transport, the glory which the Father hath given him; to make my acknowledgment, in the praises of heaven, among the multitude which no man can number, as saved, for ever saved, by his love and care, his power and grace. What! when the least beam of his glory let in upon my soul turns my earth into heaven, and makes me

cry out with Peter, ‘*it is good for us to be here,*’ can I wish to delay his coming? When, remaining in this vale of misery I groan under corruption, and am burdened with a corruptible body, can I say this is better than to be fashioned in soul and body like unto the Lord? When I find here nothing but vanity, and vexation of spirit, shall I be averse to the Lord’s coming to change my sorrows into joy unspeakable and full of glory? Here, beset as I am with enemies, would I not long for that blessed day when I shall see them again no more for ever? And would I not be glad to be taken from a world lying in wickedness, into the new heaven and earth wherein dwelleth righteousness? I know that my Redeemer liveth, I know that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; I have humble confidence that he will own me among the children; and shall I, like those who know no better joys than this world can afford them, are ignorant of a Redeemer’s righteousness, and lie under the unconscious guilt of unnumbered and unpardoned sins; shall I, like them, cleave to this base life as my all for happiness, and not wait, and wish, and long for the day of my Master’s glorious appearance? No, I will not abide in that low measure of faith, which only begets a hope that I may be well when the Lord comes, but knows not what it is *to love the day of his appearance.* My endeavour shall be to be *strong in the faith, and abounding in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost; always fruitful in good works, and hasting unto the day of the Lord.* Hold out faith, and come Lord Jesus.”

Thus the saint-like minister now ripening for eter-

nal glory, affirmed his own exultant expectation of the day of Christ's appearance; but his last words were those of remonstrance and entreaty to such as would not be partakers of his joys. "To be plain, I am grieved at heart for many, very many of you, to think how you will make your appearance before Christ's judgment seat. You have no works to speak there for your belonging to Christ; I can see none. I see works of various kinds that prove you do not belong to him. If a life of pleasure, idleness, indulgence, drunkenness, pride, covetousness, would recommend you to the favour of the judge, few would be better received than numbers of you. In the name of God, my friends, when you know this moment in your own consciences, that if, as you have been and are, you should be called to judgment, you would be as surely cast into hell, as if you were already scorching in those dreadful flames, why will you live at such a rate?—Well, we shall be all before the judgment seat of Christ together. There the controversy between me, persuading you by the terrors of the Lord, and you determined to abide in your sins, will be decided. There it will appear whether your blood will be upon your own heads for your obstinate impenitence, or upon mine for not giving you warning. Christ will certainly either acquit or condemn me on this account; and if I should be acquitted herein, what will become of you? I tremble to think how so many words of mine will be brought up against you on that day. What will you say, what will you answer, how will you excuse yourselves? O sirs, if you will not be prevailed upon, you will with eternal self-reproach

curse the day that you knew me, or heard one word from my mouth. Why, why, will you die with so aggravated a destruction? O think of the judgment; think of it, and you will not be able to hold it out against your own souls. May the Lord incline you to do so; may he cause this word to sink deep into your hearts; may he shew you all your danger; and with an outstretched arm, bring you out of the hands of the devil, and translate you into the glorious kingdom of his dear Son to his own glory, and your unspeakable happiness in the day of the appearance of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Even so, most mighty God, and most merciful Father, for the same Jesus Christ's sake. Amen."

This awakening appeal seemed like a foreboding of an approaching end to the solemn duties of his sacred office; and a more touching close was never given to the ministry of any man, nor can there be produced a nobler specimen of the eloquence of a heart, throbbing at once with blissful prospects for himself, and grief over those who had not believed his report. His eye of faith could pierce through the gloom of death and the darksome regions of the grave, and enjoy a glimpse of that crown, radiant with the light of heaven, which awaited him in glory; while all that imparted a hue of mourning to the funeral pall, the shroud, and the silence of the tomb, was the conviction that he should become a witness in the great day, against those thoughtless sinners over whose salvation he yearned and wept in the bowels of Jesus Christ. Here we see at once, the sublimity and tenderness of the grace of God: a tear to love bedewed

the eye that glistened with seraphic rapture, as it caught on this side the river of death, a distant prospect of the ethereal scenes of eternal bliss; the disciple of Christ, like his Master wept, in the hour of triumph, over the place whose inhabitants might have known, ere they were hidden from their eyes, the things belonging to their peace.

Soon after this animated declaration of his own hopes, and his fears for many of his flock, Mr. Walker was seized with a violent illness. A fever confined him for several weeks to his room; and when he had in some measure lost the disease, its effects on an enfeebled system gave mournful warning of his approach to the grave.

His friends, however, had the satisfaction of seeing him recruit his strength a little, as is evident from the following letter of the Earl of Dartmouth to Mr. Rawlings, who sent this pious nobleman accounts of his health.

*Blackheath, May 17, 1760.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am more obliged to you than I can well express, for the repeated notices you have given me concerning that holy man of God, our valuable friend; and am heartily thankful to the indulgent Father of mercies, for the prospect your last brings of the continuance of his useful labours. While the will of God concerning him seemed doubtful, I could not resolve to write to you, not knowing how to suit my letter to the state it might find him in, but contented myself to wait with anxious impatience for the farther account you promised me, and which came not through the

hands of Mr. Talbot till last night. In the mean time I had various thoughts of heart; sometimes concluding that the Lord had taken him, and then supposing that a remaining doubt as to the event of his illness, had induced you to defer writing. My prayers were sometimes faintly offered up for him: had they not been addressed to him who searcheth the heart and trieth the reins, whose all piercing eyes discern the very thoughts and intents of the heart, they must have been lost in the multitude of strong cries and earnest supplications, that have been offered up at Truro and elsewhere. These I trust have prevailed to the prolonging a life, which is to be made yet farther instrumental in promoting the Redeemer's glory, and the salvation of redeemed souls. The fever with which Mr. W. has been attacked, seems by many of its symptoms, to have been of the same nature with that which many, in and about London, have undergone this spring; but with this material difference,—that, in these parts, it has usually been attended with an eruption, which the physicians have endeavoured to promote as much as possible. This, I suppose, occasions the difference in the manner of their treatment; here they have spared [depletion] as much as possible, and supported their patients with cordials. In both cases the success is from the Lord; to him be all the glory. Many thanks to you for your animating exhortations. I thank God that I cannot look inward, but I see abundant cause of self-abasement, or upward, but I see mercies, that, in a less insensible heart, would excite the warmest returns of gratitude and love. A strong remainder of unmorti-

fied sin casts a cloud before my eyes, that I cannot yet look forward with that joyful expectation which animates the breast of my friend. May my Lord speedily remove it, and give me to rejoice in hope of his glory, with joy unspeakable! I know you will not think it a trouble to let me hear once more of Mr. Walker. The sermon and tract you promise will be very acceptable, as all the former have been. I am much obliged to you for the perusal of Mr. Burnett's letter:—if the anecdote which he mentions concerning the lay-preachers be true, I am heartily sorry for it. I have heard that it was true some years ago, but has not been permitted of late. He and his fellow labourer, Mr. Venn, are, I believe, as useful ministers as any that adorn our church; may they long be made a blessing to their parish and the kingdom! I beg you to pray for one who much needs your prayers, as the most unfaithful of the servants of our common Lord, and who is your

Affectionate friend,

D.

Another letter from Lord Dartmouth to the same gentleman, will shew the lively interest he felt in the cheering, but delusive prospect of Mr. Walker's recovery; and though only a part of it refers directly to the subject of our present narrative, the remainder is a valuable testimony to the zeal of other excellent and well known clergymen.

*Blackheath, June 26, 1760.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I sent forward your letter to Mr. Talbot without delay, and the sermon as soon as I had read it; which I did with much satisfaction, and most heartily join in praising the Lord for giving the powerful word, and adding to the company of the preachers of the everlasting gospel in this favoured land. A mercy of the like nature is that which he has lately shewn to your part of the kingdom more especially, and to the whole in a degree, in restoring Mr. Walker to life and usefulness. May his latter end [be] greatly [blessed] and many souls yet be added to his crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus! How greatly am I obliged to you for the particualr account you have sent me, of the temper of this happy man in his late trying circumstances: my earnest wish for myself, for you, for all that I love, is, that whenever we are brought to the borders of the grave, we may be possessed of the same calm and stedfast confidence in the loving promises of our redeeming God and Father, and taste of that peace which passeth all understanding, which Christ did bequeath as his dying legacy to his beloved disciples, and in them to all that believe on, and love him to the end of the world. If we would thus die the death of the righteous, we must of all necessity die daily to the world, to sin and self; the Lord help us so to do.

I have delightful accounts from Huddersfield of the wonderful manner in which the ministry of their

faithful and laborious vicar<sup>1</sup> is blessed to that people, and by my last letters from thence, have the satisfaction to learn that his health was never better than at present. Thus does the Lord prosper and support his servants that trust in him, under all discouragements; blessed are they, who with faithful Abraham, against hope can believe in hope, and expect the accomplishment of the promises of God, when to the eye of flesh and blood, there appears the least probability of it. Mr. Venn laments exceedingly the loss of Mr. Burnett, whose infirm state has I find at last obliged him to seek the benefit of change of air. In his last [letter] to me are these words concerning him; “my faithful helper in the Lord’s work, after many repeated efforts to continue in the exercise of his duty, is obliged to desist: his behaviour under these afflicting circumstances, glorifies his Saviour and recommends his faith. Invincible patience, and the deepest humiliation, justifying God and accepting the strokes of his rod as a punishment for iniquity, joined to steadfast confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ, are the abiding tempers of his heart. It is my prayer that he may be restored to help me; for I may really say of Mr. Burnett as Paul of Timothy, I know few like minded, who preach the hatred and the mortification of sin, whilst they exalt the free grace and righteousness of our God and Saviour; who teach men to live in the denial of every evil temper, and in the exercise of every heavenly grace, and at the same time, sensible of their vileness, to cry, “God be merciful to me a sinner.”

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Venn.

As I have formerly mentioned to you the labours of my dear friend and tutor Mr. Merrick, at Reading, among the soldiers occasionally quartered in that place, I inclose for your perusal, the copy of a letter he received from one of them, sometime after he had left the place. I have not time at present to copy it, therefore must beg you to return it. My best respects attend Miss A. and Miss T.

I am my dear friend,  
Yours in the bonds of Christian love,

D.

A violent cough which appeared to be the forerunner of a decline, at length gave a fatal blow to the hopes of Mr. Walker's friends, and utterly incapacitated him for every species of labour. Surrounded by the exciting objects of his spiritual care, he yielded with great reluctance to the necessity of refraining from all exertion, and his illness was increased by the inquietude he experienced, as he felt a growing inability to continue feeding the flock of Christ. He was so enfeebled by disease and worn down by anxiety, that it was thought advisable to recommend him to go to Bristol Hotwells in the autumn. He remained there two months, but derived little or no benefit from the change of scene. His complete resignation to the will of God, and anxiety for the society at Truro, appear from the following letter which he wrote to them during his residence at Bristol.

*Bristol, September 18, 1760.*

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

While the unsearchable will of our common most gracious Father, who has united us in spirit by so near a relation, is taking me from you for a season in presence, it becomes both you and me to submit: and although, during this separation, both you are deprived of very valuable opportunities, and I disabled from that service, and deprived of that people which are so justly near my heart, yet we ought not to indulge an untimely, unsubmitting wish of seeing each other again. What a blessing, comfort, and refreshment the thought of you has been to my soul (as always, so more especially in these never-to-be-forgotten hours, when the eternal world appeared but a step off, and my soul was fixed on the illustrious day of the Lord's appearance) God only knows. While therefore you are so near my heart, my comfort and happiness having so much dependence upon you, it is impossible that I should either forget you, forbear to pray and praise God for you, or contribute what I may in my present circumstances to your establishment, progress, and joy.

How much my views must have been drawn to the world whither the forerunner is for us entered, in the sickness I have been so long under, and am, as far as I can see, very slowly recovering from, ye may easily judge. Views of the riches of Christ, and prospects of the glory that shall be revealed, have been and still

are, blessed be God, my best cordials. Yet I have found much opposition from the quarter of unbelief, and that to be strong in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, when every thing of my own is, and is evidently seen to be against me, when grace is so imperfect, when this life appears to be closing up, and all the false confidence derived from the esteem, and supports of most pious and endeared friends is stripped away, is an attainment indeed which I long after myself, and earnestly wish may be vouchsafed to you also in life, as well as in death. In these circumstances I find no relief, but in the blessed word of God, nor in that either, unless the gracious, delightful truths contained therein be made out to my mind by the Holy Ghost; for without his illumination, my most attentive reasonings on the Scriptures have always been found unsatisfactory and unedifying. Let me exhort you therefore to a more diligent use of the Scriptures, in much prayer for the light of the Spirit, that the glory of the Lord may shine more abundantly into your hearts, and produce in you a more lively desire of seeing him as he is, with an increasing transformation of your whole man into his likeness. Ah! my dear friends we neither love nor use the Scriptures as we ought! Do we make them our only guide, having no dependence on the wisdom of man? Do we come to them only for instruction, and do we come to them in every case? Do we come to them without-prejudice, desiring only to know what the will of the Lord is, and praying always for a will to perform it, however self may be denied by our so doing? Do we come to them daily, if possible, in all our retirements, making them

the ground of our confidence that our prayers are heard, and the measure whereby we are guided in all the things we ask of God? Particularly, do we read them afterwards, for support and direction according to present exigencies? Do we make them, and not our own fancies, the foundation of our meditations, and the rule of our conduct, so as that on no pretence whatever (especially on that most dangerous delusion of being under the guidance of the Spirit without regard had to the word) we either undertake any thing as duty without their warrant, or hold ourselves excused in the neglect of what they enjoin upon us. I will ask one further question of *you*—do you with awe, reverence, attention, and all carefulness, hear them read in the church, regarding that part of the public service as among the most material and important branches of it?

That I say so much to you concerning the Scriptures, is owing to the urgent necessity there is of doing it, from the state of religion every where. While professors have not the word of God before their eyes, they must follow the authority of man, or their own inventions, and unavoidably bring disgrace upon the name they profess.

I have your prayers—I value them highly—I request them earnestly. If the will of the Lord be so, I desire to be speedily with you. What his will is in this respect, is pretty much concealed as yet; for although I grow better, I have no strength to do any thing. That the Lord may instruct you more in his

revealed mind, may make you perfect, strengthen, settle you, is the important desire and prayer of

My dear friends,

Your most sincerely affectionate

Servant in Christ Jesus,

SAMUEL WALKER.

It is impossible to read this delightful letter, without remarking the increasing humility of its writer as he approached his end, and how much more he mixed up himself with his people, when speaking of Christian imperfections, than he did in the earlier and less experienced days of his religious course. The fact is, the nearer we rise to heaven in true piety, the more we see of our hearts with the keen perception of angels; and the view of our own failings becomes so clear and forcible, that we are unable to refrain from casting ourselves in the same dust and ashes into which we would bring others. The altered tone of Mr. Walker, when compared with the denunciations of his first days of zeal, is an exemplary instance of the truly humbling effect of a high state of religious attainment. The larger our supply of grace, the less will be our opinion of any thing that is in us by nature.

Mr. Walker passed about two months at Bristol, but deriving no satisfactory relief from the waters, he removed to Kington, in Warwickshire, with the view of spending sometime with the clergyman of the place, Mr. Talbot. The season, however, set in so unfavourably, that it was thought expedient for him to return to Bristol. During his second visit to the

Hotwells, it appears that the state of repose necessary for his health, became insufferable to his active mind, and he accordingly wrote the following letter for his papers.

TO MR. JONAH MILFORD.

DEAR JONAH,

While I was with you, the trouble of many little things which I had to do, lay on yourself and honest Andrew. You must still therefore bear the burden. I am not willing to be altogether idle while I am absent from you, and shall be glad to take this opportunity of finishing *the corruptions of the heart, the illustrations of the familiar catechism, and the directions relating to marriage*. What I desire of you is, to find in the leather desk in the study (for there I know it is) a scrap of paper whereon are written in a few lines, the general plan under which I intend to methodize the corruptions of the heart. The corruptions themselves I have here already.

You must absolutely find also my book of the illustrations. The copy I have is taken from one of the boys, and utterly unintelligible in many places. Desire Mr. Conon to inquire for it at the society. Perhaps Rawlings may have it, or Miss Tregenna. Pray transcribe the whole (of the illustrations only) and send me. Somewhere or other in the study you will meet with the hints concerning marriage. They are written on a sheet of paper; but I must have besides what was in your little book, and in a paper which dear Henry Trewolla transcribed. Send me these as you get them ready.

I find the thought of my dear people at Truro a trying onc. I could wish to see you all. But God gives me herein a measure of submission. I can say in some sort, his will be done. Remember me to them whosoever they are, and believe me, dear Jonah, with wonted affection, Yours,

S. WALKER.

I saw — at Devizes. He prays ; but is dreadfully under worldly fear and shame.

The next letter, the last he ever wrote to his friend Mr. Rawlings, gives some hope of returning health, and shows how sanctified affliction had wrought upon his soul.

*Bristol, November 11, 1760.*

MY DEAR RAWLINGS,

When your letter came in, I was taking up my pen to write to Counsellor Schutz, a promising man, and whom I suppose you know, for I find you have been trafficking with greater folks than he. Immediately I laid aside that purpose, my heart being strongly inclined to a little conversation with my dear friend at St. Columbe.

You will be looking I know to find the state of my health in the first place ; I bless God [it is] better. The complaint on my lungs is in a manner, I may say entirely gone, neither have I any cough that gives me trouble. I sleep well enough, the colour of my face is better, and within about ten days I have eaten with some appetitc.

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After this account of myself, you will be ready to ask, what then ails you? Why truly nothing particularly. But I am relaxed as usual, gain no strength nor flesh, and I am continually getting cold, though I think no care is wanting to prevent it. In short, all is much better than I could expect, and in my judgment it will, if I can rub through the winter at this rate. Where God only knows; but I know assuredly where I wish it might be, and where I [desire to] spend the residue of my days, as far as the honour, and interests of my Master shall permit. How shall I easily persuade myself that my poor services can be of such use [any where] as at dear Truro? Pray signify so much to the dear people there, and withal that I have no thought of leaving them, nor ever had, unless driven to it by being unable to labour any longer among them. I could say something to you also concerning the growing health of my soul, as I trust. Indeed I can say with great truth, mercy embraceth me on every side. I have found of late a more happy concurrence of self abasing, and Christ glorifying views than ever before in my life. Never before could I say such bad things of myself, or good ones of him. I have been led to justify the Lord in taking me from my people and in stopping my mouth; yea even should he never allow me to open it more, and lay me quite aside as a vessel in which he has no pleasure. Views of this kind have, I believe, wrought more resignation in my spirit to God's way with me; but I desire to remember, that if he hideth his face I shall be troubled. Yet why should I think he will. He could never see any thing in me worthy of his least

regard, yet he has never forsaken me from the day that he first caused me to know him, and in the perilous time' O blessed be God! How did he stand by and save me! All is free grace; even glory is the gift of God through Christ, and if we do not look on it as such, we shall never long after it: and pray remark that, and examine your heart closely upon it; the rather because the hope of glory in you can be your only security against the world.

But I am learning to contract my letters, I write so many of necessity.

The poor creature you mention is an object of compassion indeed. Do not leave him by any means, and pray with him *shortly*. Do not despair of him, and let this be your reason for not doing it, even because he seems to despair of himself. Good Mr Penrose spends half a page to shew that Francis Spira's case was not absolute despair, but imagined he saw some faith in him through his deepest agonies. Your method I conceive, should be, not to press him to the application of particular promises, so much as to lay out the scheme of redemption from the very fall, insisting on the person and transactions of Christ, and then observing the fulness and freedom of the promises issuing from it. By such a channel it is, that you probably will be able to lead him to see the evil of sin. I would talk this over and over to him, and never without this, speak of the justice, majesty, and holiness of God, explaining these as they are illustrated in the life of Christ. It may be very proper by and by also, to open the corruption of nature. The Lord be with you in this work.

I have seen no reason to alter, whether doctrine or discipline, by any thing I see abroad, and therefore advise you to go on as we have done.

Excuse my saying more, than that I am in the sincerest love to all with you, especially those of your house,

Your cordially affectionate and obliged,  
SAMUEL WALKER.

To Mr. Rawlings, Junr.  
At St. Columbe.

A second letter to Mr. Jonah Milford acknowledging the receipt of some of his papers, and asking for more, is very expressive of affection for his people, and desire to be at work in some way.

*Bristol, Nov. 15, 1760.*

MY DEAR JONAH,

You and Andrew have sent me the papers I needed, which I regard as a testimony of your love, and take very kindly. But yet there is another paper regarding the corruptions of the heart, which I must get you to look again for. You will find in the desk a half sheet of paper, on which is written, very fair for my hand, a line or two at the top to this purpose, *A familiar introduction to self knowledge, Preface.* This is not the paper I want, but a scrap like that you have already sent me, whereon is methodized the scheme in which I last determined to publish the corruptions of the heart. The hints you have sent me were written before and designed for a larger scheme. Unless you look carefully you will overlook it. As

there are many papers of business, these pretty well known to you and Andrew, I would desire that none but you two may be employed in this search.

The letters sent me by one and another of you are a cordial to me. Any one who expects no particular answer (unless there be urgent need of advice) will do me a pleasure by putting a line into Mr. Conon's cover.

\* \* \* \* \*

Every one says I look better, and in divers respects I think myself to be better. But I gain no strength that I can perceive, so still remain unfit for any labour.

It will give me unspeakable comfort to return to my dear charge at Truro, if God will; and as I do not grow worse, but rather better, there is reason to suppose it is his will I shall so do, but not quickly. Was I now at Truro, I must keep within doors unless carried abroad.

I am, dear Jonah,  
Your truly affectionate,  
S. WALKER.

And so say to the rest.

These letters of Mr. Walker convey to us some idea of the delightful state of his mind in sickness. His unreserved communication with his people; his love for them; his anxiety to write for the good of souls, when he could no longer speak to them; his longing to return to Truro, mingled with the truest resignation to the divine will, were lovely symptoms of a supply of spiritual health, as the bodily frame decayed. On his own account he could not

wish to live, nor had he any longing to remain here but that he might be made the instrument of adding new glories to the diadem of his Redeemer, by a laborious and faithful ministry. The all-wise providence of God had however ordained, that the inhabitants of Truro should see their pastor no more; but it is said that in his conversations with persons who visited him at Bristol, he was made eminently useful, and probably there was some important design in the appointment of his sojourn there in illness, which will be unfolded, when the mysteries of the Lord's dealings with his children, are developed to admiring and adoring saints in the bright realms of heaven.

About a month after the date of the last letter to Jonah Milford, Mr. Walker was advised to remove to the neighbourhood of London, and accepted the invitation of the Earl of Dartmouth to pay him a visit at Blackheath. Lord Dartmouth was one of those excellent men, who, in a period of wide-spread error, and apathy towards real religion, enjoyed the privilege of a knowledge of divine truth, and manifested a sincere love for preachers of the gospel. He was the friend of several zealous clergymen, and was glad to welcome to his house a despised follower of his despised Master. Here Mr. Walker found a truly Christian welcome, and received the utmost attention during his trying illness. A letter from his noble host to Mr. Rawlings, will describe the state of his health, soon after he removed to Blackheath.

*Blackheath, Dec. 30th, 1760.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

The secret of our correspondence has been discovered, I find, to the sagacity of my valuable guest, which is not of the common sort, by something that dropped from me at Rington: you see I am but ill to be trusted with things of this nature. You are looking, I know, with impatience for some account of his health. He appears to be better than he was a week ago. You may possibly have learned that he caught cold upon the road, which brought on a return of his cough and of the oppression upon his lungs, and made so much alteration as gave some of his friends, who had seen him not long before, much uneasiness; but within a few days, the case appears to be much altered with him; he now coughs not at all, breathes with more freedom, and the lameness which the cold had settled in his limbs, has almost entirely left him; his appetite is not very good, but by means of asses' milk, broth, and other things between meals, he receives a sufficient quantity of nourishment in the day. The opinion of an eminent physician in London, whom he has consulted is, that there is no unsoundness at present within him, and consequently no immediate danger; that his disorder proceeds from malignant matter which, in his late fever, he had not strength enough to throw out upon the skin; that if this should form upon his lungs, there will then be great danger. I had wrote to you some days ago, but deferred to send my letter at Mr. Walker's request, who proposed to give me a note for you to inclose in it. I am now glad I did not send it,

because I had not given so favourable an account as I do now: if he finds time to write to you as he proposed, your impatience to feast upon that letter may possibly cause you to wish this at an end; observe I do not say it will; if it should, it would neither surprise nor offend,

My dear friend,

Your faithful and obedient Servant,

D.

It is my hearty prayer that the Lord may give a blessing to your endeavours for the consolation of the unhappy man you mention.

The situation of Mr. Walker, during his confinement in the house of Lord Dartmouth, was one of singular interest and severe suffering. He was tried by all the mournful changes of that most miserable of diseases, a pulmonary consumption, the diversified effects of which are equally distressing on body and mind. In the midst of these afflictions, the kindness of his generous host and hostess was unbounded; the physicians refused to receive any thing from him for their attendance; his flock at Truro were perpetually conveying to him sums of money, cheerfully bestowed on a minister who had impoverished himself for their sakes. Thus he received the full extent of a Saviour's promise, to those who seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, which added strength to that faith with which he contemplated the yet unrevealed glories of a heavenly world. "I stand," said he, "and look upon that blessed world with an established heart; I see the way prepared, opened, and assured to me in

Jesus Christ, and for ever blessed be the name of God, that I can look upon death, that introduces that glorious scene, without any kind of fear."

All who visited him in sickness, were struck with the calm dignity and peaceful resignation of his manner, and many were greatly edified by his conversation, for he retained full possession of his mental vigor, and was as capable as ever of guiding the inquirer, consoling the desponding, and rebuking ignorant pretenders. An instance of the latter power is recorded in an anecdote, relating to a visit he received from a presumptuous youth, during his residence at Blackheath. A young man called to request the favour of an interview with him, which was granted. Mr. Walker supposed he wanted spiritual advice, but found to his surprise, that he came, with an air of consequence, to set him right, as he thought, upon points of doctrine peculiar to his own sect, a service he was disposed to offer from the report he had heard of his usefulness in the church! He was received with great courtesy by Mr. Walker, who politely thanked him for the kindness of his intentions, but requested that he would first reply to a few questions.

"Pray Sir," inquired Mr. Walker, "what is your age?"

"About three and twenty, Sir."

"Well, Sir, and how old do you suppose I am?"

"I should imagine, Sir, past fifty."

"May I ask the nature of your occupation, Sir?"

"A journeyman cabinet-maker."

"I suppose you know mine?"

“ Yes, Sir: you are a minister.”

“ How long should you think I have been one ?”

“ Why Sir, I have heard you have been a very zealous clergyman for some years.”

“ Which of us should you imagine possessed the most learning ?”

“ You of course, Sir.”

“ But which of us, do you think, has studied the Scriptures the most attentively ?”

“ Sir, you have had the most opportunities of doing so.”

“ Now, Sir, which should you conceive has prayed the most ?”

“ Very probably you may, Sir.”

“ Which do you suppose has enjoyed the most advantages for improvement and experience ?”

“ Of course, Mr. Walker, you, Sir, in your situation.”

“ Well young man, I have only one more thing to say to you. What do you think of the self-conceit, that could induce you to come here to instruct a person who, according to your admission, had been eminently useful in the church, and was certainly your superior in age, length of religious experience, learning, and study of Scripture ? Now allow me to return you the kindness you designed for me, by instructing you in the pride and vanity of your own heart.” This rebuke delivered with all the mildness of Christian love, with the peculiar force of the venerable minister’s manner, and with the solemnity of one that spoke on the verge of the eternal world, produced a great effect upon the mind of this self-conceited

youth, and may prove a useful lesson to those of the present day, who mistake their own prejudices for clear views of gospel doctrine, and fancy that skill in the verbiage of party, implies a real knowledge of scriptural truth.

## CHAPTER XII.

### MR. WALKER'S LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH. CONCLUDING REMARKS.

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#### *His comfort in great suffering.*

IN the spring of the year 1761 Mr. Walker's illness assumed a character which plainly foretold his end was near at hand. A burning fever by day, and at night distressing perspirations, with a cough that deprived him of rest, spread a most afflicting languor over his frame, and produced a melancholy depression of spirits, yet his faith supported him. "The weakness of my body," he observed, "deprives me of all joyous sensations, but my faith in God's promises, I bless the Lord, is firm and unshaken. What though the loss of strength and spirits, robs me of all comfortable communion with God, the promises are not therefore made void." In his more placid moments, he reviewed with strict attention, the doctrines he had preached and published, and came to this happy conclusion—"I am sure they will stand the test of the last day." On contemplating his past life, he blessed God for any symptoms of the power of divine grace, rejoicing in them as evidences, and praised God that for ten years before his illness, he could see "evident marks, of having lived with a single eye to the glory

of God, in opposition to the selfishness of his nature." In such calmness did he possess his soul, that it was said of him, it never could be discovered he desired to live or wished to die. When the delusive changes of his disease gave him a momentary hope of recovery, his thoughts were instantly directed to his work at Truro; and when a relapse took place in his enfeebled frame, and the shadows of death came over him again, his affections rose from earth to heaven, from the fold below to the Lamb in the midst of the throne. He was ready to depart, or willing to wait, and "found nothing come so near his heart as the fear lest his will should thwart God's in any circumstance."

A letter from Lord Dartmouth to his correspondent in Cornwall, gives a most interesting testimony to the calmness of Mr. Walker, in the midst of his last severe trial.

*Blackheath, July 3, 1761.*

MY DEAR SIR,

Mr. Walker, to whom I read your letter, says a hearty Amen to the prayers you desire him to put up for you, and desires your prayers that he may not dishonour Christ in this last scene of his life; indeed his stedfast faith and exemplary patience are ornaments to his profession. He has an unshaken reliance on the faithfulness and truth of his redeeming God, a firm dependance on his word of promise, without any support from pleasing frames or animating views, which the extreme weakness of his body, and great depression of his spirits utterly deprive him of.

Surely the loss of them is not to be lamented, when the soul is possessed of such calm and peaceful resignation. It is my heart's desire that I may die the death of this righteous man, that my latter end may be like his.

\* \* \* \* \*

I can say nothing more expressive of Mr. Walker's present condition, than that he grows weaker daily, though he has yet strength to sit up, and that it will be no surprise to hear of his death to-morrow, though it is not improbable that he may continue yet some weeks.

\* \* \* \* \*

I have lately had the pleasure of seeing Mr. Haweis, who has been here to take a last leave of his dear friend and father in Christ. I trust he is well suited to his situation; he appears to grow in grace, and while he does so, he shall want no manner of thing, whether spiritual or temporal, that is needful for him.

Dear Mr. W. is just now persuaded to make trial of a medicine of Dr. Ward's. There is little room to expect success, but if it should please God to make it effectual to bring him back again from the dead, I will not fail to rejoice your heart with the account.

I am dear Sir,

With a grateful sense of your kindness,

Ever yours,

D.

Mr. Walker went down slowly and with extreme suffering to the grave, but those who witnessed his blissful state of mind, described it as perfect peace. To a

friend, who shed tears, he said, “ why do you trouble yourself? I am going to heaven; Christ my Lord died.” When Mr. Burnet wept over him, he exclaimed, “ do you not rejoice with me?” Five days before his death, he caused a letter to be written to Mr. Conon, in which he assures him that “ with great confusion of thought he had no doubts, great confidence, great submission, no complaining.” To this he added, “ as to actual views of the joys that are coming, I have none, but a stedfast belief of them in Christ;” but lest he should be supposed to be wanting in satisfactory experience, he proceeded, “ what I have found in myself for months past, and the present workings of the Spirit, have left me without any doubt of my union with Christ.”

This last observation will explain the reason of a remark made by the Rev. J. Jane in a letter to Mr. Rawlings, written the evening of the very same day Mr. Walker dictated his communication to Mr. Conon.

*Blackheath, Tuesday night,  
July 14, 1761.*

DEAR SIR.

I can truly say, it has not been my fault that I have not written a line to Mr. Walker's dearest relations, and chief friends, every post. I have usually prevented his request by the proposal, and he tenderly considering my weakness, has often dissuaded me from attempting it, always cautioned me to write but a line. It was my desire to have written to you this morning, but my Lord not returning till just now, I had not received your letter, and want of franks, be-

sides indisposition and other hinderances, put me by. Writing is quite another task to me, at the best, than it is to you.

As soon as I had read you favour, I told Mr. Walker, "I have a letter from R. in answer to that I wrote by your order for the sermons on the law. B— has them, and he has written to him to send them to Lord D. He begs your prayers." "I cannot pray for him, I am not able to pray for myself." "You may sigh for him." "God bless him, and keep him unspotted from the world. That I can say for him with all my heart, and perhaps that short prayer is better than a multitude of words."

To this fervent ejaculation it is owing that I take pen in hand the instant, late as it is, while the incident is fresh in my memory. I know too, now my Lord is come, my writing is superfluous. Any thing in my power, though it be as inconsiderable as the widow's mite, shall not be wanting, be it only to show my zeal.

I doubt not that we agree in every point of Christian doctrine. The matter of "animal sensations" has, in truth, nothing to do with the gospel of Christ. The grief is that they are taken for spiritual, by many imaginary converts, and not a few weak brethren, through the erude notions of injudicious teachers, magnified by their own folly and conceit. This is a kind of tare, which, I am of opinion, by the artifice of the devil, will ever accompany the semination and growth of true religion. I have had frequent occasion to reprove and admonish young people concerning it, and even the more advanced in years and

grace, are not always free from some little misapprehension of the nature of spiritual joy, of no consequence indeed, while kept within their breast; but hurtful, when divulged and recommended under the said character of Christian experience. Spiritual discernment ever increases, in proportion to real experience and proficiency in spiritual life, but alas! for want of being well guarded and well instructed, clearly principled and thoroughly disciplined; much of what passes for experience with many, is very erroneous and delusive.

I will here set the name of,

Dear Sir,

Your very affectionate humble servant,

J. JANE.

Fit it is indeed that all Christians, especially ministers of the gospel, be united in heart and affection. Amen.

To this was added, "Thursday noon. 'Two days nearer heaven' is the great comfort of the departing spirit and his surviving friend."

The last struggles of expiring nature in this eminent servant of Christ, are represented to have been very severe, and were perhaps designed to display to those who witnessed them, the perfect victory of faith over the sting and terrors of death. In the midst of convulsions, spasms, and such a dreadful sensation in his heart, that it seemed, to use his own words, "to be tied round with thongs," he maintained always a praying, patient, and sometimes an exulting spirit. On the same day that Mr. Jane's postscript was writ-

ten, he expressed a sense of the most rapturous foretaste of future bliss. Awaking from a doze, he seized the hand of his nurse, and said, "I have been upon the wings of the cherubim, heaven has been in a manner opened to me; I shall be soon there myself, and am only sorry I cannot take you with me." He also observed to Mr. Burnet, that if his strength allowed, he could tell him news which would rejoice his heart—"I have had," he said, "*such* views of heaven; but I can say no more." These raptures were however qualified by the deepest humility; for when one present rejoiced over his apparent ripeness for heaven, he said, "nay, my dear friend, the body of sin is not yet done away, I shall continue a sinner to the very last gasp." He begged another person to pray for him as a poor miserable sinner. Such indeed were more satisfactory evidences of his right condition, than the ecstasies he had experienced in a doze, which may be in some measure attributed to the common effects of the disease under which he laboured, just before it terminates in death. Repentance, faith, love, and obedience, graces which so delightfully adorned the character of Mr. Walker, were the true proofs of his preparation for heaven, and confidence in them could not have been shaken, even had his dying moments been deprived of all pleasurable sensations. Neither raptures in Christians, nor indifference in unbelievers, *prove* any thing of the unknown hereafter. How can we have *actual* views of things above, when eye hath not seen nor ear heard them; inasmuch as they are alone perceptible to angelic faculties, and we must be made like Christ before we

can see him as he is? “Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, *for we shall see him as he is.*”<sup>1</sup> Heaven will burst in full glory on the astonished spirit of the departed saint, and, awful thought, hell will open on the appalled soul of the hardened sinner, whatever their previous feelings may have been. The tenor of the *life*, and not the emotions of the *death* of any man, must form our ground of hope as to his destiny in another world.

The state of Mr. Walker, just before he died, is most satisfactorily evidenced by Lord Dartmouth, in a letter to their mutual friend, Mr. Rawlings.

*Blackheath, July 17, 1761.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Dear Mr. Walker is still alive, but so near the confines of the grave, that the only wish we have left is for his speedy release; the extreme weakness to which he is reduced, so as to be scarce able to speak, must be a state of great suffering, but it excites in him no murmur or complaint, nor the most distant expression of impatience. His chief concern while he had any strength left, was that he might not dishonour his master in the last stages of his disorder, by any fretfulness or impatience, whatever he might have to undergo: his prayer has been heard, and he is now silent and submissive, so that it is scarcely to be known from himself that he is not perfectly at ease. He opens not his mouth, but to utter some useful

<sup>1</sup> 1 John, iii. 2.

admonition and advice to those about him, or to declare his sense of the loving-kindness of the Lord, and his stedfast confidence in God his Saviour. "I know," said he to me yesterday, "that when this earthly tabernacle shall be dissolved, I shall have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

However nature must feel the loss of such a friend, yet the grief which it excites, is mixed with a joyful satisfaction and complacency, which forbids the most selfish heart to wish for his return; no, my dear friend, he shall not come back to us,—may we be happy enough to go to him. He has more than once expressed his delight in the prospect of finding many of his dear Truro friends in those blessed regions to which he is going, and of seeing others come after him to the same happy place. That you will be among them I cannot have any doubt, and I trust also that I shall meet you there, if I never see your face on earth.

I am deeply indebted to you, more deeply than I can express, for all your late repeated favours. The copies which you allow me to keep I admire from my heart. I hope they will be useful to me. Methinks I am glad that dear Mr. W. is not in a condition to hear the particulars of poor ——'s death. How they would have pained his loving heart. His example is indeed an awful warning to all, who through fear of men, are ashamed of Christ and of his word, in this adulterous and sinful generation; the doom of such is but too plainly declared. I think every thing of Mr. Haweis that you can wish: he seems to me, to grow in humility, which, as in all, so I take it more

particularly in him, is to be looked upon as the only foundation of all other graces. His zeal is lively and I hope prudent, and his success, thank God, proportionable. Mr. Burnet is with us now, but having been myself from home, I have as yet conversed but little with him; I know the opinion that my dear friend Mr. Venn has of him.

\* \* \* \* \*

I trust a lively and grateful sense of the great blessing that has been bestowed upon Truro, will be fixed upon the hearts of those who have been partakers of it, and that the want of their pastor and father, will keep them watchful and humble. He has often thankfully rejoiced in reflecting, that they have been brought on in such a way, as if they continue in it, the devil himself shall never prevail against them.

\* \* \* \* \*

Mr. Jane and Mr. Burnet send love to you; accept the same from, dear Sir,

Your obedient and affectionate servant,

D.

Saturday, 18. I have just received the sermons on the law. Mr. Walker appears to-day to be at the last extremity, he will hardly live till to-morrow. Happy release.

Sunday, July 19, 1761, the morning after his noble friend's last postscript was written, Mr. Walker's happy spirit passed with a gentle sigh from the sabbath on earth to that in heaven. A letter from Mr. Burnet to Mr. Rawlings, of St. Columbe, thus describes his peaceful end.

*Blackheath, July 20, 1761.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Mr. Walker is no longer an inhabitant of this world:—yesterday, at a quarter past nine in the morning, he left a poor sickly body, and joined the society of heaven. His death was like his behaviour in sickness—without a groan: I was not present; Mr. Jane and Mrs. Randall had withdrawn for a moment, and the next moment, word was brought that he was gone. We cannot judge distinctly how, or in what manner, he was engaged previous to his dissolution; he seemed to be in prayer, and was heard to say “Lord Jesus:” but for a day and night before, at times, his faculties were much benumbed; and the testimonies already given to his faith and love were sufficient, abundantly. I refer you to the two letters I have wrote to Mr. Conon on this head; and earnestly pray the Lord to bless those awful providenees to your soul and mine. Remember what he has said to me more than once, “why are you sorry, &c. I go to heaven, Christ my Lord died;” and Christ, my dear friend, will speedily return again. I pray you be a comforter to those with you, who may be ready too much to grieve as those who have no hope; especially to dear Miss Tregenna. I saw your last to Mr. Pearson, and as I have wrote to Mr. Conon, you have no reason to question my love.

I am unfeignedly yours,

GEORGE BURNET.

Mr. Jane desires his affectionate regards to him and all friends. I go for Oxford and Huddersfield this day.

According to his own desire that he might be buried in whatever parish he died, the remains of Mr. Walker were interred in the churchyard at Lewisham. He had been removed to a lodging near the house of Lord Dartmouth, a few weeks before his death, where he expired amidst the affectionate attentions and sympathy of his friends, and to the inexpressible sorrow of all who had partaken of his counsel, and profited by his ministry. He was only in the forty-eighth year of his age.

The whole history of the church affords not a more delightful instance of a wise, self-denying, and laborious parish priest. In public and in private, he filled without a visible hiatus, the entire circumference of his circle of duty, and left for posterity, as it is hoped this narrative has proved, a model for the imitation of all parochial ministers, allowing, of course, for variations in peculiar circumstances and times. What impression he made on the minds of those pious men he visited, may be gathered from a letter of the excellent Hervey, after he had been at Weston Flavel. "I was lately favoured at Weston with a visit from the Rev. Mr. Walker of Truro, who is indeed a most excellent man, and seems well to deserve the character he bears. There is something in him very engaging, and very venerable. During our conversation, I felt a kind of reverential awe on my mind, blended with more than fraternal affection. How old is he ?

By his looks he appears to be past forty. What a reproach it is to our men in power, nay to the nation itself, that so valuable a person should, at this time of life, be no more than a country curate. But he, good man, disregards the things of this world."

The description given by Calamy of the great Howe seems very applicable to Mr. Walker. "As to his person, he was very tall and exceeding graceful. He had a good presence, and a piercing but pleasant eye; and there was that in his looks and carriage, that discovered he had something within that was uncommonly great, and tended to excite veneration. His intellectual accomplishments were eminent. He was one of great abstractedness of thought, a strong reasoner, and one that had a very penetrating judgment, which carried him as deep into a subject as most men ever went that handled it. He had bright natural parts, and they were greatly improved by study and experience. He had an admirable way of thinking upon any subject that offered; and many times very surprising turns in discoursing upon it."

All persons who have mentioned the appearance and character of Mr. Walker, agree in giving an outline of him, somewhat similar to this. His countenance indicated the possession of a calm but exalted understanding, and his conversation was replete with the piety of a saint, the information of a scholar, the judgment of a sage, and the courtesy of a gentleman. In private life, he attracted the esteem and respect of all his associates, and repaid their affection by instructive lessons of truth. In his ministry, he was not content with a power of producing excitement and command-

ing attention, but inquired from his converts as to the nature and extent of their impressions, that he might enable them to distinguish between transient impulses of feeling, and the deep-rooted workings of vital religion. An overwhelming solicitude for souls actuated his every movement, and caused him to make each incident of life in some measure subservient to the concerns of eternity. Possessed of the rare power of gaining an ascendancy over the minds of others, he invariably used it for their spiritual benefit, and never once employed it for secular or selfish purposes. He sought no other hire than the fruit of a diligent ministry, and he resigned his benefice, and the prospect of a rich alliance, that nothing might obstruct him in his one pursuit; nor was he ever heard to express a desire to exchange a scene of retirement, and poverty honoured by the especial blessing of God, for a more productive or more prominent situation. He was content to cultivate that portion of the vineyard assigned him by his heavenly Master, and had no anxiety but to dress it into health and fruitfulness, and to excite his fellow labourers to do the same. He owed nothing to this world, and tasted chiefly of its bitters: all his enjoyments descended from above, borne to him on the stream of that river which makes glad the city of our God, of whose waters, his soul is now drinking at their source before the throne.

His works are mostly in the shape of sermons or brief treatises on religious subjects. They are remarkable for clear and well arranged views of divine truth, accompanied with the most powerful applica-

tions to the conscience. It would be unfair to criticise his style, because a great part of his writings were never prepared by himself for the press, and were only intended for his own congregation and friends. Although, as part of the remains attached to this narrative will shew, he was not incapable of sublime and original conception, yet like the apostle, he studied, for the sake of usefulness, great plainness of speech. He seemed to be utterly unsolicitous about himself; and no more desired to write for fame, than to labour for the sake of gain; his only object was the honour of his heavenly Master, and not the vain applause of man. The effect of many pious writings and sermons is lost, in the admiration excited by the brilliant talents and imagination of their authors, and the messenger is frequently more thought of than his message. Mr. Walker escaped this evil by preaching and writing only for the heart, and by making all his discourses as plain as the subject permitted, though never forgetting the dignity of truth, or falling below its majesty. In a sermon on Acts xxvi, 28, he says, “it is my endeavour always to speak in the most intelligible manner, and to bring what I have to say to a determinate *point* that may be easily seen, to the end that you may not be puzzled by a variety of matter and of distinctions;” and accordingly his addresses were so framed, that the topics he discussed were well apprehended by those who heard him, and dwelt in their memories.

His “*Christian*” contains a practical course of sermons, on *The sinfulness and misery of man—The helplessness of man—The power and love of Christ—*

*Faith in Christ* — *The believer, a new creature* — which will long continue to be read with delight and profit, by those who value the grand fundamental doctrines of the gospel. The “Fifty-two sermons on the baptismal covenant, creed, ten commandments, and other important subjects of practical religion, being one for each Sunday in the year,” prefaced by a brief but interesting account of his life and ministry, are such valuable illustrations of the leading truths contained in our church catechism, that no clergyman ought to be without them. These were published in the year 1763, and the editor informs us that it was Mr. Walker’s intention, had his life been spared to have printed a series of expository lectures upon the whole of the church catechism; happily, however, those he lived to complete, have been long known to the world. In the year 1788, Mr. Barker, vicar of St. Mary’s, Hull, printed his nine sermons on the covenant of grace, with an addition of three letters on ordination. These discourses had previously found their way into the pages of the *Theological Miscellany*, but were now brought out separately, in order that they might become more extensively useful. The excellent Ambrose Serle superintended the publication of his “*Christ the Purifier*,” “containing ten discourses upon the sanctification of believers, through the love and grace of Jesus Christ,” and wrote a preface in recommendation of them. Of Mr. Walker he well observes, “he desired to be and was a *bible divine*, one who wished to draw his religious principles entirely from the book of God, and who proved the real influence of those principles upon his heart, by the careful conformity of his life. He main-

tained, after his blessed Master, that the *tree* must *first* be made good, ere the fruit could be good ; for *men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles* ; and that the grace of God leads men, according to an old observation, to ‘ *work from life and not for life.* ’ ”

Many papers and letters of Mr. Walker have from time to time found their way into various religious periodicals, and all bear evidence of the power of his mind and the devotedness of his heart. The same also appear in the smaller treatises which were printed during his life and after his death ; and both in his published writings, and in those which yet remain unprinted, there are the strongest marks of a progressive apprehension of divine things, and of a growing humility.

The review of Mr. Walker’s character would be incomplete, without a few observations on the effects of a ministry, such as that he so judiciously exercised, on the present aspect of religion in our land. He lived in an age of great interest, when the long forgotten doctrines of the reformation began to be received amongst a people, who had sunk into miserable depths of apathy and irreligion. A flame had just been enkindled by the fire and zeal of certain energetic individuals, who possessed much more of the fervour, than of the wisdom of Christianity, and whose eyes were so dazzled by a sudden burst of light, that they lost the power of looking calmly either on present circumstances or future consequences. Their efforts were made with a laudable desire to rouse from the sleep of death, those who slumbered in their sins ;

but they were so elated by success, that they forgot, while spreading gospel doctrines, to lay permanent foundations for a spirit of Christian unity. The confusion and disunion which succeeded the death of one of such leaders, were generally as injurious as his labours had been useful. Whitfield, and others who pursued a like course, undoubtedly waged a mighty warfare against the spiritual enemies of man; but in the heat of battle, struck too much at a venture, and inflicted wounds upon their own church which have not yet been healed. Instead of bringing into vigorous action the practical wisdom of our reformers, they adopted sudden plans of their own, which were often ill-suited to the then agitated elements around them, and productive of serious injury when they had settled into a calm. They made too much haste for the gradual working of gospel leaven; but, to do them justice, their motives were pure and their lives devoted to the willing service of God. It must also be remembered, that they had no opportunity of seeing, as we do, the full extent of those dangers which accompany departure from established discipline and order. The dissenters of that age were generally well disposed to enjoy their own opinions in peace, and set an edifying example of learning and piety. Watts, Doddridge, Guise, and others, preached also the true doctrines of the reformation, which had unhappily been overlooked by too many churchmen, who neither felt in their hearts nor taught in their pulpits, what they had subscribed with their hands. Hence these good men naturally attracted attention and friendship from enlightened clergymen, who suspected no evil, nor had

indeed cause to fear it from such liberal non-conformists. That, however, which was not to be dreaded from individuals, ought to have been apprehended from principles, to the spread of which an unguarded conduct in many members of our establishment gave but too much facility. Mr. Walker and his contemporaries of a kindred spirit, foresaw and escaped these dangers, while they have transmitted to posterity proofs of devotedness to their calling, and of experimental godliness, fully equal to those of men more popular but less prudent. They beheld with amazement and grief, those deviations from all rule by which thousands were misguided, though they were, notwithstanding, most unjustly reproached as enthusiasts. Of this number were Archdeacon Basset, Mr. Adam, Mr. Biddulph, the band of evangelists in Cornwall, Mr. Romaine in London, and many more, in whose footsteps a large company of the priests are now treading with success, who will, it is hoped, if a wider scope of usefulness, proportioned to a vastly augmented population, is opened to them, ultimately bring back those who have wandered from our fold, only because its dimensions were not sufficient to contain such a multitude. Of the followers of Wesley, Mr. Walker observed to Mr. Adam, "my conduct with regard to the Methodists, hath been upon the plan of Gamaliel's advice: for though there appeared a zeal and boldness in them which might very justly engage my heart to them, yet I could never persuade myself their proceedings were justifiable;" and again he says, "nevertheless I trust they have been the means of kindling gospel principles among us, and seem about

to leave the work to more regular and capable heads than their own."

One of the last advices Mr. Walker is reported to have given to a favourite member of his clerical club was, "whatever good you design to do, do it in the church;" to the expression of which opinion he was doubtless led, by his foresight of that disorder in which all irregularity must ever end. Time has now amply revealed the wisdom of his judgment; and it only remains for us to hope, that experience will teach others hereafter, the truth of what his penetration and knowledge of human nature predicted of the hasty proceedings of his own days. We have been accustomed to attribute too much of the present energy in our church to men, who, having called upon her sons to awake, either left them alone, or led them astray when aroused from their lethargy; a conclusion evidently most erroneous, since the most effective clergymen of our times are imitators of those who lamented and opposed all irregularity. Religion has often flourished amidst earthquakes and whirlwinds, that have convulsed and uprooted all the monuments of earthly power and grandeur, because of union and peace in the church of Christ; but when, as in our day, the same tempestuous agitation shakes both temporal and spiritual establishments, the foundations of the earth may be truly said to be out of course, and all things wear an aspect awfully fearful and momentous. Now then is the time for the church of England to arise in all her strength, to enlarge her field of action, to open wide the doors of her fold, to shew the spirituality of her doctrines, the excellence of her discipline,

the beauty of her ordinances—and she will soon recall the scattered affections of those who have wandered from her communion, and be made a blessing to a people recovered from their dissensions by the uniting spirit of the gospel of Christ.

END OF THE MEMOIR.



Remains.



## NOTE ON THE FIRST FIVE SERMONS.

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“LOVE,”<sup>1</sup> says an old divine, “is the master bee, which carries all the swarm with it;” and it is certain that the unhappy differences of Christians arise from their other graces having lost an essential affinity with this heavenly leader. As it was the first affection corrupted, so it is the first renewed, and is designed to be the main-spring of our social happiness and public usefulness; a beam of the sun of righteousness to cheer, enlighten, and warm us in our cold and dreary pilgrimage to those regions, whose eternal day is produced by its full effulgence. Mr. Walker being deeply imbued with the spirit of this grace, and therefore duly estimating its value, inculcated it on his parishioners in five admirable sermons, which were found among the papers of the late Rev. Rowland Hill, by whom they were frequently read to his society of communicants, at Surry chapel, and whose intention it was to print them for their use and edification. He had written a preface to them containing a very brief memoir of their author, chiefly taken from the short account of his life and ministry, prefixed to his fifty-two sermons published in 1763, and commencing with the following address:

<sup>1</sup> *Leigh's Body of Divinity*, London, 1672, p. 763.

*“To the communicants and congregation assembling in Surry chapel.*

MY DEAR BRETHREN AND FRIENDS,

Thankful for every opportunity to express my high respect and regard, to an affectionate congregation I have so long served in the gospel, I am happy to present before you these few plain sermons, well worthy of your most attentive perusal; being persuaded that if by the power of divine grace, you should be actuated by the spirit and temper of them, you will possess the richest blessing that the souls of men can possibly enjoy. But I must first inform you by what means these sermons were put into my hands.

At a very early period of my life, soon after it pleased divine mercy to make the gospel of Christ the power of God to the salvation of my soul, by the pious conversation of an elder brother,<sup>2</sup> I heard much of Mr. Walker of Truro, as being one of the brightest ornaments of the Christian ministry that was then in the established church. In addition to this, I was favoured with a more intimate knowledge concerning him, from a very intelligent lady who was well acquainted with him, and who was directed by providence to remove after [Mr. Walker's death] to Wem, in Shropshire, near the place of my nativity,<sup>3</sup> and resi-

<sup>2</sup> The late Sir Richard Hill, Bart.

<sup>3</sup> Hawkstone Park, Shropshire, the seat of Sir Rowland Hill, Bart.

dence in my younger days. From her I was informed of the many excellencies of this able minister of the word of life. Perhaps no minister shone brighter among the people he was called to serve, and consequently none had a warmer place in their affections and esteem. All his religious publications were kindly put into my hands. These were not numerous, but strong, affectionate, and plain. His *Lectures on the Church Catechism*, prove that he was no friend to the doctrine of *baptismal regeneration*, as upheld by some to supersede the need of *personal regeneration*, which must be accomplished upon the hearts of all that are by grace made meet for glory. He was much better taught than to suppose the mere outward administration of an ordinance, could be any thing further than a sign of what *should be*, and not the thing itself which *must be*. Satisfied that such a mere popish explanation of that ordinance, must be very injurious to the souls of men, so as to make them live in stupid ignorance of the necessity of being renewed in the spirit of their minds, he gives his readers to understand that however we may be outwardly admitted to the privileges of Christianity, by the administration of the outward and visible sign, yet all would be of no avail without the inward and spiritual grace. I well remember what strength and energy were to be found in a small volume of sermons on that subject, written by the same author, [and] entitled *the Christian*, directing us to seek after that living change, whereby we are alone enabled to live to God.

Not only in this, but in all his other publications, this important truth seemed to bear most powerfully

on his mind, being firmly persuaded from his own experience, that as the body without the soul is dead, so Christianity itself is but a dead letter, unless animated by that living principle from God the Holy Spirit, through which we are alone enabled to live a life of entire devotedness to his glory. The life of Christianity is a life hid with Christ in God.

No wonder, if in my different itinerations through the West of England, I felt myself strongly excited to visit Truro, the place of the ministerial labours of this excellent man, that I might inquire more correctly from the very few remains of his surviving flock, respecting the labours and deportment of this useful minister of Christ.

It seems he was in the habit of writing the substance of his sermons, before he delivered them from the pulpit: on these he occasionally enlarged, and afterwards entrusted them in manuscript to be read by the serious part of his congregation, at those social meetings which were abundantly kept up under his direction and advice. [I was] anxious to procure a memorial of that which might perpetuate the memory of such an invaluable minister, [and] a person willing to gratify my feeling, put a manuscript of these his short sermons upon the grace of charity, or love, into my hands. Though these have been in my possession for a considerable time, yet on a re-perusal of them with a judicious friend, it struck me forcibly whether in these my fast declining days, I could leave behind me a more profitable testimony of my high respect and real regard to the congregation I have so long served,

than to print these sermons for their serious perusal, and prayerful consideration.

Has God himself a richer blessing to bestow upon the souls of men, than this excellent gift, or grace, of love? That love which is the fulfilling of the law, and prompts us to every thing which is wise and good? Let us only love God for his own sake, and man for God's sake, and then let us live in sin *if we can!*

I believe I can appeal to my beloved congregation, how far it has been my constant aim to urge these practical duties, though only upon evangelical principles, and to give God the glory of every grace he confers on us; knowing well that "every good and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of light with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning," for "of his own will," without any co-operation of a free will in us, "begat he us by the word of truth," and then we became his willing "people in the day of his power."

By the tenor of all Mr. Walker's writings it appears he was equally confirmed in the same important truths: he knew that practical godliness could only be established upon evangelical principles. That which our gratuitous redemption, through the great work which Christ has accomplished for us, secures to every believer, is the blessing of inward and personal holiness, which is wrought in us by the active agency of his most Holy Spirit, whereby we are necessarily constrained to hate sin and the practice of it, and to live to God all the days of our lives. Being predestinated to be conformed to the image of his dear Son, we know that as he who has called us is holy, so it is our

duty and privilege to be holy in all manner of conversation, for he came to redeem us from all iniquity, that he might “purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.” I am therefore happy to be the publisher of these few pages, for your sakes as well as my own. Regardless of all that cowardly timidity of speech which some call *caution*, or *prudence*, in simplicity and godly sincerity, and not in fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, I have attempted to recommend myself to your consciences, by distributing, I trust, with an equal hand, those truths that tell us, while salvation is all of grace, yet it must be a salvation from the power of sin.”

FIVE SERMONS  
ON  
CHARITY, OR BROTHERLY LOVE,  
PREACHED AT TRURO,  
IN THE YEAR MDCCLIV.

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SERMON I.

*And above all these things, put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness: Col. iii, 14.*

THE apostle had been saying in the two former verses, "Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another: if any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." All these excellent graces he exhorts them to put on one towards another; but he reserves the best of all for the last: "and above all these things, put on charity" or love;—put it on over them; they are not what they seem without it; nor doth any of them stand in so high a place in the rank of Christian graces as this, which therefore may be well called the bond of perfectness. So St. Peter also speaks of this grace, "above all things have fervent charity among yourselves." The

original word also will bear another interpretation, which equally may serve to shew the eminence of charity or love. Instead of "above all these things," it may be read, "for the sake of all these things, put on charity;" as if it should be said, "it becomes you as Christians and brethren, to put on and exercise towards one another mercy, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, forbearance, forgiveness." But then if ye do any of all these toward each other, ye must first put on charity, without which the least of them will be impossible; and any thing that has the appearance of them will be but a mistake. It is charity must, and only can render you merciful, kind, humble, meek, patient, forgiving. Wherefore, "for the sake of all these things, put on charity." But whichever way we interpret these words, the sense is much the same; and charity appears to be the eminent grace, above all, and for the sake of all, to be put on.

When we treat of Christian love, we enter into the very heart of Christian godliness. For thus our Lord says, "this is my commandment, that ye love one another." Yea, and he makes the exercise of this grace to be the very hope of a Christian: "by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Yet nothing is so contrary to our selfish proud hearts, except only the love of God, as this Christian brotherly love. To love in word and in tongue, to put on a civil carriage, to be complaisant, to be humane, to be liberal, this is easier; but to love in deed and in truth, with fervency and unfeignedness, this is one of the hardest victories we have to obtain over our own hearts.

“We know that we are passed from death unto life,” saith St. John, “because we love the brethren.” Then if we love them not, it is plain what a state we are in, not of life, but of death; a thought that should raise our attention, and engage us to submit our hearts to an inquiry, whether this love be in us or not; for brethren, if it be not, ye hear what the infallible word of truth saith—“he that loveth not his brother abideth in death”—and to this all the wit of man can add nothing more terrible.

In speaking of this doctrine of Christian charity, it shall be my business,

I. To give you an account of its *nature and rise*.

II. To set out its *exercise and influence*. And,

III. To shew you the *necessity* of it.

The first of these shall be the matter of our present consideration; which also will be suitable to the solemn action<sup>1</sup> many of us are intent upon, as it will lead us into those endearing views of the Redeemer’s love and grace, which may well raise our affections to him. In giving you an account of the nature and rise of Christian love, I must desire you to consider,

I. The natural estate of man since sin entered into the world. “There was war in heaven”—and what was the ground of it? The rebellion of Satan against God. While he retained his purity, all was peace above; because all alike were subject to the supreme governor of the universe. All loved their Maker, nor had they any jarring of interests, for they had all the same thing to do, to please God; nor any hatred one

<sup>1</sup> The communion.

of another, for they were all blessed in the favour of God. But as soon as Satan rebelled, and cast off his allegiance, setting up his own will against God's, then the bond of peace was broken, and the war in heaven began. Amidst many equals, what could ensue, but a contention who should be the greatest; and while the indulgence of self-will was the happiness proposed, with what rage and rancour must that contention be maintained! No possible way remained for restoring the peace of heaven, but either bringing back the rebel angels to submission to their common Lord, together with the renewal of his favour and countenance to them, which was not vouchsafed to the angels who kept not their first estate, or that they should be cast out of heaven. This latter was the consequence.

Upon the creation of man, it was very natural for this revolted spirit to attempt the same projects upon earth, which he had before made in heaven. He saw by experience, that if he could draw off the creature from his submission to his Creator, making a separation in that which alone can be the bond of unity, viz. the dependence of the thing formed, upon him that formed it, instantly there must ensue confusion and disorder, the work of God be spoiled, and as he fondly conceited, utterly disappointed. How sadly he succeeded, the history of our fall informs us, where it is plainly told us, how Satan, by his hellish art, seduced the heart of Adam from his obedience to God, alluring him to seek for a more pleasing happiness in the creature, than he could find in the enjoyment of God. The depravity of man's nature was the event,

and we are now born into the world with those very contentious principles planted in our souls, which first caused war in heaven, and then fightings upon earth, viz. self-will, and such an alienation of our affections from God, as inclines us to seek for a happiness merely of this world.

Suppose every son of Adam, now, to be self-willed, i. e. obstinately bent upon doing and having what he will, and that they are all intent upon the same thing, viz. a happiness which the pleasures, and honours, and gratifications of sense can minister; I beseech ye, what can be the consequence, but what we see and have heard of all over the world; hatred, envyings, strife, jealousies, contentions, resentments, and every other kind of devilish work? Every one must do as he will, therefore none can bear control. Every one wants the pre-eminence in wordly enjoyments, therefore none must be disappointed. Satan has too well succeeded: love of men, with obedience to God, is banished out of the earth, and natural men, as St. Paul saith, are living in malice and envy, "hateful and hating one another." We have an early proof of the selfishness of fallen man, in the case of Cain, who because God had not respect unto his offering, as unto Abel's, rose up against his brother and slew him. The same is recorded concerning Joseph's brethren, who because their father loved him more than all his children, (such was the fondness of his old age; and which by the way may teach us, not to set our hearts too fondly on any earthly comfort, however desirable and just it be, as no doubt it was in Jacob's children, to desire the love and favour of their father) "hated

him, and could not speak peaceably unto him, but conspired against him to slay him."

I have insisted the longer on this, that you may see the two principles natural to us, which are, and wherever they prevail cannot but be, the springs of contention, viz. self-will and worldly love. Such self-will was in heaven, and such self-will and worldly desire are and will be upon earth, till the heart be brought to a willing submission to the direction of God, and to an entire love of him. Without this there can be no love of our neighbour; as this is effected, that will take possession of the heart; but we shall always find our love defective, and that we are liable to contentions and variance, till our will be perfectly resolved into God's, and the love of God have the full and free possession of the soul, neither of which can be absolutely completed, till we are in heaven. I desire you to take notice,

2. That "the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy (or rather dissolve) the works of the devil;" which in one word are *dissentions*, first in the creature towards God, and then consequently towards his fellow-creatures, and which the devil hath wrought by introducing into his heart the principles of disobedience, and worldly love. This was what the Son of God was to dissolve and untie, that a universal harmony might be restored, whether between men and God, or among men between themselves. To this end he must gather them out of this present evil world, and bring them back to obedience to God and love of him, and in consequence of this to a love one of another; for you cannot but see how impossible

it is that we can love one another, till our hearts are reconciled unto God, and he is made our portion, our self-will and love of the world being over-ruled. Then, when the selfishness of our natural hearts shall be mastered, and they are brought to submit to the love of God, we shall be able to regard others without envies and jealousies; yea, and so far as they are like God, with complacency and affection. So then, while Christ is making atonement for the sins of the world, he is destroying all manner of enmity thereby, even the enmity which men bear one to another. For hereby he purchases that mercy, and that grace, which can either incline or enable them to lay aside their rebellion, and return to their God with loyal and affectionate hearts; which when they do, the principles of hatred are dissolved, and with the love of God, the love of our brother is implanted in the soul.

From hence it is evident; that this brotherly Christian love doth not arise from any earthly consideration whatever; not out of any ties of blood, acquaintance, interests, or conformity of tempers, nor doth at all lie in good humour, friendship, humanity, or benevolence (as men now a day assent to call it, and boast of it); but that it is entirely of a heavenly original; a real consequence of receiving that gospel, which, wherever it is cordially received, doth by the mighty, though secret power of the Spirit accompanying it, beat down man's rebellious heart, wean man's affections from the world, and fix them upon God, thereby so mortifying self, and restoring the image of God in him, that both nothing within hin-

ders him from loving his brother, and the love of God there engages him to love him. This doctrine we have from St. John, all through his first epistle; "we love God because he first loved us;" and then, "let us love one another, for love is of God, and every one who loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.— If any man say he loveth God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar."—But,

3. You shall need more attentively to consider the first steps which this great peace-maker takes in dissolving the works of the devil, in order more expressly to discover the rise and nature of Christian love. Having "offered one sacrifice for sins, and being for ever sat down on the right-hand of God;" he sends out his word and Spirit, to a world lying in wickedness. By this word and Spirit, he convinces all who will hear, of their sinfulness and approaching ruin; by the word and Spirit, he persuades and enables them to believe he is come to save them; by the word and Spirit, he puts into their hearts that faith working by love, which is the means of their being united to him, and becoming real living members of his kingdom and body; hereby (*viz.* by faith in his blood) "crucifying their corrupt affections, and destroying the body of sin, that henceforward they should no more serve sin." By the word and Spirit, he builds them up in their most holy faith, shedding abroad more abundantly the love and likeness of God in their hearts, and destroying more and more, the principles of their corrupted nature, pride, self-love, and worldliness. By the promises of the word and the continual supply of the Spirit, he keeps up within them the hope of

an eternal inheritance, quickens their desires and longings after it, and purifies them to a greater fitness for it. But you will say, what has all this to do with Christian love? I answer such as these *only* are capable of it, and it is impossible they should be without it. For you see what were before proved to be the natural grounds of hatred, and hinderances of brotherly love, viz. self-will, and the love of this present world, are mortified in these; and the love of God, which cannot but engage to the love of all who are like him, hath taken possession of their hearts. To which, if you will add the many circumstances suited to draw forth the love of renewed heavenly minds, (as are the minds of those on whom this salvation of Christ had taken effectual place,) such as the likeness they see in each other of their heavenly Father; their being all one in the same state of sin and death; their being all taken into the same liberty of the children of God; their being all under the same head, purchased by the same blood, governed by the same Spirit, and united into one body; their having all the same interests, the same enemies, the same warfare, the same infirmities, the same cause to maintain here, and the same glory to inherit hereafter: I say, if you will put all this together, you will not have to seek for the nature and rise of Christian love, and may easily enough discover that it is a grace wrought in the hearts of those, in whom Christ hath dissolved the works of the devil, and set up his kingdom. So St. Paul teaches us, when he would influence the Ephesians to the exercise of brotherly love, upon those very principles I have been mentioning; “I therefore, the prisoner of

the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, one Spirit, even as ye are called unto one hope of your calling: one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, through all, and in you all."

Thus now, upon the whole, I hope you may see something of the nature and rise of Christian love. It is impossible to a natural man. He may be civil, courteous, friendly, well-bred, sweet tempered; but he cannot *love*: he hath still the inveterate principles of selfishness in him, which on many occasions will be breaking through these cobweb constraints, and shew the natural man still. It is when through faith in the Redeemer, and by the mighty power of his Spirit, a man is become a member of the everlasting kingdom, and loves God rather than the world, and is more willing to please God than himself, that he can find this inward unconstrained principle in him, the love of his neighbour.

The remaining time shall be spent in some proper applications. And,

First, I would remark from what hath been said, that Christ only is able to dissolve and destroy that enmity which is the work of the devil in us. If you are not living members of Christ, new creatures, it is in vain for you to think of loving your neighbour. What! can you love your neighbour merely for the sake of his godliness, because he is walking as Christ walked, because he is heavenly-minded, renounces the world, and shews a prevailing zeal for the honour

of his God? Try if you can love him, delight in him, and rejoice in him for this very reason. Alas, you cannot bring your hearts to it; you cannot help being displeased with him, and wishing him out of the way. Or what! can you forgive an enemy and love him too? You may persuade yourselves that you can forgive him; but can you love him? No, you cannot do this. God commands you to do so, and you wish you could; but it is all in vain—your endeavours after it are all fruitless: you can seem to love him, but cannot do it in truth. “The law is weak through the flesh;” it commands you, but you find by reason of your selfish hearts you have no power to obey. And what will you do? If you love not, you abide in death; yet you cannot love. See then, “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus must set you free from the law of sin and death” you find within you. It is Christ must dissolve this work which the devil hath wrought in your hearts, must first humble your pride against God, and lead you to a dutiful and affectionate spirit towards him, and then you shall find you can love his children and even your enemies.

Secondly, I beg you seriously to consider it, that if you love not, you abide in death. As I said, there is not a more infallible sign of a state of sin and death than this. Light Christ hath brought into the world, but you love darkness rather; for so saith the same apostle, “He who saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.” Here is a plain rule;—whatever pretences you may be able to make, whatever forms you may be under, whatever

good things you may have to say of yourselves, yet still if you hate your brother, you are in darkness and death even until now, to this very hour : and is it not a sad consideration, that in the midst of light, you should have lived in darkness all this while. Alas ! how careless you must have been, and inconsiderate about your souls, to run such mighty hazards, neglecting so great salvation, and never once discovering that you were strangers to the new kingdom of heaven ; that you have been living all your lifetime upon the brink of a double death, of which the one, however terrible it looks, is but the shadow of the other ! When will you be persuaded ? If God's word be true, you, who love not your brother abide in death, are no Christians, no disciples of Christ, are without hope, and strangers to the covenant of promise. You will not say God's word is false ; that you cannot persuade yourselves ; yet you will not be persuaded to believe it to any purpose. I will tell you plainly, Sunday after Sunday these years past, you have been proved in your own consciences, by every sermon you have heard, to be no real Christians ; in no sense fit to die and to appear before the judgment ; yet even now you are the very same men, if not worse ; and now that you are convinced again in your own hearts of the same thing, have I not all the reason in the world to believe that you will take no more notice than you have hitherto done ? Do not be angry with me for telling you the truth : you do not think I set so little value upon your favour, as to risk the losing it for nothing ? Believe me it is only because I regard your souls more than your favour,

that I speak to you as I do. Believe me, I am not willing you should abide in death; cannot endure that any of you should perish. But,

Thirdly, and that more directly to the<sup>1</sup> ordinance before us, do you love the brethren? If you do not, you are not fit for this act of communion with the saints, and will be spots in the feast of love. If you do, I beseech you to remember to whom you owe it. If you "love the brethren, you know that ye are passed from death unto life." But O remember to whom you owe that love, to whom you owe that life. Remember what you were when that love sought you out; how lying in wickedness, how living without God in the world, how serving divers lusts and pleasures! Then, what'did his love for you? "He took you out of the mire and clay, and set your feet upon a rock, and ordered your goings." Remember, that it was Jesus alone who brought you back unto God, who taught your hearts to love; and remember what it cost him; what wrath of God, what rage of men, what pain, shame, death it cost him. "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied," saith the prophet; in all his sufferings he shall be satisfied, if you are saved; this is all the return he expects, that you be saved.

Come, my brethren, ye that love one another, let us go and thank him. Come, his disciples indeed, let us go and praise him together. Let us remember together, with thanksgiving, him that died for us all. Let us thank him with loyal hearts, with hearts de-

<sup>1</sup> The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

voted to his service ; that is, as he will interpret it upon his illustrious day, to the service of *our*, and as he condescends to call them, *his* brethren.

I am very sensible how apt the remembrance of a dying Master is to draw forth the flames of love towards him and our brethren ; but ye must beware that those flames be not quickly suffered to be extinguished. Let the solemn action abide with you, the seal of your Master's favour, and the pledge of your love. Recall it from day to day for consolation and correction. Be cautious over the rebellion and worldliness of your hearts, and look to yourselves that ye lose not those things ye have wrought, but that ye receive a full reward.

*Oct. 6th, 1754.*

## SERMON II.

*Above all these things, put on charity : Col. iii, 14.*

CHARITY, i. e. brotherly love, is the ornament of man. Things that do but look like it are held in the highest estimation. Good nature, affability, an open hand, and a humane heart—things that are but the shew of love—are qualities, without somewhat of which, we reckon a man intolerable. What an ornament, then, must love itself be, if courtesy and liberality, the distant imitators of it, be so desirable?

*Distant imitators* I call them. For if courtesy hath no higher an original than good breeding and sweetness of temper, and liberality arises only from the compassionate feelings and regards of mere humanity—they have not the least spark of Christian love; and though they ought to be esteemed as virtues useful to society, yet they must not be reckoned Christian graces. In such an age of politeness and distribution, it is peculiarly needful to make this distinction; and you know the apostle made it long ago—“if I give all my goods to feed the poor and have not love, I am nothing.”

What then, you may reasonably ask, is love, this highest ornament of the mind, this note of a Christian, this witness of a child of God, and heir of glory

this best of all graces, greater than faith and hope, and which shall outlive them both, nor ever fail through all the ages of eternity? The inquiry, you must own, is of importance, and it behoves us all to see what title we have to it; for “we know that we are passed from death unto life, if we love the brethren;” and we are plainly told that “he that loveth not his brother abideth in death.”

Now that Christian love might be seen as it is, and distinguished from all things that are too commonly mistaken for it, it was necessary to lay the foundation of this inquiry in a consideration of the rise of real Christian charity, whereby its true nature may be discovered. To this end, it is fit you should remark, that the devil hath wrought into the very nature of fallen man, even every one of us, these two great principles of all manner of enmity and dissension, *wilfulness* and *love of the present world*. Man is now naturally, nor can all the good breeding and philosophy in the world make him otherwise, *wilful* and *worldly*. *Wilful*, i. e. set upon having, and doing all things according to his own humour. *Worldly*, i. e. intent upon the enjoyments the world offers. While things remain in this state, what can ensue but what we see every where—a prevailing selfishness, full of inward disgusts, jealousies, fears, envyings, as men’s humours are thwarted, and their interests interfere? All wilful, all worldly, how can they love one another as themselves? How bear, forbear, rejoice, mourn for one another, or, in short, do the least of all these things which love easily does! But now, would not all this strife be removed, were there one supreme *will* to

which they should all joyfully submit and be directed by; one infinite portion which were enough for them all? If, having no will of their own, to obey God's will were their one desire, and to enjoy his favour their only happiness, would not this take away all possibility of contention? I beseech you, what could they contend about? The wilfulness, therefore, of our nature as opposed to God's will, and the natural love we bear the world, as opposed to the love of God, must be first subdued, ere there can be any such thing as Christian brotherly love. We must obtain an obedient heart towards God, before we can forbear one another in love; must love God before we can love our brother.

But this is not the work of man. How vain were the attempt to turn the whole bias of our nature, to reform the very constitution of our souls! Vain indeed, seeing the Son of God was manifested to destroy these works of the devil, to turn us from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God! Yes, it was a work worthy the great Redeemer; and every faithful subject of the Redeemer's kingdom will own, that by the alone influences of the word and Spirit of Jesus Christ, he hath seen the sinfulness and danger of his natural estate, discovered the disobedience and worldliness of his depraved heart, and the eternal ruin, such a sinful disposition of soul must end in; that invited alone by that merey which the blood of Christ hath purchased, he is returned to God; that now by the alone power of divine grace, his delight is in keeping God's commandments, and submitting to his dispensations; not in following his own wayward will,

and pettishly consulting his own humour; and that by the same renewing grace, he finds that blessed portion in God, which he could not have in all the world.

In such a one the work of Satan is dissolved, the principles of enmity, wilfulness, and worldliness, are beaten down. Enmity against God is removed, obedience and love towards him have taken possession of the heart. The consequence of this is love of the brethren; an endeared esteem, and a tender kindness for those who are like God, have the same common Lord, are saved by the same blood, and sanctified by the same spirit, are members of the same body, having the same interests, the same enemies, the same hope, and the same inheritance.

This is the *rise* of Christian love: and you may now easily discover the true nature of it to be an interesting concern, wherewith a man of a renewed and heavenly mind, delivered from the dominion of wilfulness and worldly love, doth regard the ease of others. Wilfulness and worldliness must be displaced, the soul must be brought to submission and love towards God, ere there can be inclination or liberty to be sincerely interested about the matters of others, especially the great concern of their souls. To effect this Christ claims as his own work: he will have the honour of his religion rest upon it; will have all men see, that what philosophy, and moral refinements cannot produce, his real disciples attain unto. He will have them all to be of one heart as well as one body, that the world may know that God hath sent him.

Thus the way is opened to the second point proposed, which was to speak of the *influence* and *exer-*

*cise* of Christian love. Whoever is delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of Jesus Christ, must, for that very reason, be kindly affectioned, for such a one is "renewed after the image of him that created him," and as it is elsewhere expressed, "conformed to the image of his Son." And we know that God is love, and the kindness and love of God towards man appeared when he gave himself for us. A real Christian, therefore, as he is renewed in his mind after the image of God, and conformed to the image of his Son, must be, and actually is kindly-affectioned. Without this, there is no resemblance between the Father, or the Son, and himself.

And now this love and kindness doth influence his soul to wish well to all men. This universal well-wishing I take to be the most immediate fruit of a kindly-affectioned heart. If there be a single person on earth to whom you do not wish well, do not think you are possessed of the grace of charity; for do not you see, that in that instance you are not like God, who sends his sun and rain upon such a one; are not like Christ, who gave himself for him.

This universal well-wishing unto all men of the kindly-affectioned heart hath a double regard. Principally, it is willing that all should be saved: this is the ruling wish, and subordinate hereto is a desire of their present welfare. When this wish is disappointed, the kindly-affectioned heart feels a compassionate distress; but if it be gratified, it rejoices, and this especially as to men's eternal interests. If their feet go down to death, and their steps take hold on hell, it

feels somewhat of the psalmist's compassion who said, "I am horribly afraid for the ungodly that forsake thy law." If they shew the marks of God's children, it is pleased and satisfied in them, and experiences the complacency of the same prophet, "my delight is in the saints that are upon the earth."

That you may therefore have the whole scope of this well-affectioned love laid before you, it will be needful to consider it with respect to the spiritual and present interests of others.

As to their spiritual interests, it hath been said that love wishes the salvation of all men, and therefore is, and must be, variously affected, as they appear to be either out of, or in the way of salvation.

First, then, if you please, we will see, how well-wishing charity is disposed and acts towards those who by wicked works appear to be out of the way of salvation. And here,

Charity pities and compassionates sinners, because they are so led away of their lusts, and are heirs of destruction. Such was the love of Jesus, when drawing near to Jerusalem he beheld the city and wept over it, saying, "if thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes;" and in that other compassionate exclamation of his, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate;" and so St. Paul, "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my con-

science also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart: for I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." Compassion is the genuine language of love towards sinners. The loving Christian hears of the abundance of evil men with grief, and beholds the giddy sinner with the relentings of pity. "O that thou wouldest know the things that belong unto thy peace," his heart cries within him. Yes, you may be assured, O sinner, that every true Christian you meet mourns over your soul: your heedless ways vex him; your every idle loose word pains him at the heart. Yourself, have you seen a criminal under condemnation, and hath not your soul yearned with pity over him, while yet the execution was suspended? Believe it, thou art the man. The Christian looks upon thee with an eye of equal pity. Sentenced he sees thee, by the most exact justice, and condemned by irresistible almighty power, and longs for thy soul, with tender compassion, that thou wouldest return and live, while yet the fearful execution is respited, while death, drawing nearer daily, yet forbears to snatch thee away. Yes, ye servants of Christ, ye are conscious of this gracious pity. Strange that the foolish sinner cannot discern your compassion, your solicitude for him! Strange that he should insult your generous disinterested love: most of all strange, that he should interpret your kind expostulations to be pride, ostentation, and affecting a dominion over him, saying with the men of Sodom to righteous Lot, "this one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a

judge." But if your love be real, it will not stop here, will not lose and spend itself away in mere pity; you will be endeavouring what you can to recover his soul. And therefore, I mention as another branch of love towards sinners, that

Charity is patient towards them. It does not render to them evil for evil, nor railing for railing. No, pity forbids. It is because they are sinners, that they do evil, and rail, and blaspheme. This is the very disease under which they labour, that miserable state for their lying in which the charitable soul holds them in compassion. The servants of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle towards all men, long-suffering, not easily provoked, forgiving to seventy times seven. How likely a method this of working upon a sinner, of heaping coals of fire on his head, as refiners do upon their metals, and melting him into reflection and sorrow! You may see what force this gentleness and forbearance hath, to work upon the hearts even of the worst of men, in the case of David with persecuting Saul. When David had spared to kill Saul in the cave of Engedi, and shewing him the skirts of his mantle, which he had cut off in token that his life was in his hand, had most gently and humbly remonstrated with him, Saul lifted up his voice and wept. And not long after, when David had spared him again, while he was asleep in his tent, taking only his spear, with the cruse of water that was at his bolster, Saul, vanquished by the repeated kindness, cries out, "I have sinned; return my son David, for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have played the

fool, I have erred exceedingly." Now thus to do, to be gentle and forbearing, is easy to love. Love cannot do otherwise; for love seeketh not her own, seeketh not self-gratification, but the soul of a neighbour. With what gentleness doth the good man Lot speak to the Sodomites, who offered him the greatest injury, "I pray you brethren do not so wickedly." So love speaks; it puts the law of kindness into the mouth, nor is to be tired out of patience and meekness, if by any means a brother may be gained. You know, nor can it ever be enough considered, how our Lord insists upon this forbearance, "I say unto you love your enemies," (and they can be only sinful men that are so) "bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you, that ye may be the children of God your heavenly Father." In so doing, you resemble God, and he will reward you with peculiar favour. Affectionate compassion, wishing the salvation of the sinner, you have now seen doth exercise itself in all patience and gentle forbearance towards him: another way wherein compassionate love doth exercise itself for the recovery of those who are out of the way, is

By "providing things honest in the sight of all men." Not only things just and equal, but things of good report, walking blamelessly and harmlessly in the midst of a "crooked and perverse generation," holding forth the word of life, as a shining light to the world. He who is regardless of another's weal, either not forbearing that whereby his brother may be offended; i. e. not be peevish or angry, as we com-

monly understand, or rather misunderstand the word, but be led or kept out of the way; he who is so regardless of his neighbour's weal, as either not to forbear this, though with much inconvenience to himself, or fails to set before him an edifying example, is an entire stranger to Christian love and compassion towards souls. What can be plainer than this, however formal persons will be disputing about it? Can he who loves another be regardless of his interests, and care not if his neighbour receive irreparable damage through his doing, or not forbearing to do a very little thing? You would hardly esteem a man your friend upon such terms. No more may you judge yourselves friends to your neighbour's soul, if you will not constrain yourselves to forego, or do such otherwise harmless or indifferent things, as your sinful neighbours may be unduly influenced by. The truth is, you are altogether indifferent what becomes of his soul, and then how in conscience can you think that brotherly love abides within you? Kindly-affectioned love, becomes all things unto all men; instructs by example, reproveth by refusing the vain customs of the world, admonishes by setting the light of a strict circumspect carriage before men's eyes. It will do nothing which may hurt another's soul, although it might not hazard a man's own; is continually considering if there be nothing in the conduct whereby the weak may be offended, or the wicked hardened. This looks like real regard for others, and such kind of expressions of love we shall not be without, if genuine gospel unfeigned love have possession of our hearts. Such, I am sure, is the doctrine of St. Paul in his conclusion

of a long discourse upon this very subject.<sup>1</sup> “We then that are strong,” saith he, “ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves (in things to their offence) but let every one of us please his neighbour in that which is for his good to edification.” Once more,

Charity, compassionately seeking the salvation of sinners, doth take all favourable opportunities for admonishing and entreating them. When these opportunities may be, every man must judge with the best prudence he can. All that I can wish and insist upon here is, that love may have made the heart ready; even such a love, as will not be turned away from its purpose by worldly considerations and fears. When this is the case, opportunities will be wished, waited for, and improved; and a friend, a companion, a brother, shall not all his life (as I fear it too often happens) be without affectionate exhortation. I know how contrary to our hearts, even with our nearest relations, this task is; but surely, it is because we love not fervently. I know how we would be making excuses, and putting off this business upon others, as if it were the alone office of the minister. But where then is our love? Love doth not want to be excused doing good. And what, is there any sin in warning a neighbour for the salvation of his soul? Doth God any where forbid it? Truly no, but just the contrary, as I might prove to you from many passages of Scripture. When St. Paul writes to the Thessalonians, he speaks to every member of the church, not

<sup>1</sup> Rom. xiv.

only to the ministers of the gospel, and yet hear what he says to them; “warn them that are unruly or disorderly;” and again, “if any man obey not, have no company with him—yet admonish him as a brother.” And to the Galatians, “if any man be overtaken in a fault, ye that are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness.” St. James also, was speaking to Christians in general, when he said, “brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, let him know that he that converteth a sinner from the error of his ways, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.” Indeed we are commanded abundantly in anywise to rebuke our neighbour, and not suffer sin in him. But till love gives us courage, he will want the charitable admonition. Wherefore let us weigh that significant proverb of Solomon, “open reproof is better than secret love.” But lastly,

Charity will not fail to pray for sinners. He who loves, knows that every endeavour must fail, unless the Spirit of God render this effectual. For which reason, God is made acquainted with the tender compassion of our hearts; and according to the apostle’s exhortation, prayers and supplication are to be made for all men. To neglect this were the most evident proof of the want of love, seeing this is the very means of bringing down the blessings of God’s grace upon them.

Yes, thoughtless sinners, while ye think not of it, thousands are pleading with God for your souls, beseeching him not to execute speedy vengeance upon you, imploring his mercy on your behalf, that yet a little space may be allowed longer if at last you may

return; yea, intreating him not to take his Holy Spirit utterly from you, but that he would awaken you with his terrors, before you be overtaken by his judgments. And yet, how can ye be insensible to such a reflection; can ye think they are ill employed? Would you wish them to spare their pains; are you indifferent whether their prayers are heard for you or not? I think you will hardly say so. Surely you cannot but judge yourselves indebted to their love; and can you withal approve your own stupid remissness? What, not one spark of pity upon your own souls, which are the occasion of so much compassion, watchfulness, labour, and prayer in others! O that you would consider what deserved objects of compassion you are in the eyes of God and man. Indeed, object of compassion, if the service of Satan be slavery, and banishment from God be misery; if never to see the light of everlasting life be terrible; if to endure the endless vengeance of an enraged God be insupportable; and this is your very condition while you remain in your sins.

*Oct. 13th, 1754.*

## SERMON III.

*Above all these things, put on charity: Col. iii, 14.*

How afflictive was the view to our good apostle, of what himself either was in his unbelieving days, or of what he saw unbelievers every where practising! Hear how he describes it: "We ourselves also (who are now renewed by the grace of God) were sometime foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful (unto) and hating one another." Distressing consideration, that creatures of the same race, all alike God's workmanship, should be set on to envy and hate, to fear and devour one another; that the face of the earth should be overspread with ill will, and the voice of resentment, rage, and violence be every where heard; that every man should be an enemy to every other; that upon causes little or great, discontent, clamour, bitterness, strife, tumults, war, bloodshed, should rise up and deform the peace of mankind. Lovely charity, the healer of this hell upon earth! Jesus, blessed peace-maker, manifested to dissolve the works of the devil, deliver us from ourselves, mortifying the baneful principles of contention in us; set up thy peaceful dominion in our hearts, teach us thy love, to love one another as thou hast loved us!

I have already shewn you that the rise of Christian love is in a vital union with Jesus Christ, whereby we are made living members of his kingdom, and our hearts drawn up to a love of, and conformity to God. We entered also into a more particular inquiry after the exercises and influence of brotherly love; and, after having advanced that the immediate effect of love in the soul was a universal well-wishing to others in their spiritual and temporal interests, we proposed to consider the exercise of Christian love in both these regards.

As to the spiritual interests of others, we set forth last Lord's day how love shewed itself towards those who are out of the way of salvation.

Now therefore we are to view it in its actions towards those, who appear to be children of God in Jesus Christ, walking with God as dear children. Here it will be sufficient to shew that well-wishing love rejoices in their spiritual welfare—gladly contributes to their advancement—is grieved for the decays of any of them—studies to live peaceably and affectionately with them—delights in their Christian fellowship.

1. Love rejoices in the spiritual welfare of others. The beloved and tender-hearted disciple says of himself, "I have no greater joy, than to hear that my children walk in the truth." So St. Paul expresses his consolation in the saints that are upon earth, "My brethren," he calls them, "dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown;" and elsewhere, "what is our hope or joy, or crown of rejoicing, are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his

coming?" And lest you should imagine there was any party selfishness in their joy, observe how James and the elders received St. Paul's account of his ministry and success; "when they heard what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry, they glorified God."

Now this joy in the saints is so signal a fruit of faith in Jesus Christ, and consequently a mark of a good state, that St. Paul particularly mentions it among the fruits of the Spirit, as he leads us out towards our brethren; "the fruit of the Spirit is love;" and then he next adds, "joy," whereby he plainly means (as appears by the duties respecting our brother that follow it) a real rejoicing over the souls of others. And let common sense speak; when we wish well to the interest of another, can we do otherwise than rejoice when his affairs prosper and succeed?

Let us examine our hearts by this rule. Is it a real unfeigned pleasure to us, when we see any seeking the kingdom of God? Do we find our hearts rise towards them with delight? Yea, and this notwithstanding they may differ from us in opinion, and perhaps have conceived some prejudices against us; still can we take satisfaction in them as our brethren, because of their holy and Christian conversation? Will we suffer no disgusts to harbour in our hearts against them, and this too, if they set out a more edifying example and carriage than ourselves, and thereby be a cause of lessening men's esteem of us? If so, we love indeed in reality, and not in pretence.

But how contrary this to the practice of the formal

professor. If the sight of a serious Christian, who contends for the faith and practice of Christ's religion, walking closely after his Maker's example in a non-conformity to the world, his own lusts, and the fashions of others, as far as they contradict God's will and the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom—I say, if the presence of such a one be offensive to you, if you are secretly disgusted at him, nor can endure him because he carries religion farther than yourselves; if you are angry at him because in some lesser things he doth not think in your way, and are apt to pick out every fault you can find in him, passing by and making no account in your mind of his godly deportment; in such case you are certainly without Christian love. For “charity rejoiceth in the truth,” and see if you have any other reason for disliking such a one, but because of his pious and self-denying conversation; otherwise you could be well enough reconciled to him, if he would do like others; but you cannot bear he should be so precise and particular. I would God you would diligently read over, whatever you are, the history of the rage and malice of the Pharisees against our Lord, inquiring upon what cause they hated and persecuted him as they did. It might be the means of shewing you that you have too much of that spirit in yourselves.

2. Love gladly doth contribute to their spiritual advancement. St. Paul, though he had never seen the Romans, yet tells them, he longed to do so, that he might “impart to them some spiritual gift, to the end that they might be established.” Love wants to be useful and helpful, to promote and edify; is willing

to spend and be spent in advancing others, according to its abilities and opportunities. St. Peter would not be backward in that delightful work; if it were possible he would be of service when he should be no more, and could no longer speak; "I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth: yea, I think it meet as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance. Moreover I will endeavour that you may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance." Love hath a watchful eye, jealous of another's soul. Love hath a ready tongue, to admonish, exhort, and provoke unto good works. Love hath an open heart, to communicate its fears, and a tender hand, to do all in the spirit of meekness. Love is ready to communicate what it can. Love doth all things to edifying. Love lays no stumblingblocks in the way of the weak. Love seeketh not her own pleasure or humour. Love considereth another's weal. Love, in a word, hath the mind of Christ Jesus, who went about doing good, "who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

I cannot stop to tell you what courses love takes to promote another's welfare. It were endless to set about it. They will be as various as the circumstances and abilities of one another. But in this work love is continually employed. Wilfully it doth nothing to the hindrance—gladly it doth any thing to the furtherance of another's salvation.

The point is, whether our hearts and hands be in

this work. Do we consider one another in this view? Do we watch over one another for good? Do we enter into the case of others, apprehend for them their dangers, and feel a solicitous care about their welfare? Do we inquire what we can do for them, and as gladly do whatever may establish them? Are we really employed in these things as occasion serves? Where are our proofs that we are so engaged:—our warnings, reproofs, self-denials, entreaties, prayers? If we truly love, we shall have them to produce; for it is impossible we should be interested in the advancement of a Christian friend, when we sit down at a distance, and do not take him by the hand, as opportunity offers, and circumstances demand. But do we do all these things gladly, “out of a pure heart fervently,” as the apostle charges, not thinking our pains any thing, nor imagining we have conferred any favour? Love does not admit of selfishness. As much of this as is mixed with it, so much the pure nature of love is spoiled. We must labour that our services of this kind be not to please ourselves, but to benefit our brother; and that the only reward we expect, is the pleasure of seeing him prosper: and how blessed an employment, to minister to the spiritual necessities of the saints; to strengthen their faith; to direct their steps; to comfort their afflicted spirits; to enliven and confirm their hopes; to help their joys! It is the employment of ministering angels, who are “sent forth to minister unto those who are heirs of salvation.” It was the business of Jesus upon earth, and it is his continual care in heaven. It is the very

office of the Holy Ghost the Sanctifier, the Comforter ! Say then, if it be not a blessed employment.

But to be indifferent about a brother's soul ; to be indifferent whether heaven or hell shall be his everlasting portion ; to sit down unconcerned about others, mistakingly content if ourselves seem to be in the way to heaven ; to spend ourselves in mere fruitless wishes ; to content ourselves with heartless complainings that many are so bad, and none are better ; from day to day to use no endeavours about our neighbour's souls ; perhaps never in one's life to have attempted such a thing ; is this charity ?—You may give what you will to the poor, you may pity their bodily distresses, you may be as tender-hearted and ready towards them this way as you will, and may call this by the name of charity if you please ; but be assured, you are not charitable ; you care not what becomes of your neighbour's soul ; you do not, will not move a step to save him. O that you would remember this word, “ he that loveth not his brother abideth in death.” But,

3. Love grieves for the spiritual decays and falling away of any. Great have been the failures of some of the best of God's children, and too many are the backsliders in heart, “ those that hear the word, and with joy receive it, and by and by in the time of temptation fall away.” Too often hath our God cause to say, “ this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart ; they are revolted and gone ; a deceived heart hath turned them aside, that they cannot deliver their souls, nor say, is there not a lie in my right hand ?” Many, like Peter, shamefully deny their Master in the day of trial ; and many like the rich

young man, when they hear Christ's sayings, finding them too hard for them, go away sorrowful. Such things are matters of real concern to the loving Christian. When any waver from the faith, and leave their first love, the threatenings of God against them pain him to the heart. "If after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse than the beginning;" and if any "man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." Such scenes as these love cannot see, such sentences it cannot bear, without an awakened distress. Methinks this distress is strongly painted in that passage of our Saviour's life, "from that time," viz. after he had been reproving the fleshly hearers of his word, "many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said he unto the twelve, will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, whither shall we go; thou hast the words of eternal life." "Will ye also go away? These have forsaken me, they cannot bear the hard saying. What, shall I be left of you all; will ye too follow me no more, think my sayings hard, and forsake your own mercies? Say, my friends, yea, tell me, if ye also will go away?" Peter's heart was fired with the thought. "Go from thee, Lord! to whom shall we go? Miserable the man that leaves thee; wretched are those which are gone back from thee. Thou hast the words of eternal life; thou, forsaken as thou art, even thou only canst shew us the way to life; thou art the very Christ, the Son of the living God."

Yet such scenes as this we, even we, have seen and see daily among ourselves; many offended at the doctrine of a heavenly life, and following no more after Jesus. But how are we impressed and affected by it? Do we grieve to see them return to their vomit and their wallowing in the mire? Are we afraid for the ungodly that forsake God's law? Are we pained to think that it is too possible nothing now remains for them but judgment and fiery indignation; yea, and are we indeed sorry when we see or hear of the failures of such as we trust are, in the main, in the way of life? This is brotherly love.

But should you—I dare not think it of any of you—should you be secretly pleased when any return to their old courses—it is so much the character of Satan, that I will not believe it of any one of you! You may be self-reproached and uneasy when your companion looks towards heaven; nay, wickedly set yourselves to draw him back, because you have no regard for his soul any more than for your own, but you cannot be pleased when you have succeeded; I will not believe it possible. You are rather sorry for what you have done, and wish you had left him to his own way. But you have no concern that many forsake Jesus otherwise; upon this you look with indifference at least, and are not disposed to be sorry for the failures of others; rather you dwell upon them—alas, this cannot be love, for love “rejoiceth not in iniquity.”

4. Love labours to live peaceably and affectionately with all those who fear God. “Let us follow after the things that make for peace, and things whereby

one may edify another," saith St. Paul; and again, "follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace." But how shall we follow after the things that make for peace? By bearing and forbearing one another; giving up our own humours; not taking up prejudices; not observing mistakes; not judging rashly; not taking offence upon every cause; all which must be done, else there can be no peace. It is love which makes all this easy, love which "seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, covereth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." It is love which is the mother of peace. Love takes up easily the conduct of Abraham with Lot, when there was a strife between their herdsmen. He said unto Lot, "let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen, for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me; if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will take the right, or if thou depart to the right, then I will go to the left." So love condescends, nor finds any difficulty in doing so. Love quietly lets people go to the right hand or the left, in following their own consciences. Love can endure infirmities in others; love doth not quarrel because men on earth are not perfect as the saints in heaven; love cannot bear distances and coldnesses, nor stands off upon every trifle, but gives the hand to those who have given the heart to God. Love, in a word, if it cannot have peace, seeks and ensues it; yea, though while it speaks of peace, a blinded zeal may make ready to battle, yet it remaineth love still. Gracious disposition—which, did it prevail,

would quickly set the world together again. Blessed peace-making grace, they who possess thee are called the children of God!

See, I pray you, if you seek peace; if you follow hard after it; if you do all that lieth in you to live peaceably. In little matters are you easy to bear and forbear; in greater have you learnt to forgive? In religious differences have you learnt to leave men to their own consciences, as you desire they should you? Do you find all angry prejudices wearing out of your hearts, and will you not be guided by them? O cultivate this blessed temper, and seek to be at peace with all those with whom you have reason to hope you may dwell together for ever in heaven.

Or are you indifferent whether you are at peace or not? Is your self-will unbroken? Cannot you bear contradiction? Must you have your own way? Will you not condescend to sue for peace, nor hardly to accept it? Are you angry, peevish, fretful, censorious? Truly there is nothing like love in you; a spirit of discord and variance hath possessed you. O that you would consider this word, "he that hateth his brother is a murderer, and we know that no murderer hath eternal life." Yet once more,

5. Love delights in the Christian fellowship of those who seek God by Jesus Christ. "I am a companion," saith David, "of all them that love thee and keep thy commandments." He loved to be with them, as at other times, so peculiarly in religious employment and acts of worship. "I was glad," said he, "when they said unto me, we will go into the house of the Lord." "Why so," may one say,

“might he not as well serve God elsewhere?” No; “thither the tribes go up, even the tribes of the Lord, to testify to Israel, to give thanks to the name of the Lord.” The apostle’s charge is, that we “do not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is.” This was the primitive custom, when “they continued in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayer.” Accordingly, “be filled with the Spirit,” saith St. Paul, “speaking to yourselves, (or as it is in another place,) teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts unto the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” But now what is it that stirs up the soul to the offices of public or private Christian fellowship; fits us for them, and makes us long after them? It is love. This draws out the desires of those that fear the Lord, to speak often one to another. This unites their hearts with their voices, when they pray to and praise God, with and for one another. This made David say, “one day in thy courts is better than a thousand; I have loved the habitation of thine house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.” To assemble without love, is to leave behind the very soul of public worship. It is no assembly of the saints without love, and all the acts of Christian fellowship, love delights in. Then the flame of devotion is communicated from one loving soul unto another; then mutual and united prayers, praises, and thanksgivings, go up to the throne of grace.

This is a joy which strangers do not meddle with ; strangers to Christian love. O how did David cry out in the experience of it, “my soul longeth, yea even fainteth for the courts of the Lord.”

Take this along with you, therefore, that if you do not desire Christian fellowship, of whatever kind it be, you are unacquainted with Christian love.

Let this suffice now, for the exercise and influence of Christian love towards those who appear to be the children of God in Jesus Christ. When we meet next, God willing, I shall endeavour to shew you somewhat of its actings with regard to the temporal concerns of others. Meantime I conclude with two short remarks.

The first is for the use of those who have been altogether unable to apply to themselves the description given of brotherly love. I beg you to see that there is a wide difference between not hating and loving. You say you do not live in hatred—you forgive all men—you bear no malice. Hence you sit down easy, and imagine you love and are in charity. I entreat you to see your mistake. You have not been able to apply to your own case one of these branches of Christian love; yet they have been all evidently proved to you from various Scriptures. However unwilling you may be to hear, or I to speak it, it is too plain—alas, you abide in death. I have repeated the same words, “he that loveth not his brother, doth so abide in death,” over and over, on purpose that you might take notice of so dreadful a state. If this word should, as I pray God it may, awaken your

fears, and convince you of your dangerous condition, you shall do well to observe,

The second remark I make to those (i. e. to all) who have found their love imperfect. You find the work of the devil not yet utterly dissolved; you are more selfish than you would be; you cannot love as you wish. Remember then what you before heard, that the Son of God was manifested to dissolve the works of the devil. Humble yourselves before him; sue earnestly for a new heart and a new spirit; that he will exert his mighty power in consuming your lusts, and transforming you more abundantly into his divine image, that loving God more entirely, you may love your brother more unfeignedly. Doubt not but he will grant your requests, who both died and liveth for you, even Jesus Christ our Lord!

*Oct. 20th, 1754.*

## SERMON IV.



*Above all these things, put on charity : Col. iii, 14.*

YOU have had some account given you of the higher and more noble exercises of a loving heart, and do not you verily wish the grace were yours, however far you may be from it? You can take no offence, I am persuaded, at that temper of soul which is so well disposed towards you; which most kindly interests itself in your great eternal interests; which feels a tender sollicitude for you; bears with, forbears towards you, prays, does any thing for you, if you are walking in darkness and sin; which rejoices over you; labours for your spiritual advancement; walks with you in all endeared friendship and godly communion, if you are treading the path of life. Thus Jesus lived; he was all compassion to sinners, he pitied, he died for them; he grieved for his enemies; his carriage to them was lowly; his patience with them never to be tired out; his endeavours, his prayers for them ceaseless, his warnings awful; his solicitations importunate; his reproofs free and weighty. All his joy was in his friends; he bore with them in all their infirmities; he ministered to them whatever might strengthen or comfort them; he prayed for them, and finally, would have them with him where he is. Thus love carries itself to others with respect to their spiritual interests.

We are now to view it in its regard to the temporal concerns of others. Christian love, carried into the ordinary affairs of life, is so far from being the least, that it is, I believe, the greatest proof of its being what it calls itself. For see, corrupt nature, while it hath made us selfish, hath also rendered us worldly. We naturally desire the things of this life, and because we desire them, we value and depend upon them. This is the case of every natural man, and that with jealousies one of another. But now, when a man can so far lay aside his selfish views, as to be nothing displeas'd with the worldly prosperity of another, nor finds any other use of what he hath more pleasing to him, than to help the necessities of others; and both these out of a heart drawn after the things that are above, and entered into the views and regards of God towards his creatures upon earth; then it is plain that the natural heart hath been renewed, and the man taken out of this world. In two respects then love is influenced towards the temporal interests of others, considering them in a state of prosperity, or of adversity and affliction.

First, then, charity doth not envy the prosperity and advancement of others, for in any sense "charity envieth not." How should it be love if it did? Yet to envy the prosperity of others, is just what the natural heart suggests. People may say what they please, and may put on an air of satisfaction when others prosper; but in the meantime, if they look no higher than the present world themselves, jealous envy sits upon their hearts. And this not only with regard to money (though that I suppose most noto-

riously excites envy, because the greatest and most common pursuit of earthly-minded men) but also with respect to station, honour, character, or any other present attainment. It is he only whose affections are fixed upon heaven, that can endure without jealousy and disgust the prosperity of another. So the psalmist speaketh of himself, describing the workings of his own heart —“as for me, my feet were almost gone, my steps had well nigh slipped, for I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.” This he could not endure, till he regarded them in another view. “It was,” says he, “too painful for me, until I went into the sanctuary of the Lord; then understood I their end.” The prosperity of others is not always a matter of joy to the Christian heart; he considers their end, and if their prosperity be rendered a snare to their souls, by the abuse they make of it, he cannot rejoice therein. This consideration will possess him with pity, but their prosperity is not a cause of envy; he doth not suffer his heart to envy them, though with the psalmist he should be inclined so to do.

We shall all do well to search our hearts here. “Charity envieth not.” What was it which drove the princes and presidents of Darius’s court to obtain an impious decree against Daniel? Was it not because the king thought to set him over the whole realm, in dignity above them all? When any is distinguished above you by abundance and honour, do you find your heart set against him? If so, you must needs be of the world, and only envy him, because he hath attained what you wish for yourself. Why did Jacob’s other sons envy Joseph? Was it

not because their father loved him more than all his brethren? And what was the consequence? "They hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him;" they cast him into a pit, and at last sold him into Egypt. And we, do we hate those who attain that worldly thing we aim at, who stand in our way, or thwart our schemes? Cannot we speak peaceably to, and much more of them? Are we contriving in our hearts their disappointment and damage? Are we rejoiced when they are removed by providence, misfortune, or death? Alas, this is devilish envy. The ten had indignation against James and John, when their mother had requested for them of the Lord, that they might "sit the one on his right hand, and the other on his left, in his kingdom." The best of God's children are liable to envious suggestions. We have too much of the world in us all, and while this remains we shall need to walk heedfully, lest the strivings of an envious heart extinguish love. Even in religious causes envy will be working, and we shall be apt to hate others, because they have more distinguished gifts and graces than ourselves. Excuse this needful hint, which is not directly in our way, while we are speaking of love as it regards the temporal interests of others. It doth not envy their prosperity, though it may not be said always to rejoice in it; for in this it considers the end, and either is pleased or grieved, as the welfare of men's souls seems to be affected thereby. In the book of Proverbs, from the beginning of the fourth to the end of the ninth chapter, Solomon, as it appears to me, introduces the advice he had received from his father

David. But whether David's or Solomon's, it contains the best instructions ever given by a father to a son, and which I cannot but earnestly recommend to the perusal of the one and the other, and to parents especially, that they may see what instructions they ought to give to persons who are growing up, and what views themselves ought to have towards them. To the present purpose, therein it is abundantly evident that wisdom, i. e. godliness, is the main thing to be regarded, and that if a man with all his getting doth not get understanding, we can have no cause to rejoice over his prosperity. But,

II. We are to see how love acts towards those who are in adversity and affliction. We are come now to what the world means by charity, and beyond which they have no apprehension of charity. True it is, helping others in their distress, is an eminent branch of love; but then all such helping others in distress is not charity. Wherefore, that you may see what are the true exercises of brotherly love in this matter, and also may not think yourselves charitable merely because you give, though it be never so largely, we will briefly consider the following points. (1.) What outward distresses render people objects of charity? (2.) What it is which love readily ministers to them out of its ability. (3.) The principle it acts from in ministering help. (4.) The measure in which love doth it.

1. What outward distresses render people objects of charity? And here I say generally, all persons in distress are objects of charity; whoever needs relief demands charity. Helpless childhood, and decrepid

age, poverty, sickness, affliction, oppression, have their several claims, and challenge their several helps from Christian love. Nor do I know of any other distinction, allowed to be made between the persons under any of these distresses but only this—that those of a man's family and kindred have the first demand upon him—"if any provide not for his own, especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel;" and next to them, those who are "of the household of faith," by which we must understand such as are of a more pious and orderly conversation, who therefore are to be preferred to others. Only here it will be needful to remark, that some who demand relief, are not objects of charity. If a man will not work, and yet is able, neither should such a one eat. Yet one who did not work when he was able, and now cannot work if he would, such a one must be regarded as a real object of charity. For we may not take up God's province in executing judgment, who asks by St. Paul, "who art thou, who judgest another man's servant?" If you say, to relieve those who have brought their distresses upon themselves is to encourage vice and idleness, I answer, you have not to do with a man's vices, but with his wants; you do not encourage his idleness, but relieve his necessities. If afterwards when his distress is over, he encourages himself from a like expectation of relief in his perverse ways, or others take occasion from hence to do likewise, the fault is not yours, but his and theirs. You must leave them to God, who will have it his sole prerogative to execute judgment; "vengeance is

mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." You must not for this cause withhold your hand from any man in his real needs. All the objects of charity may be concluded under these three branches; the *helpless*, whether children or others, the *sick*, and the *afflicted* by misfortune or violence. Let us see,

2. What it is which love readily ministers to each of these after its ability; to the *helpless*, the *sick*, the *afflicted*. Now the poor and helpless, every one knows, the charitable man will relieve; it is a duty so much commanded throughout the Scriptures, that I shall not dwell upon it. But let us see what love doth by the other two, the *sick* and the *afflicted*. The sick need peculiar care as well as compassion, and this love will, after its ability, minister to them. "I was sick," says our Lord, "and ye visited me;" visited me with your alms; your entreaties with others, if you had nothing to give of your own; your provision of all needful helps; your presence, if proper and useful. Love stands upon no niceties, but will be ministering to others, though it may be disagreeable. I do not say that love will put us upon seeing every one that is sick, but I say love will put us upon seeing any that are so where we may be of service; and that this may be often the case with those who are poor, as well as sick, no one can doubt. So again with regard to the *afflicted*; it is the office of love to mourn, not to rejoice when another is cast down; not to curse, as Shimei did David; not to mock, as the Jews did Christ—"Come down from the cross, and we will believe." Yet so much of the work of the devil possesses men's hearts, that

without doubt many triumph in the downfall of others, setting themselves to bring forth the causes of their misery, with an ill-natured harping upon their faults, or at least like the Priest and the Levite in the parable, passing by on the other side, without any compassion. "To him that is afflicted," saith Job, "pity should be shewn by his friends;" but then those friends must first have learnt to love. It is love which fills the heart with pity and compassion. Love provides the wine and the oil, and pours it with cautious care into the bosom of the miserable. "Remember them that are in bonds," saith St. Paul, "as bound with them, and those that suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body." But this love doth, and love only. It is said, "deliver the spoil out of the hand of the oppressor." What, are there no oppressors, or no love, that we hear of few such deliverances? It is a weighty saying of Solomon's, and most worthy our notice, "if thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; if thou sayest behold, we know it not, doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it, and shall not he render to every man according to his works?" In a word, love is money to the poor, a physician to the sick, a comfort to the afflicted. Yet,

3. On what principles doth it act, when it ministers these things according to its ability to the distressed? I pray you to observe, that it is not the mere doing such things, but the doing them from a right principle, that makes them acts or exercises of Christian love. Now this principle is neither a good natured constitution, nor a pharisaical ostentation nor a philosophical

pride, which often lead men to do many things which go by the name of charity. Acts of bounty, done merely from good nature, or to shew our seemingly bountiful disposition, or to put the persons to whom they are done under obligations, have nothing like charity in them. For how can Christian love be that tenderness of constitution, of which a heathen may have as much as a Christian? Or what hath love to do with ostentation? Nor doth love seek her own, nor once think of conferring favours, when it is doing kindnesses. Such things as these, you see, have nothing in them of the nature of love. So truly might St. Paul say, "though I give all my goods to feed the poor, and have not charity;" where he flatly insists, that a man may give away all his goods, and have no charity. What is this principle then, you say, which sanctifies all such actions? It is love; that grace of the renewed mind, by which "we are merciful, even as our heavenly Father is merciful." By this we feel something of the compassions of God and of his Son Jesus Christ, towards the objects of distress. By this our hands, as well as our hearts, are open to communicate, without any design of conferring favours, gaining a name, or receiving again. It is compassion. Do you ask what this is? It is what no one knows but a Christian, and every Christian possesses. It is what grows up with the renewal of our hearts to the love of God, by faith in Jesus, whereby a man sees every thing in a new light, and is affected with every thing in a new manner, and finds himself insensibly interested in the cases of others, and that in a quite different sort to what any natural man possibly

can be. Do you know what it is to love God with all your hearts, and to seek with the whole bent of your souls the things which are above? Then you know yourselves also stewards of whatever you have, for God's honour, and compassion for the distressed will direct you to their relief. You will be doing good cheerfully, because you have in you the mind of Christ Jesus. Our Lord describes charity in a word, "do good, hoping for nothing again." This is pure love, to do good for the sake of doing it; this is to be like God, whose dispensations are this very thing. If, therefore, out of pure compassion, you are laying yourselves out to succour the helpless, the sick, the afflicted; i. e. to succour your neighbour in his distresses of whatever kind they be, according to your power, hoping for nothing again—then you are really exercising yourselves in true charity, and your Master tells you, that "your reward shall be great, and you shall be the children of the Highest."

There is a word common in the mouths of beggars about our streets, by which however I fear they themselves mean little, "give me something for Christ's sake," which may serve, perhaps, more familiarly to represent the right principle of doing good. Do we do it for Christ's sake, regarding his *honour* in the use of our abilities, considering his *body* in his distressed members, and pitying and succouring them, even as he hath compassion on us? If you are disciples indeed, these views will go along with and influence you to acts of charity; and if you are the new creatures I was speaking of, persons of renewed minds who have been brought from Satan unto God,

they will have the pre-eminence in all your conduct.  
I come to speak,

4. Of the measure wherewith the charitable man ministers to the necessities of others, I mean as to the matter of alms-giving. Now seeing the gospel hath enjoined nothing upon us particularly in this matter, but hath left us to distribute, as the principle of brotherly love shall dispose us; from that principle, rather than from any direct injunctions of God's word, we must seek out the measure of our liberality; and truly, if this hath possession of our hearts, neither love of money, nor distrust of God's providence, nor insensibility to the distresses of others will hinder our distributions. "Every one of you," saith St. Paul, "as God hath prospered him"—"of the ability which God giveth," saith St. Peter; as if where love was, every one would give as God hath prospered him, and he was able; and in truth, this is the only rule which can be given. Love your neighbour, and you will not fail of giving according to your ability. But I have shewn you over and over, that he who loves his neighbour must first love God, and be of a heavenly disposition. Then compassion to the distressed will open at once his heart and his hand, nor will those considerations which hinder the worldly and selfish from giving of their ability, hinder him. Worldly men cannot distribute; either they are insensible to the wants of others, or if they are touched with them, they have not the heart to give liberally; their love of money, and fear of lessening themselves, makes them draw back. But when a man loves God, and seeks everlasting life, he hath no such regard for

money; when he trusts upon God's care, his fears and dread of want are suppressed, and when he takes his neighbour into his heart, pity renders him liberal. If therefore you would know the true standard of your distributions, see that you love God and not money; see that you can trust yourselves and all your affairs to God's care; see, finally, that you be possessed with a tender compassion towards your distressed brother, kindled in you by the compassions of Jesus towards yourselves, and then whether you have much or little to give, you shall need no direction how to open your hands.

Thus now I have laid out what I hope may serve to make you advised sufficiently concerning the nature of Christian charity, as it relates to the matter of helping the distressed. Herein my design hath not been to discourage liberality upon any principles, but to undeceive any who may have unduly judged of themselves that they were charitable, and to make it evident what true Christian distribution is.

I shall detain you once again, if God permit, with setting before you the *necessity* of Christian love.

Meantime, let us labour to improve the subject of this day. Go, my brethren, try your hearts. Ye are living amidst much prosperity, see if ye do not grudge and envy the prosperous estate one of another. Yet with your prosperity, objects of distress are with you always: consider how you carry it towards them; if they have a place in your thoughts, your pity, your purse, your prayers. It is not enough to give, you must have compassion on them. This will make you think for them, and fall upon effectual means for

their relief. “Blessed is the man that provideth for the poor and needy;” it is a gracious employment. But of all sorts of liberality that is the most gracious, which is laid out in the useful and religious education of children. See to it if these be cared for. Possibly their parents are bringing them up in vice and idleness. They demand your attention; and God hath blessed you; ye are well able; and O that ye would remember how riches make themselves wings and flee away! O that ye would “make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.” “While ye have time then, do good unto all men.”

## SERMON V.

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*Above all these things, put on charity : Col. iii, 14.*

WE are now to conclude these discourses upon love, a grace in which I fear we come very short, yet a grace than which I can desire to see nothing more among you. Do we regard every man another's weal ; are our souls precious in each other's eyes ; do we rejoice over the least appearance of a religious state in any ; are we unwilling to believe any thing evil one of another ; are mutual infirmities endured, and failures pitied ; are we ready to every good work of love, to help the souls and the estates of our brethren ; are animosities, resentments, distances not known among us ? Have we no envyings one of another ; no hatred ; no wrath ; no clamour ; no evil-speaking ; no selfish covetousness, the root of them all ? When will it be that we shall put on charity, and be merciful, kind, humble, meek, long-suffering, forbearing, forgiving one towards another ? When will that faith be in us, which shall unite us all as one soul to Christ, and love, the fruit of it illustrate and dignify our faith ? When shall we love as brethren, as members one of another ? I know not when ; but I hope you wish for such a day ; I wish you to pray for it ; I pray God to hasten it among you. May his blessing, on what I have now to offer concerning the *necessity* of Christian love,

render it an effectual means of enlarging that gracious spirit in all our hearts.

The necessity of Christian love may appear from these three considerations.

I. That the honour of Christ demands that we love one another.

II. That we are no real disciples of Christ unless we do so.

III. That without this there can be no such thing as communion of saints. Which last I purpose mostly to speak of, as particularly suited to the ordinance before us.<sup>1</sup>

I. Then, the honour of Christ demands that we should love one another. How so? Why hereby he is manifested to be the Saviour of the world, the powerful and sufficient Redeemer of mankind. But how doth love shew this? You shall hear. You know (because I have spent a whole discourse upon that point) that in our natural estate, being under the guidance of our selfish and worldly hearts, we are at variance with each other, and that it cannot be otherwise, while every one expects to have his own will, and all are seeking pre-eminence in worldly goods, as we all naturally are. How may love and peace be restored? It was said that it could not be done any other way, than by taking away that self-will and love of the world, which is natural to our hearts, by disposing us to submit to God's will rather than to follow our own, and to set our affections on God and heavenly things, rather than upon the things of this world. If this be effected, variance must cease, and

<sup>1</sup> The Lord's Supper.

love must take place. Now this turning men's hearts, being entirely the work of God, was, from the fall, promised to be done by the seed of the woman, and if Jesus doth this, and he only, it is evident that he, and he only, is the Redeemer of the world. He undertakes, as he says, to sanctify men's hearts by faith of him, for he was manifested to destroy the works of the devil. But how shall it appear that he is able to do this, and consequently that he is the person God hath promised, and sent to be the Saviour of the world? It will appear very plainly, when his disciples lay aside their selfish earthly regards, and love one another with a mutual respect to each other's interests as to their own. Then it will be manifested that their hearts are turned back again to God, without which it were not possible they should so love one another. But who by this means shall know that Jesus is the Saviour of the world? Why, the whole world that see his disciples loving one another, and the only ones that do so, or can do so, in the whole world. The world cannot but see that a mighty change is wrought upon them, and thereby confess that Jesus is the Son of God, that Saviour that should come into the world. The force of the argument lies here, that the true disciples of Christ by means of their love are singular. While all the rest of mankind are living in malice and envy, hateful to, and hating one another, neither malice, envy, or hatred should be found among them, but they should be seen to exercise all manner of tenderness, forbearance, delight, and mutual regard every one towards his brother. This must be both a confounding and convincing ar-

gument to the world. What I have been now insisting upon, our Lord once and again prays for in this very view: he would have his people love one another, that the world may know that God hath sent him. He says, "neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word, that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." That they all may be one—What! One body? How? By the same Spirit influencing the head and the members. How shall this appear? By the fellowship they hold with Christ by *faith*, and with one another by *love*. These two are the great instruments of spiritual union. So he speaks immediately after, "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me."<sup>2</sup> How should the world know it? Not by their *faith*, but by their *love*, *faith* being invisible in the heart, *love* evident to the eyes of the world.

You see now that it is by the spirit and exercises of love, we may do Christ honour; and from hence it is abundantly evident, that there cannot be a more ready way to disgrace Christ, and to hinder the success of his religion, than by those disputings, and unloving warmths, falsely called zeal, which have been and still are so much in the world. O when shall we have done with them? Truly, when we love, and our hearts can rejoice in the image of God wherever we find it. May we never forget that strife and conten-

<sup>2</sup> John xvii.

tion is the work of the devil, and that we can never indulge it, without at once giving place to him, and putting a stop to the conviction of the world, and to their acknowledgment that Jesus is the Son of God, to the saving of their souls.

II. The necessity of Christian love appears from hence, that we are no real disciples of Jesus Christ without it. "This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you." The latter clause respects the manner and measure of Christian love, the former the thing itself, which our Lord calls his commandment, and that commandment a new commandment; new, not because it was never given before, (for all the faithful from the beginning of the world lived in it, they could have had no faith without it) but new, because love is indeed a new thing to fallen man, and his commandment, because only insisted upon by him, or to be practised by those who truly believe in him. If then we be not in the practice of this love, his commandment, we are not really his servants. If we are without it, we cannot be in that new state and kingdom which he hath set up, and must be still of the world. By this token we must learn to know ourselves, whether we are his disciples or not. If we do not love, however much seeming zeal, humility, heavenly-mindedness, we may think we have, all is in truth just nothing; we are not disciples of Christ, and the whole world will know we are not so, for if by love all men shall know that we are Christ's disciples, then if we have not love, all men shall know that we are but pretenders to Christianity.

See then, would you have all men know you to be

Christians? How shall they know it? By your barely telling them so, and making public profession of Christ's religion? No, this will not do; this of itself will give us no satisfaction; you must shew us your Christian love, then we shall own you to be disciples indeed. We would needs think you Christians if we could, but we cannot do it, while you are envious, or revengeful, or selfish, while you shew no concern for other people, no pity towards sinners, no delight in the saints. Except we see the marks of Christian love upon you, we cannot believe you to belong to Christ. Convince us only that you love, give us the signs of disciples, and it sufficeth.

It is but a little matter, however, whether men own you or not; Christ will not own you for disciples. How should he? True, you call him Lord, Lord, but you do not the things which he saith; you do not keep his new commandment, do not love others as he hath loved you.

And since neither men nor Christ will or can own you for disciples, being without brotherly love, I pray you no longer to mistake yourselves, nor to conceit that you are Christians when you are not so. You are most concerned, that you are not deceived. It were a sad thing that you should live and die in a mistake; and if God's word be not mistaken, you are. Hear what he saith; "he who saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. We know that we are passed from death unto life because we love the brethren; he that loveth not his brother abideth in death." But,

III. The necessity of brotherly love is evident,

in that there can be no such thing as communion among the saints without it. I will speak only of that most direct expression thereof, their communicating in the same ordinances. There is a union of the bodies and souls of fellow-saints, which belongs to their communion, and which without love is impracticable, as has been plain enough from all these discourses. But this I do not principally intend now; my purpose is to shew you, that we must needs love one another, that we may be fit to meet together here in this house, or to praise God together in heaven.

We are not fit to meet together in this house without love. The short, yet full account which St. Paul gives of the communion of saints one with another, is this; as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body being many, are one body, so also is Christ; i. e. Christ mystical. The meaning is, the church of Christ may be compared to the body of a man; as the body of a man is one, so is the church of Christ one. The body of a man hath many members or distinct parts, so hath the church of Christ many particular believers. Yet all the members of a man's body, though they be many, are but one body, which is but the composition of several parts or members; so all the believers in the church of Christ, though they be many, are but one church, which is but the composition of the several believers. Well, we see that the members or parts of a man's body, are really united together into one body. But are believers as really united together, and what is it unites them? "By one Spirit we are all baptized into

one body, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." It is the Spirit, you find, unites all believers into one body, of which union, the two sacraments, baptism and the Lord's supper, are the seals. Not to speak of baptism, is the Lord's supper a seal of the spiritual union between believers; doth it signify their being one spiritual body? Then it must be the expression of their love to each other in that relation. For as there can be no union with Christ without love, so there cannot be any communion of his saints without it. Take away love, and the Lord's supper loses its very nature, and is no longer a seal of spiritual unity, because there is really no such thing, if love, the great fruit of it, be wanting. Accordingly St. Paul says expressly,<sup>3</sup> that to eat without love, is not to eat the Lord's supper: "now in this that I declare unto you, I praise you not, that you come together, (in the public assemblies, particularly to the supper of the Lord,) not for the better, but for the worse; not to edification, but to condemnation." What was it could turn even their solemn meetings into a curse? It was their want of love. "First of all, when you come together in the church, I hear that there are divisions among you;" and if so, they could not be in charity. "When ye come together therefore into one place," (in this manner, divided and without love) "this is not to eat (more exactly ye cannot eat) the Lord's supper." Ye do indeed eat bread and drink wine, but ye have no communion therein with Christ or each other; ye

overturn the end of the supper, which is a pledge of spiritual union. So when he speaks of unworthy receiving, and the fearful consequences thereof, "eating and drinking damnation," and this by reason of not discerning the Lord's body, he hath special regard to the want of love, by which means these Corinthians could not use this sign according to its nature and appointment, which is to be a seal of spiritual union between Christ and his members, which you must understand by "discerning the Lord's body." If then we eat and drink without love, we do not communicate hereby, and nothing is sealed, but we are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. We both abuse this solemn remembrance, and crucify to ourselves the Son of God afresh, and instead of shewing forth his death, put him to an open shame. But when we eat in love, as all members of Christ's body, having the same care and love one for another as for ourselves, then we express a real spiritual union, have communion one with another, and do worthily partake of the signs and seals of Christ's mystical body.

What hath been said of the Lord's supper, is equally observable of every other act of social worship. Why do we meet here to pray with one another; why not as well pray at home? So we may if we come not in love, for the end of our assembling is to pray for, as well as with one another. He that regards none but himself here in his prayers, might as well be at home, for he doth no more here than he might do at home; he overturns the end of social worship. To meet together to pray, is a sign of love; but if love be wanting, the sign doth not signify or declare any thing,

and the nature of it is lost. Yea, and to come without love, is the same thing as not to come at all, for he that doth not come in love, doth not come as a saint, as a member of Christ's mystical body. In a word, you shall judge what share love had in the public assemblies of the first Christians. "They continued stedfastly in the apostle's 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. They continued daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart."

Nor are we fit to meet together in heaven without love. This St. Paul makes very evident, in the conclusion of his most lively description of love. "Charity never faileth." All gifts shall fail; yea, and these very graces which are now excellent in our state of warfare, and upon which we stand, shall cease, but love shall never fail. When we come to a state of perfection, faith shall be lost in sight, and hope in enjoyment, but love of the brethren shall abide. Then the end of the gospel shall be completed, and charity shall be perfected. "Charity never faileth;" as if he had said, there shall be no divisions, no strifes in heaven, no enmity, no jealousy, nor proud contention shall be there; all above is love, mutual joy, and fair peace. Ye foolish Corinthians, ye cannot carry your heart-burnings with you to heaven; ye must lay them aside and learn to love if ye will be blessed there. Christ bears your strifes now, but

think you he will endure them in heaven? Will he suffer the peace of his family there to be disturbed? O this blessed charity; follow after it, it will never fail. My brethren, let us reflect how solitary an unloving soul would be in heaven! Untouched with the joys of others, jealous of their happiness, with what heart could he join in their praises and services? How magnify the Redeemer's grace and love for the multitude of the saved? How add his voice to the united acclamations of those who follow the Lamb wheresoever he goeth? It is love, love of the brethren, as well as of God, that will make heaven to be heaven. God hath made us for society. Christ hath knit us together in one body. Even in heaven there is no being happy alone. We must love now, if we will be happy for ever. How horrid the thought of spending eternity alone! Yet it were better to be alone, than to be with those we do not love. O believe it, the saints above communicate to and with each other's joy, holding delightful fellowship, and walking together as friends. Together they sing and give thanks, and even as themselves they love one another. In heaven, charity makes the communion of the saints perfect.

Thus now you have been shewn the necessity of Christian brotherly love, whether for the honour of our Master, our interest in him, or our fellowship with each other, here or in heaven. How applicable what hath been said is to the supper before us can hardly need be insisted on. Our Master hath invited us to his feast, but you would not come without any regard to his honour, and the interest of his kingdom. You desire that he would own you for his

disciples ; you would sit down at his table with your Christian friends. If you are coming in love, all this is answered, and this shall be a communion unto you indeed. But if you love not, you cannot eat the Lord's supper. I trust, therefore, all of you, who have determined to accept your Lord's invitation, are drawing near in the sincerity of love, lamenting you can love no more, desirous to give this token and pledge of your charity, and expecting that the remembrance of your Master's death, will be made to you a blessed means of enlarging your hearts in the bowels of love. Yet remember, that love is not that cold-hearted thing it is too often thought to be. Reflect upon the description you have heard of it ; its compassion over sinners, its rejoicing over saints, its willing labours towards the souls and bodies of men, and, the resemblance it bears to the love of Christ Jesus, whose command is, that as he hath loved us, so ought we to love one another. We shall quickly see his love in lively representations. God grant we may be all transformed into the likeness of it, for the sake of his honour, our own souls, and the edification one of another.

*Nov. 3rd, 1754.*

SERMON VI.

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THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITY  
OF  
SPIRITUAL RELIGION,

PREACHED AT ST. COLUMBE, MARCH 3, 1754.

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*My son give me thine heart : Prov. xxiii, 26.*

THIS is the demand of God upon us—of that God whose property we are, whose peculiar goodness hath distinguished us beyond all other works of his hand, who waits upon us with blessings daily, plentifully poured down upon our forgetful heads, whose tender protection is ever with us, who guides us through the wilderness of life, where danger, distress, and terror lie in our path and threaten our ruin, who hath provided mansions of peace, security, joy, and glory for us above. It is the demand of the kindest, most indulgent, affectionate Father, almighty to save and bless in all the fearful scenes we have to pass, in our cruel warfare with Satan, in the hour of death, and when the judgment day shall spread its gloomy horrors over dissolving nature—it is his demand, “my son, give me thine heart. Give not thine heart to another; rob me not of thy love, and trust, and de-

light; give them not to pleasure and vanity, to wealth and station; give to me the choicest love, the whole confidence, the most pleasing joys of thy soul. It is thy heart I ask of thee; thou givest me nothing without this. The sacrifices of thy knees and thy lips, thy public and private attendances cannot please, cannot satisfy me; if thy heart be engaged in another service, they are abominations unto me, an unmeaning formality, mere heartless compliments, "my son give me thy heart." I hope this subject may be usefully handled in the illustration of the following points.

I. What it is to give the heart to God.

II. That there is no sort of religion where this is not done.

III. To help your inquiries whether ye do give God your hearts or not.

After which,

IV. We may conclude with a suitable application.

We are entering upon a matter of high moment, a matter too but little considered, and upon both these accounts, a matter which demands your serious attention and application, as ye are all alike concerned in it.

I. What it is to give the heart to God.

You know there is a God, an almighty, wise, holy, just, good, and eternal Spirit, ever with you and near you, your sovereign Lord, exercising an excellent dominion over you and all his creatures, your Maker and preserver, inviting sinful man by the Son of his bosom to come back to him, and providing stores of joy in another life, for such as accept his most gra-

cious and condescending offer. Now how ought you to be disposed to such a being? I shall take the help of the church catechism to tell you, both that you may be confirmed of my speaking to you the words of soberness, and also may the better recollect what the religion of the heart means in your after retirement. You know that it says your duty to God is, “to believe in him, to fear him, and to love him with all the heart, with all the mind, with all the soul, and with all the strength; to worship him, to give him thanks, to put the whole trust in him, to call upon him, to honour his holy name and his word, and to serve him truly all the days of the life.” And see in conscience, since you know God to be an almighty king, to whom you owe all manner of service, and who also is ever present with you, observing and considering all your ways, if you ought not to render him the first and most prevailing *fear* of your heart; if it doth not become you to fear him always, to be carried on by the sense of his majesty and presence, and of the obedience you owe him, so as to be constrained thereby in all places, companies, and circumstances, not to disobey him in any matter—to fear him, not to be afraid of him, but in such a manner to be influenced by this holy fear, as ever more to be most of all things afraid, lest you should sin against and offend him. If you know God to be boundless in goodness, in himself most lovely, because of his unspotted purity and holiness, and in all his ways manifesting himself as a good and blessed God, surpassing all admiration and praise, how ought your hearts to *love* him, to esteem him as your father and

Lord, to desire his favour, to delight in his being near you, to please yourselves in being and doing what he would have you? Surely you ought to find yourselves constrained by an inward care, desire, and willingness to do whatever should oblige him, and nothing which might injure or offend him, because even thus you would love your friends. You are assured that God is the Lord and ruler of the world; therefore it is your duty to *worship* him, to bear in your hearts a perpetual acknowledgment of your dependance upon him, that you hold all you enjoy at his will, receive every thing you have from his bounty, and live by his mere grace and favour. Thus your hearts would be devoted to the sovereign of this land, were you advanced by his kindness, were you supported at his cost, and held a comfortable subsistence at his pleasure. You know God to be the Father of all mercies to you; he that keeps you day and night; he that preserves you in life and health, and strength and peace; he that hath and doth bear with you in all your sins; he that is willing to forgive them all, and stands with opened arms to receive you into his very bosom, to fall upon your neck and kiss you whenever you return to him; he that hath prepared an habitation eternal in his heavens, for such undutiful creatures as you have been. And what doth all this demand within your hearts? Doth it deserve no return? *To give him thanks*, to bear a grateful sense of the obligations you owe him, to be disposed evermore to praise and magnify him for his gracious dealings with you; this, how reasonable is it? And what monsters of ingratitude must you judge your-

selves, if you feel no thankfulness resting upon your hearts, under the manifold unmerited mercies which the all-gracious God hath poured and doth pour upon your unworthy heads. You do, or may know, that by God all things consist, that his almighty arm and universal presence are the prop and stay of the world, that he guideth all things, and disposeth all things in wisdom and goodness, contriving all our matters in a way most conducive to our eternal happiness, and to our happiness now, as far as is consistent with the former. And what should this work upon your hearts, but that you *put your whole trust* in him; that you should repose yourselves upon his protection and care, find yourselves ever resting upon his arm, quietly and securely leaving the affairs of your souls and bodies to his foresight and good providence, and submissively acquiescing in his disposals. Should you be cleaving to worldly things for safety, deliverance, and happiness, you would not imagine that you gave God your hearts, or put your whole trust in him. What you know of God's power, wisdom, goodness, love, and presence, must keep your souls in a certain apt posture and readiness to *call upon him* in every time of need; in wants, in distresses, in afflictions, in trials, in temptations, whenever your souls want comfort, and whenever they want strength. As the little helpless child is ever ready to fly to its parent, to be secured from danger, to be kept from falling, to be comforted in every grief, and relieved in every want, so must your souls be ready to call upon God. Nay, but if you know God to be, what indeed he is, an awful and dread majesty, worthy to be revered in

all places of his dominion, and manifested in his holy word, as a pure, forgiving, and condescending God, you must needs bear upon your hearts a prevailing *honour* towards his holy name and word. You cannot but reverence that name by which he is known, and that word which displays him as favourable to lost sinners, and magnifying himself in their salvation. Finally, as you know God to be your king, and that you are bound to him by the manifold obligations of creation, preservation, redemption, and providence, your hearts will be disposed to *serve him truly* all the days of your lives. You will admit of no reserves as to what he would have you do, will hearken to no pleadings of flesh and blood, of interest and reputation and convenience, but will be heartily engaged in his service, ready to discharge his commands, and honestly labour to be found faithful in your stations, and to approve your ways before him. And this not by starts and fits, as driven to it by fear, but continually all the days of your lives, as invited into it by choice, and influenced in it by love.

This shortly may serve to give you some notion of what giving the heart to God is. Indeed it can give you no more than a notion of it, if you have not these several graces wrought into your hearts, and so, can but have found the want of them as they have been mentioned. And yet from so short an account you must have been led to discern, that though your hearts be strangers to them, yet there is somewhat in this fear, love, worship, gratitude, trust, calling upon God, honouring him in his name and word, and truly serving him, which is extremely becoming reasonable

creatures, living under the eye of an almighty, wise, gracious, forgiving, and compassionate Father. You are persuaded at least that there is some meaning in a religion of this sort, and are suspecting that any thing which bears the name of religion, can be but a mistake if this be wanting. Probably you are reasoning with yourselves thus, "true, O Lord God, thou art an eternal, and universal Majesty, ever reigning over us, and ever present with us; we ought to fear thee in all things, to be possessed with a constraining fear, lest we should transgress against thy law, a fear to which all other fears should be subjected, the fear of men, the fear of shame, the fear of poverty, the fear of death. Thou inexhaustible goodness from whom all blessings flow, lovely in thyself, and most lovely in all thy dispensations, we ought to love thee with our whole heart, to value thee beyond the whole world, to desire thy favour, as our only happiness, to scorn every earthly thing in comparison of thee, yea, and to delight in the idea that the good God is ever with us. Most true is it, that thy hands have made us and fashioned us, that by thee we live, and from thee receive all that we enjoy; we ought evermore to acknowledge our dependance upon thee, to worship thee with our whole hearts, and continually to stand before thee with this awful sentiment—we are by thy power, bounty and love. And thou Father of all mercies, while we consider thy patience with a world in rebellion against thee, while we read of thy amazing love in giving thy Son to save us, while we reflect upon thy forbearance with us, and thy willingness to take us to thy bosom as thy children, sure we

are that it becomes us to be thankful, to possess always a grateful sense upon our hearts of thy various loving-kindnesses. Nor can we deny, in the views of thy power, providence, and interposing care, that we ought not to dishonour thee by putting our trust in another, yea we are ready to subscribe to thy own determination, however fearfully the curse may light upon our own heads, ‘cursed is he that putteth his trust in man, and taketh man for his defence, and in his heart goeth from the Lord.’ And dost thou bid us call upon thee for succour, wouldest thou have it known that all our help and strength is in the Lord, who are yet foolish and perverse wretches, that are so little ready to cry unto thee and lean upon thee, while we are beset with many vexations? Most justly mayest thou leave us a prey to our enemies, since we forget the rock of ages, since our vain hearts disgrace thee so much as to seek for refuge in any other arm but thine, thou Almighty God! Thy name too, most mighty Jehovah, and thy holy word deserve the peculiar reverence of our souls. It becomes us not to mention the one without reverence, nor to approach the other without secret and awful respect. And if thou be, as in truth thou art, our rightful Master, if thy service be so honourable as well as delightful, and our hearts pronounce within us that such thou art, and such thy service to those who truly obey thee, surely then we ought to obey thee, to be thy servants alone, to renounce all other masters, and to be studious in all things to do thy will. Thus, even thus, in all these respects, we ought to give thee our hearts.” I shall leave this matter with you, after I have added

this one observation, that what you have now heard, and not any acts of prayer, attending upon the church or sacraments, too commonly called doing our duty, though they are means of grace, or means whereby we are enabled to give our hearts to God, is plainly said in the church catechism to be our duty to God; as indeed well it might, because these several dispositions of the heart towards God are the very substance of the four first commandments which every one knows do contain our duty to God. Did not experience teach us how easily people will suffer themselves to be deceived in matters of religion, however sharp-sighted they may be in every other matter, it could not but fill us with surprise to find men taking the outward helps of communicating, hearing sermons, attending upon the church on Sundays, and saying of prayers which are too often forgotten as soon as ended, and mistaking these things for the whole of religion, when indeed they are no part of it, if they proceed not from that disposition of heart towards God above described, and are no otherwise our duty than as they are the enjoined means to derive upon us that grace which can alone possess our hearts and lives with the duty we owe to God, and our neighbour. Had not the catechism been miserably forgotten and neglected, the words which go before the Lord's prayer, must have rendered, I think, such a fearful mistake impossible.

II. The *second* thing proposed was that there is no sort of religion, where the heart is not given to God. And here, with regard to those careless persons, who take up any thing which looks like religion, only by

the by, who only come to church because they are not detained elsewhere by business or pleasure; who live without private or family prayer, lying down and rising up, even as the beasts of the field do; who cannot endure to read a word in the bible, and hate every other serious book; who spend their days merely in minding the world, and think not of God from one end of the week to the other, perhaps hardly think of him when they are present here at his worship, and have his name in their mouths; who possibly think all the time too long which is spent here, but the hours not long enough when over the glass in ale-houses; who lightly profane God's name and disregard his sabbath; who live in drunkenness, or lewdness, or any other raging deadly sin—it will be allowed, I suppose, that their religion is out of the question altogether. They trouble not themselves about it, do not pretend to be religious, know that they live as they ought not, without God in the world, and are, by their own confession, without hope, unless it be that unmeaning and most ridiculous hope contrary to every word in the Scriptures—that because there are a great multitude in their condition, therefore it will not go so ill with them as some say. Vain imagination! Just as if a rebellion in this kingdom should be less dishonourable, or less provoking to the king, because the far greater part of the people were gone into it. Alas! the word of God doth, and doubtless their own consciences too, give these up as utter strangers to all religion, and professed enemies to God.

But some of you may be ranked among others who make a fairer shew, and have some appearances of

Christianity and godliness about them ; who do not swear, do not debauch themselves with drink, do not cheat their neighbours, read in God's word, say their prayers, attend the church, are constantly at the holy communion, mind their business, are quiet in their houses, give somewhat out of their ability to a poor neighbour ; and if this be not religion, if such be not good men, perhaps it will be said, then who are ; what would the man have more ? Why truly, I would have this more, that the heart should be given to God ; and if that be not done, I will beg you to believe all this is of no account, amounts to just nothing at all, and only serves to blind men's eyes, and make them conceit they are something, when in truth they are nothing. This is just the religion of the Pharisee in the parable ; he did no harm, he kept his church and his sacraments after the manner of his religion, and yet you know what account Christ makes of him. To speak the whole of the matter in one word ; do you think you can be real Christians without loving God ? If you think so, you deny God's word, which says expressly, over and over, in the Old Testament as well as the New, "thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength." And yet with all these fair appearances, I must venture to tell you, you do not love God ; yea I will endeavour to convince you, that you may have all this regularity and decency, and still be strangers to all love of God. Love is the same disposition in the heart, whatever be the thing we love, whether God or a friend. Do you think now that you love God in the same manner

as you have loved, or do love your friends; I mean those persons to whom your hearts are bound by an intimate and endeared affection? You know what delight you each have in your friend's company, how easy it makes you, how always something is wanting if he be not with you. You know how often you think of him when absent, and how eagerly you wish to see him. You know what confidence you have in him, and what a consolation it is to you to tell him all your fears and cares. You know how jealous your heart is of his reputation and interest. You know how much pleasure you could take in obliging him, and how contrary it would be to you to offer him the least slight; how restless you are upon any misunderstanding, till you are sure that he is not displeased with you. These are the genuine and natural effects of love towards your friend. But with all your regularity, you feel and experience nothing like this towards God. Say, are prayer and serious employment delightful to you, because you converse with God in them? Are you acquainted with that content of soul, which accompanies the sense of God's presence with them in the hearts of those that love God? Are you discomposed, and do you find the relish of every thing else gone, if you have lost sight of God? Are you disquieted till you find him with you again, wistfully thinking of the hours when he was with you, and eagerly longing for his return to visit your souls with his presence and countenance? Do you come to God in all your needs with any thing of that confidence which love inspires, and do you find comfort in pouring your complaints into his bosom? Are you jealous

of his glory and interests, feeling yourselves hurt, if he be dishonoured by the sin which you see others commit against his name and majesty? Are you pleased in doing whatever he would have you, and possessed with peculiar dislike of doing the least thing which might displease him? And when you have unwarily injured him, do you find no peace in your souls, till you have hopes of his forgiveness and reconciliation? If you know not the power of godliness, if your hearts be not given to God, but all which you build upon, is the outward form and ceremony of religion, you are utter strangers to this love of God, and I must leave you to judge, how little you are real, vital Christians. No, my brethren, with all your decency you love the world, you love your own pleasure, you love your own praise; to these you give your hearts; you do not love God; and if so, what pretence have you to religion? You do not reckon a man your friend who doth not love you, and convince you that he doth upon every occasion; so neither can you be the friend of God, if you do not heartily love him, for believe it, God will no more take compliments for friendship than yourselves. By this time, I hope it may be something evident, that there can be no religion where the heart is not given to God; for what has been now instanced in the love of God, might be made equally manifest from every other of those tempers, or dispositions of the soul, which were before insisted on from the church catechism.

III. Our *third* employment is to help your inquiries, whether ye do give God your hearts or not.

Now here it may be observed, that every man gives

his heart to some thing or other. There is only one way of giving the heart right, but a thousand ways of giving it wrong, all which however may fitly be collected under this one head, *present things*. Whatever you are therefore, you do either give your heart to God, or to present things. The inquiry is on which your hearts are bestowed.

Are they laid upon pleasures? Numberless is the tribe of the sons of ease and indulgence: possibly some of you may be among them. If you are, the thought of amusement and company-keeping engrosses your minds. Perhaps others of you are among the sons of riot, who peaceably or madly deprive themselves of their senses in drink and excess: or if you delight not in noisy beastly mirth, yet you may live in gratifications, which however harmless in themselves, may prove you "lovers of pleasure more than of God." See, doth not the hour of company or amusement, engross all your thoughts and engage your eager expectations ere it comes? Doth not that hour pass forward too hastily when it is arrived? Do not you look wistfully back upon it when it is gone, and live upon the hope of some new delight which offers itself to your prospects? Or if you have none such before you, do you not sink into a sort of disconsolateness, till some unexpected pleasure or entertainment gives you momentary relief? Mean time, with how much indifference doth the hour of prayer come upon you, and how little heart have you to it when it comes. How tedious the time till it is over. How do you seem to be escaped when it is ended; how totally forgetful of God from that instant; how easy were the painful

drudgery at never so great a distance, and how disappointed if some unexpected occasion forces you to your knees. See now, where your hearts are bestowed. Surely not upon God, when you have no desire to be near him, but upon your own gratification and vanity, because in the hope and enjoyment of these, you are in your element.

Are your hearts laid out upon the interests of life? Say, doth not your business wake with you in the morning, and settle itself upon your thoughts till you sink into sleep at night? Are not your highest hopes that you may prosper in the world, and get riches in possession? Is it not in the disappointment of your worldly views, that you feel the smartest grief, and in your attaining earthly treasure, that you experience the greatest, liveliest joy? Is it not here that your hearts are apt to boast, to look about upon others with a pleasing sense of your worth beyond them, and to say unto your souls, ye have goods laid up for many years, take your ease? But how seldom withal have you leisure to think upon God; how willing to excuse yourselves that you think of him no more, because of the hindrances of business. How content could you be to leave God to his heavens, were you assured that he would leave you to go forward your own way, discharged from his laws, and perfectly your own masters, without any fear of his displeasure. See then, if your hearts be not serving mammon and not God.

Do any of you live in the practice of any one sin? If so your hearts cannot be given to God. If you are dishonest, if you keep unrestituted what belongs to your neighbour, if you allow yourselves to oppress

and over-reach, to cozen and deceive; if you seek a livelihood by ways and devices for gaining money, which you know are so many traps for drawing others into sin; if you swear or talk lewdly; if you are sabbath-breakers, passing the sacred hours in business or pleasure; if you give yourselves to drink, be it but now and then; if you carry resentment and bitterness upon your hearts and tongues; if you live without stately worshipping God, or in short, are in the practice of any one thing for which your consciences condemn you, (and to them I now make appeal); if you live in the breach of any one of God's commandments, harbouring sin with you in heart or life, making slight account of your evil tempers, and are only sorry a little when you have committed a sinful action till you forget it and fall into it again; if this be your case you cannot think yourselves that you fear God, love him, serve him, or have given your hearts to him. For if you continue in one sin, (and by continuing in it, I mean falling into it again and again) do not you abide in the breach of one commandment, i.e. do not you refuse to obey God in that particular; do not you flatly stand it out and rebel against him? And then can you possibly have any real regard for God and for his authority over you? Your own common sense will tell you that you cannot. Thus every one of you would readily determine concerning your servant, should he refuse to do the very thing you bade him. You would be apt to tell him he was no longer a servant, and sensible of the wrong done, you would ask if he did not see that he made himself the master.

Say now, have I been speaking to any one of you in these inquiries? Hath your conscience been speaking within you, *thou art the man* over whose heart pleasure, interest, or sin holds dominion? Or if you have stood clear and unconvicted hitherto, can you say also, "I live for God's sake: praise be to the glory of his grace, I can reflect upon months past, during which to this hour, I have been seeking God and his ways, regarding this as my main business, and only valuable concern?" Can you honestly say, "thou, searcher of hearts, knowest how thou dost engage the most sensible fears, the most ardent esteem and desire, the most settled devotedness of my whole heart; how my most agreeable reflections are upon thy blessed self, and my most reviving hopes run after thy favour and love; how in thee I trust, and upon thee I lean with the most assured security; how to thee only I cry for help and blessing; how I reverence and desire to honour thy name and word above all things; how I wish in all things to be thy humble servant?" Can you thus make answer to the demand of your heavenly Father; and hath it been your greatest grief that you cannot more perfectly give him your heart?

By this time you may see if you have given your hearts to God, or not, and so the way is opened for a suitable address, to those who *have* and to those who *have not* given the heart to God.

I. To those who have given their hearts to God. Beware of that corrupted nature within you, which will be ever endeavouring to seduce your hearts from him. You have very formidable, artful, and inveterate enemies without, the devil, the world, and the

flesh ; but that which lurks within, that which gives them all their power, that which is ready to join them, whenever they come upon you, is your perverse nature, which is at enmity with God, and ever lusts for its own gratifications. Suspect your hearts therefore, continually observing their motions ; be most suspicious if they seem to let you be at quiet, and evermore bear a resolute opposition to them for God, according to his word, and the inspirations of his Spirit.

Think it your main concern to give your whole hearts more abundantly to God. Labour to stand more and more in his presence, and to exercise your good dispositions under that influence. It is the presence of God which quickens all, which keeps open the eye of holy fear, sharpens the edge of vigorous love, raises worship, confirms trust, enlivens thankfulness, preserves readiness, impresses reverence, and animates sincerity in all obedience. Be therefore more under God's eye, bringing your hearts and laying them open before him ; so his Spirit will breathe upon you and transform you more abundantly into his image.

Be thankful for what God hath done for your souls ; ascribe all the glory to the praise of his grace, while you reflect what you were, and what you would have been if left to yourselves. Look inward, and rejoice in the knowledge you have of God, and in the sense of his favour towards you ; look forward to the crown of life, which waits to cover your brows. But withal, let each say " yet not I but Christ which liveth in me." Yea let your master have your warmest acknowledg-

ments, nor keep them pent up in your hearts; let them flow abroad, in a life of thankfulness, to his glory and the furthering your own salvation.

Finally, be humble; have your manifest imperfections ever in your eye; the imperfection of your fear, and love, and devotion, and thankfulness, and trust, and applications, and honour, and service; see how unworthy you are of God's notice, in all and every one of these, and how much you stand in need of mercy; yea, and see continually how weak you are, how easily to be moved if left to yourselves; how Satan would sift you if forsaken of divine succour. Keep with you the most humbling sense of your manifold old iniquities, and they will humble you more, now that your hearts are given to God. Remember in a word your sins, imperfections, weakness; so pride shall not be your destruction. Say always in every view of yourselves, "we are nothing;" so shall the Lord keep you to his everlasting kingdom.

2. To those who have not given their hearts to God. It matters not how much you give of your knees, or of your bodily presence to God; his demand is the heart, and this is otherwise bestowed. Suffer me to tell you, that if your hearts be not given to God, God is not this day reconciled to you. You have heard many great and glorious things of the love of the Father, and of the love of Jesus; we have read of the place of honour at the judgment day, of the company of saints and the presence of God in the eternal heaven, yea, and you cannot but have been pleased and seemingly revived in the views of such condescending goodness, and such inspiring hopes; but

so far are you from having any lot in them, that all the wrath of God abideth in you. He who hath purchased these hopes, and shall finally distribute them—he that shall pronounce the terrible sentence upon sinners, declares flatly against you, “he that loveth father or mother,” and much more other things less dear to us, “more than me, is not worthy of me.” And the beloved disciple, after him, saith, “if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him; and the friendship of the world is enmity with God.” And is it a state to live at peace in, a state to be desired, to have God your enemy, to be utterly without hope; is it a state to which any other is to be compared for the fearful danger of it? You would tremble to see a man drunk or asleep upon the brink of a precipice, would tremble lest he should fall and be dashed in pieces upon the rocks below, which you have hardly courage to look down and see; but what is such a case to yours? If God be not reconciled to you, doth not his vengeance hang over your heads for all the sins you have ever committed against him; is he not able to punish you; is not the pit of destruction yawning for you; and however content you may be, is there any thing but a thread which keeps you out of it, the slender thread of life, apt to break with the least violence, and of itself insensibly growing decayed, and hardly able to hold together? Learn to tremble for yourselves while you consider what God is, and what you this day are. Humble your souls, cry to him for mercy without delay, and return unto him with all your heart.

Suffer me also to say to you, that even mercy

cannot save you, such as you are. Heaven would be no happiness to you, while your hearts are not given to God. You may conceit I know not what of God's goodness; but as you do not love him, you could not be happy in him. Is your greatest happiness in God now? You confess it is not. Is his presenee delightful to you at present? You answer no. Would these things be otherwise hereafter even in heaven, when you could no more love God there than upon earth? It is the love of God, that fits the soul for him, gives it a eapacity of finding happiness in him, endears and makes his presenee delightful; and if the heart doth not love God now, doth not more than in any thing else, seek and delight in his favour and presence, it could not, in the least degree, relish the joys of heaven, and would be diseonsolate and miserable in the very midst of triumphant saints and angels.

## SERMON VII.

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### CHRISTIAN SINCERITY.

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*Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him—bchold an Israelite indeed in whom there is no guile: John i, 47.*

THE character of Nathanael, you may see from the short history just before concerning him, was that of an honest downright man, open to conviction and free of prejudice; who, as he would not believe without evidence, was as ready to believe when sufficient evidence was given. Now Philip had been telling him of their having found him, of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth the son of Joseph. Upon this he fairly proposes his objection, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" He would reason with Philip, and offer the difficulties which suddenly rose up in his mind against the truth of what Philip had been telling him. "Nazareth is a place vicious to a proverb, no one expects any thing good from thence; besides the Messiah is not of Nazareth, but of Bethlehem." His friend's heart, we may well suppose, was too full of zeal and joy to enter into any sort of debate. He suddenly interrupts Nathanael's reasonings, and would have him come and see for himself if any good thing

could come from Nazareth, or if this were not the very Christ. Nathanael did not, as a conceited and proud mind would have been apt to have done, obstinately refuse and turn away from the invitation; he was no more prejudiced against the truth, and so careless to search it to the bottom, than he was credulous to receive it without grounds. He goes with Philip for further inquiry, and it was upon his drawing near to Jesus with this view, that the words in the text were spoken of him, "behold an Israelite indeed in whom there is no guile." Our Lord took occasion from this simplicity and honesty of Nathanael with regard to himself, to give his general character, to shew him to those about him for a sincere upright man without any guile, deceit, or prejudice. He was an instance of *sincerity*, as in this his conduct with regard to our Lord, so in all other respects. It is my design from hence to speak to you of *Christian sincerity*, which every one knows is a qualification of our service to God, without which it is nought, hypocritical, and unacceptable. This is a most needful inquiry, to the consolation of some, and the condemnation of others. For to know whether we be sincere or not, is to know whether we be Christians or not; whether we have or have not any grounds of confidence towards God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. With the greatest plainness therefore I possibly can use, it shall be my present endeavour to set this matter before you; and here I will,

I. Give you a general notion of sincerity.

II. I will set out some of the most distinguishing marks of it.

III. I will speak of some false and mistaken marks of sincerity, endeavouring to make the whole useful as I go along.

I. I am to give you a general notion of sincerity.

Now this is nothing else but being in earnest in the service of God, honest, and downright with him, studying and endeavouring to do his will and to please him. The sincere man is a humble man; he knows the place he stands in with regard to God—that God is the king and he the subject—God the master and he the servant; and he deals by God as a good subject does by his king, who labours to be obedient and dutiful, and to promote the honour and interests of his sovereign; or as a good servant goes to work with his master, in faithfulness and integrity. I say the sincere man knows the place he stands in with regard to God, both as a creature entirely at the disposal of his Creator, and as a sinner saved from death by God's mercy and goodness, and accordingly the great thing he hath at heart is to serve and obey God; this is the great and principal aim he hath throughout his conduct. Would any one of you know what a sincere man is; only consider what you would wish your own servant should be towards you, and you shall have his very character before you. You would wish your servant should be very sensible it is his duty to do your business faithfully; that he should be very hearty and very honest, so as with continual consideration and diligence both to consult and act for you; that he should have your interest at heart, and consult that in all your affairs. Such a one, truly convinced of the duty he owes you, hearty

and willing in serving, and withal intent to promote your interest as much as he possibly can, you reckon a sincere, faithful, honest servant. Whereas if he has no sense of the duty he owes you, if he is unwilling to do what you would have him, and is little concerned when your affairs suffer damage, you justly reckon him unfaithful and dishonest. Sincerity therefore supposes a prevailing sense of the duty we owe to God, a hearty willingness to discharge it, with a constant endeavour and intention to promote the divine glory and God's interest as the main end of our actions. Gospel sincerity is a being pleased with the service of God, setting about it heartily, constantly, and universally, and having the honour of God the great end we propose; or in one word, seeks, endeavours, and wishes to please God in all things. The sincere person is not cold in the obedience he pays to God, as if it were of force and constraint; does not sit down satisfied if the least thing be out of order; maintains a constant and irreconcilable war with his lusts and corruptions; is constantly pressing to be more perfect than he is; hath his conscience tender to the least iniquity, not being able to endure the smallest sin; does not bear to do God the least dishonour, without a sudden uneasiness; strives earnestly that neither his own pleasure, or pride, or the flesh, or the world, should have any place within him, or defile the pure intention he hath to act for the glory of God. In short, sincerity is an honest, free, constant, entire, service paid to God; insomuch that the sincere man is able to say, "God knows my heart, he sees there that I would please him if I could;

that I desire to do what he bids me ; that I have nothing so much at my heart as this ; that my greatest fear is lest I should offend and displease him ; that I have more concern about this than about any worldly thing which may befall me ; that I am continually watching lest sin should prevail over me ; that I am seeking to be more well-pleasing in his sight." Or if the sincere man be not sure that God sees all this in him, if he have some doubt about his integrity and trust in God, yet he is sure that he doth not willingly allow himself in any thing that is evil ; that he seeks and tries his ways as much as he can ; that he is striving to become better than he is, and more holy ; that he would not have any thing at heart but the glory of God, in all he does, although he distrusts his deceitful heart, and knows not how to be confident that his heart is whole with God, and that he is so upright and uncorrupt as he would wish to be. You see now that a sincere obedience, as to the intention and purpose, as to the willingness and freedom of it, is the same thing as the most perfect obedience. The sincere man desires to be all that the perfect man shall be. If there were such a thing as a perfect obedience, it could only be the work of a heart where love was perfectly ardent, submission perfectly absolute, and the aim at the honour of God pure and unmixed ; but in the sincere obedient man, a prevailing love of God gives to the soul an entire willingness to submit, and an earnest endeavour to do all things to the glory of God. By this time then I hope we may have conceived some general notion of sincerity, and we have seen it to consist in a

heartiness and willingness to obey God, and in making it our principal aim to please him. However, for the sake of more clearness, I will now as I proposed,

II. Set out to you some of the most distinguishing marks of sincerity; and I will mention them shortly that they may be more easily remembered.

The *first* distinguishing mark of sincerity I shall mention, is a diligent searching out our duty from the word of God, and bringing our hearts to a trial by it. He who does not seek to know his duty, can never think himself sincerely desirous to practice it. If your servant, heedlessly neglecting to inquire wherein you would have him employed, sits still all the day idle, you would readily conclude he had no heart to your work, or interest. But this the sincere Christian does not do; he comes to inquire at God's mouth, seeking to know more of his duty, and to be confirmed that what he does is right. He does not let the word of God fall to the ground; it hath a searching quality with him; it enters his heart, and proves him if there be any iniquity in his ways. He is swift to hear, and it is an especial pleasure to him to be in the way of a ministry of the word, which lays bare his heart to him. In short, he is continually endeavouring to know the way of God more perfectly, for he loveth the light, that his deeds may be made manifest to him if they be wrought in God. He does, like holy David, make the word of God "the light of his feet and the lantern of his paths," and is continually calling upon God with him, "prove me and examine my thoughts, look well if

there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

A *second* distinguishing mark of sincerity is this, that a sincere man is in all places equally fearful of offending God, and alike desirous to please him. There are a host of self-deceived persons, who go on with a good measure of regularity, while among their serious friends and neighbours; but when they are at a distance from them, and find themselves set at liberty, as it were, their constraint is removed, and they are ready to forget God, and to give into the fashions and practices of those they are among, being well enough content if they can escape the eye of their more serious acquaintance. Such persons, it is plain, do not seek to please God but themselves, in the appearance of religion they have about them. But the sincere man is the same at home and abroad, and hath even a greater fear of offending, when he is out of all notice of religious persons, than when his most severe and observing friend is with him.

A *third* distinguishing mark of sincerity is, that the sincere man is as exact and forward in the private exercises of religion, as in those which are public. Gladly and diligently he holds a secret intercourse with heaven; will bring himself before God upon all proper occasions; sets himself to praise and thank God, and confess his sins, and call for grace when no eye sees him; and this, not out of fashion and formality, but from the simplicity of his heart, from the desire he hath to draw near to God, and to obtain grace that he may serve him better than he does. The sincere man is not pleased to have his hours of private

devotion broken in upon, continues, as well as he may, to love leisure and no interruption in that employment, is not glad of excuses to lay it aside, nor can contentedly pass it by upon every cause, or none at all. I add again, as a

*Fourth*, and very noble mark of sincerity, the cleaving to God and duty when God hath withdrawn his comforts and spiritual consolations. When God hides his face, and darkness and fear possess the soul, when there is a labouring for peace but no finding it, when doubt and trembling have seized the mind, and there is not any glimpse or dawning of joy; then to acknowledge the righteousness of the Lord's judgments, still to bless God and forsake him not, to turn unto him with all the heart, to say with blessed Job, "though he slay me yet will I trust in him; though I go down with sorrow to the grave still I will cleave stedfastly unto him, still I will own him merciful, just, and holy; still, when the snares of death are about me and the pains of hell have overtaken me, I will complain unto my God, and cast myself upon him, and patiently wait his leisure; I will seek him early in all the ways of duty if I shall find him." I say to be thus with God in the days of the affliction of the soul, is a very noble and evident mark of sincerity.

*Fifthly*, the same example of holy Job furnishes us with another distinguishing mark of sincerity, which is, if a man abides by his duty in adversity, as well, and as much as, in prosperity. When the world frowns, and crosses come on; when a man must suffer, and sacrifices of earthly treasures, it may be, must be made to conscience; when a man can no longer

bear up his head among those who were his equals, and his false friends fail; then to go through the grating trial with patience and resignation, is a comfortable evidence of sincerity. This was what Satan judged would be an overmatch for the integrity of Job. "Hast thou observed my servant Job," said God, "a perfect man and an upright? Then Satan answered, doth Job fear God for nought? Put forth thy hand and touch all that he hath, and he shall curse thee to thy face." And surely there can be no great question of sincerity, when in such circumstances a man can say, "the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord." We do not so well know what we are, till adversity of one sort or another tries us; but when upon any change, we peaceably resign all our earthly expectations, and cast ourselves upon the Lord, then we may plainly see whose we are and whom we serve.

A *sixth* distinguishing mark of sincerity is the being careful about the seemingly lesser matters of duty, especially such as are little regarded by the generality of mankind. The formal Christian will not allow himself in scandalous vices; will not swear profanely, nor commit lewdness, nor be drunken, nor cheat, and steal; will read and pray in some sort, and appear at public worship; but the sincere Christian will seek to please God in the whole breadth of the commandments. He hath regard to things which others take no heed of; will not use the name of God lightly, nor so much as speak a loose word; makes much of his time, and doth not give himself to lightness though he is cheerful; will not speak evil of his neighbour,

nor defraud with his tongue in making bargains; will not indulge himself in drinking; will not study to please his palate; will be glad of every opportunity of appearing before God, though it be not a sabbath, and on that holy day will neither do his work nor enjoy his pleasure, but give it as much as he can to God. From such a conduct as this he may plainly see, that he doth not put on religion out of fashion, but he leaves the fashionable religion behind him. Nor does he do it to please himself, for his singularity will needs bring him into disgrace. Wherefore he may have good hopes that his obedience is sincere. Again,

A *seventh* distinguishing mark of sincerity, and which I conceive ought very much to be regarded, is an abstaining from all appearance of evil. He can never be thought to hate sin, who will be always living upon the borders of it, just upon the very brink of offending. Truly the sincere man thinks he is safer at a greater distance from it. Before he ventures upon any indifferent thing, he inquires if there be no lurking snare under it, if it will not draw away his heart from God, and if he judges it may, he prudently refrains from it. It is not enough for him that things in themselves are not hurtful; what danger there is in them is his inquiry, for he will be running no needless risks. It is true he is denying himself what possibly he might be well enough pleased with, and what in itself he knows to be innocent; but then while he is thus cautious and wary, he is somewhat confident that his heart is whole and sincere with God. I shall mention but one mark more of sincerity, and that is,

*Eighthly*, a certain tenderness of heart to feel our faults, a being hurt and grieved at the least sin we commit, or which in any measure prevails against us in the heart or life. Not to be afraid of the least sin, to pass it over quietly and calmly, without any apprehension or suspicion that the enemy hath gained ground, and lodged himself with us, is a shrewd token of an unhumbled, insincere, and hypocritical heart. But when upon the least notice of sin the soul takes alarm ; when the first risings of it are perceived ; when the smallest inroad upon duty, and the first warning given of it, occasions suspicion and searching of the heart ; when a falling under temptation produces sorrowing of a godly sort, carefulness, clearing, and casting off the accursed thing, indignation, fear, vehement desire, zeal, revenge, then there is evident assurance of sincerity with God.

These now seem to be some of the most evident branches or tokens of sincerity, and that a man deserves the character of Nathanael, “ an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile.” Before we pass to the third particular, I shall add a word or two for practice, from what you have heard already ; and,

1. The remainder of the law of sin in your members is no hindrance to your sincerity, nor consequently to your acceptance with God. Your sincerity is really nothing else but your being on the side of Christ in the Christian war ; and if you are really fighting against, and by the power of divine grace keeping this corruption of your nature in subjection, so that you do not yield and submit to it, it is an evident sign that the kingdom of grace is set up in you, that you

belong to Christ; and instead of being disheartened, murmuring, and growing distrustful of your spiritual estate, because the inbred enemies of your soul are continually rising up against you, you ought to take comfort to yourselves that, as they do not prevail over you, you are under the guidance of one who is mighty to pull down all the strong holds of sin within you, and to bring you more perfectly into the obedience of faith. Indeed were this law of sin suffered to get the mastery, from that instant you would become the servants of sin, and could have no title to sincerity, however fair you might carry it to men. You would then be subjects to an enemy of God, whether it were to pride, the world, or lust. But while you are really fighting, and the victory is on God's side against them; while by a longer continuance in the war you are grown to know them better, to find them more subtle, cunning, and formidable than you thought them; and hereupon become more wary and fearful, you will prove by comfortable experience that their continual assaults need not disturb the peace of your souls, but being often attempted, you will as often have matter of thanksgiving and consolation. For sincerity, you find, does not suppose you have no enemies, no imperfections and infirmities, no sins and temptations to contend with; just the contrary; it supposes you in the midst of a wicked world and an ensnaring flesh, and beset with the devices of the devil and your own hearts, and you may observe that the best proofs given of your sincerity arise from the cleaving of your hearts to God amidst them all. But,

2. That your intentions for God and to please him

may be more pure and unmixed, and so your sincerity more evident to yourselves and more acceptable to God, labour that there be still less of self in your purposes and intentions, even though you be comfortably confident that the prevailing aim of your souls is to please God and to set forth his glory. This is indeed the most glorious aim of any creature, and such you may be sure is your principal aim and view, if you answer to the character of sincerity above given. But still as long as you live, the pride of your heart, your love of the world, and the indulgence which your flesh demands will be mixing themselves with your best purposes; and although they be inferior aims, while your heart is right, yet they do, so far as they have influence, spoil and defile the purity of your intentions. It should be our constant endeavour to purge them away as far as possible, to have as little as we can of self-pleasing, worldly interest, or indulgence, as the principle of any thing we do, and still to be contending that that little may be less. For though God is graciously pleased to admit of a sincere obedience, instead of a perfect obedience, yet there will be some dash of insincerity or impurity in our intentions, while the soul remains corrupted in any measure by the filth of sin; and although this may not utterly be avoided in our present state, yet it may be amended, and so we shall be living and acting more and more daily to the glory of God. Alas! what unworthy wretches are we, when the very best thing we have about us, our very sincerity, is impure and defiled! This may well serve to humble us, to drive us to the mercy of God, and to make us, as altogether nought in

ourselves, cast ourselves upon the all-sufficient righteousness of Jesus Christ. But when raised with the hope of acceptance through him, we should contend earnestly to be more pure, getting further above the world, crucifying the flesh more abundantly, and bringing down our hearts, so that God may be more glorified in every desire and purpose of our minds, and every action of our lives. I go on now,

III. To set out to you some false marks of sincerity. There is an hypocrisy or insincerity which is not of design and purpose, where a man puts on a shew of what he is not, not with a view of deceiving the world, but because he is really deceived in himself, and judges himself to be in a better way than he truly is. And I conceive men are found to be mistaken as to themselves, and to dwell upon some false mark of sincerity in such instances as these—when they look only on the outside of religion—when they make a party of it—when they rest upon some particular actions—or upon some former actions. I shall have time only to touch upon each of them shortly. And,

1. Men may think themselves sincere whilst they regard only the outward parts of religion. We must observe that sincerity is the work of a contrite, humble, repenting heart, such as is that of a real Christian, renewed in the spirit of his mind according to the gospel, and through the grace of Jesus Christ. It is not every one who seems to have some good purposes, will not run into gross sins, nor neglect duties which are easy to be observed, who is therefore a sincere Christian. Sincerity is a truth in the inward parts; it supposes grace to have set up its reign there, and to guide all the

heart to God. Natural conscience may act so far as to make the outside of the cup somewhat clean; and when the outward man is preserved clean from scandalous sins, and decent by attendance upon the forms of religion, how easy a matter is it to be satisfied that all is well, and to go on contentedly in an unhumbled, impenitent state? Indeed it is no easy matter to bring such a one into any question or suspicion about his state. For why, he says, I do not allow myself in sins which I see many others practising? I attend the ordinances of religion, I give somewhat of my substance to the needy; and I know not that God would have more of me. Now although the whole gospel tells us that this is but delusion, while the tempers of the heart are unreformed; yet such a one will insist upon it that he knows no better, and that if you pretend to other matters, it is you and not himself are blinded and mistaken. Here he rests and will not be moved. It is plain that he is insincere notwithstanding; for though he knows not that he is out of the way, yet he does not come to the law and the testimony, to the word of God to prove and try his works. He does not humbly examine himself by the rule of the gospel, every word of which would condemn him, and so he remains without one of the distinguishing marks of sincerity, an impartial inquiry into his duty, which truly is an essential part of sincerity.

2. Another of these false marks may be making a party of religion. Indeed it is an easy thing to be deceived, to think ourselves in earnest when we are not so. What an easy thing indeed were it to be a sincere Christian, if you had no more to do than to

go to the church, rather than to a meeting, to call yourselves protestants rather than catholics, and then to suffer some slight inconvenience, it may be, for sticking to that party to which you belong? And yet it may not be imagined that many have not been in the hotter days of party zeal, deceived this way; and that many this day have no better thing to say of themselves, than that they are of this or that sect or party. So it was of old between the Jews and the Samaritans; while neither of them had the least degree of brotherly affection, yet both of them rested much upon their place of worship. Now, although sincerity hath little to do in comparison, in such matters of opinion as make divisions among Christians, yet from these very divisions, unhumbléd men are apt to conceit well of themselves, and to imagine they are marvellously well affected to God. One judges well of himself for no other reason than because he is of the establishment; and another because he is not of it. One because those with whom he is numbered suffer reproach, and another because of the supposed greater purity there is in that body of Christians he is united with. Thus resting upon things which are not essential to godliness, and being of a party spirit, they deceive their own souls.

3. Another mistaken mark of sincerity, may be the resting upon some particular actions. Such may be that which in this age deserves particular notice, because it is so nobly practised, liberality. It is possible a man may be deceived this way. He hears charity greatly commended as the very end and crown-work of religion. He imagines that this is nothing

more than giving of his substance to the distressed. He opens his hand and pours out largely, and it is no great inconvenience it puts him to, and hereupon he applauds and approves himself for his simplicity and sincerity before God. In this sense he conceits that charity covers a multitude of sins; that by such acts he wipes them all out, or makes a kind of composition with God, for many bad practices he lives in, or at least for an entire want of a hearty and real godliness. What I have said of this may be observed of many other things. One man rests upon his honesty, another upon his sobriety and temperance, a third upon his easy and forgiving temper, a fourth upon his withdrawing himself from the world, and retiring, as he calls it, to sit down easy, a fifth upon his constancy at church and sacraments, and thinking of another life. Some how or other, multitudes do deceive themselves by dwelling upon one action and part of their conduct, which they look at till it dazzles their eyes with its seeming brightness, and makes them unable to see that darkness which there is in many other parts of their conversation.

4. Men may be mistaken about their sincerity by resting upon some former action. We too fondly think well of ourselves, and it is not to be imagined how ingenious we are in hiding our sins from our own notice. And this we are extremely apt to do in the instance I am now speaking of. When any one, from a principle of conscience, hath refused some offered advantage, or restored that which he had before unjustly taken away, or undergone some severe trial for righteousness' sake—I say, when a man hath once

made some considerable sacrifice to a pure conscience, and from thence very hastily drawn a comfortable conclusion about his sincerity, how exceedingly apt is he to rest upon it afterwards, to be continually flying back to it for many years, when perhaps he hath no present evidence to produce, and it may be, is fallen away from God? I do not say that the remembrance of such a thing may not be a matter of comfort, but then it can only be so if the state he is now in be that of sincerity. But as if sincerity consisted in one great stroke, and no more were to be done, we are very ready to sit afterwards like conquerors in triumph, even when we are carried away by the devices of our lusts, and Satan is leading us captive. He is willing enough we should amuse ourselves in this manner; it hides from us our decays and sinfulness. Wherefore the apostle's own conduct must be imitated here. He had need to glory, if any mere man had, yet he says, "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching into those things which are before, I press forward unto the prize of the high calling." I have done now with what I proposed, and shall end with a remark or two.

The first of them is, that sincerity is the fruit of a true faith, and in that regard indispensably necessary to salvation. This we find from the whole gospel, but especially from that great commandment of all, "thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy mind, and all thy soul, and all thy strength." Surely unless we love God he cannot be pleased with us; and sincerity is the work of love. What would any one do about God's throne who was not pleased

with him, nor had any willingness to serve him? He would be unfit for heaven. If we will believe God's own word, there is another place allotted for such a one. The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them who know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and Christ will pronounce upon them, "depart from me all ye workers of iniquity." Indeed, where the love of God is shed abroad in the heart, there a hearty willing service will always follow; and where the love of God and of Christ doth not so far prevail as to lead us to give up our earthly things for God's sake, I shall leave common sense to judge if a man must not be content to have his portion in this life; if he be not utterly unfit for the joys above, where there is no other happiness to be had but a spiritual one, in fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, and the holy saints; and if sincerity be so needful to our eternal acceptance with God, it will behove us,

2. To search out our hearts and spirits, if there be this sincerity, truth, and integrity in us. The subject, as you have heard it handled, may serve to contribute thereto, whether you consider the true or the false marks of sincerity. And shall I seem to require a needless or unimportant thing in calling you all to this exercise? If you have found the true marks of sincerity to belong to you, I shall not need tell you what a well grounded confidence you have that your faith is not in vain, that you have that faith which worketh by love, since this sincerity is but love in action.

## SERMON VIII.

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### THE POWER OF GOD.

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*Lo, these are parts of his ways ; but how little a portion is heard of him ; but the thunder of his power who can understand ?*  
Job xxvi, 14.

IN this chapter Job is replying to what Bildad had said in the former, concerning the dominion and power of God. He remarks several instances of God's power, and then draws the conclusion in the text. I will give you some little illustration of what Job says here of God's power, by way of introduction to a practical consideration of that awful subject. But Job answered and said, how hast thou helped him that is without power ; how savest thou the arm that hath no strength ; thou hast advanced nothing to support and strengthen me ! How hast thou counselled him that hath no wisdom ? I can get no wisdom or instruction from what thou hast spoken, and how hast thou plentifully declared the thing as it is ? Truly thou hast given a very scanty account of the power of God. To whom hast thou uttered words ; was it to me thou didst speak as if I were ignorant herein ; and whose spirit came from thee ? What troubled

soul could ever be revived or relieved by such discourses as these? Hear me now, and I will tell thee of the power of God—dead things are formed from under the waters, and the inhabitants thereof.<sup>1</sup> You speak of the monuments of God's power in the visible heaven's,<sup>2</sup> and they do truly declare the glory of God's power, but what think you also of the things formed under the waters; of the corn that dies and springs up again under the influence of the clouds; of those metals and jewels formed in the bowels of the earth by God's power; of the prodigious creatures in the sea, the inhabitants thereof, all which were first made by the creating voice of God, and are propagated by his cherishing providence. Stop not here: hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering.<sup>3</sup> The dead are in his eye, he can call all the congregation of them from their dust, for all their lodgings are perfectly known to him, yea, and the place of the damned is manifested in his sight. Destruction hath no covering; they who are in hell are not hid from his presence, they know and feel the power of his wrath. He stretches out the north, over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing.<sup>4</sup> Look to what is above thee, the power of God hath stretched out the heavens as a curtain, spread abroad from north to south, and there is nothing to support them but his invisible hand. Look to what thou treadest on; the earth, vast as it is, hangeth upon nothing, hath no props nor pillars to lean on, it floats like a feather in the air, and is upheld by the power of

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 5.<sup>2</sup> Chap. 25.<sup>3</sup> Ver. 6.<sup>4</sup> Ver. 7.

God. Consider thou the air; he bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds, and the cloud is not rent under them.<sup>5</sup> He collects and confines the waters together in clouds, and keeps them by his power in the air, that the air is not split asunder by their weight, but wonderfully holds them up, and lets them fall gently and leisurely to water the earth. Yea, he holdeth back the face of his throne, and spreadeth his cloud upon it.<sup>6</sup> Either he hath designed his clouds to cover the heavens, and to screen the earth from the parching heat of the sun, or he veils the glory of that light wherein he dwelleth, the intolerable brightness of his presenee, and as it were spreadeth a cloud upon his magnificence, that we be not dazzled and consumed at the sight of him as he is. He hath compassed the waters with bounds, until the day and night have an end.<sup>7</sup> See who restrains the waters of the sea. They swell, they foam, they roar, they rage horribly; the waves, forced on by mighty winds, come like mountains upon the shore; yet they overflow it not—their pride is stayed, they may not pass it, they come to nothing, they retire back to the womb that brought them forth, as if they repented of their attempts, and declare the decree of the Almighty, that till day and night shall have an end, they are forbidden to cover the earth. The pillars of heaven tremble and are astonished at his reproof.<sup>8</sup> All nature is in commotion and astonishment at his command; the air thunders, lightnings blaze, the storm flies abroad, the earth shakes, the mountains tremble

<sup>5</sup> Ver. 8.<sup>6</sup> Ver. 9.<sup>7</sup> Ver. 10.<sup>8</sup> Ver. 11.

and totter; they are all in astonishment, as servants before a frowning and rebuking master. He judges the sea by his power, and by his understanding he smiteth through the proud.<sup>9</sup> He splits the sea by stormy winds, as though he would make the bottom of the deep to appear, rakes up the sand from beneath, and orders the face of the sea into huge mountains and valleys, and then he saith, "peace be still," he smiteth through the proud waves. By his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens; his hand hath formed the crooked serpent. The sun, the moon, the stars, all the ornaments and furniture of heaven are his; he made and he maintains them by his power, and all the prodigious things below, even the crooked serpent, the great leviathan of the waters, depend upon his omnipotent arm. Lo, these, wonderful as they are, are but parts of his ways; but how little a portion is heard of him. What a nothing in comparison of what God's omnipotence is, can we conceive from all this! But the thunder of his power, the greatness, the vastness of his power, who can understand? None can, no creature, none but thy infinite self, can comprehend thy power, of which we can only say, thou canst do what thou wilt, all things are possible to thee, O God.

In speaking to the subject of God's power, I shall take it for granted, ye will all readily allow that he is omnipotent or almighty, that nothing is beyond the reach of his might, and that it is his arm that doth all his pleasure. I will not delay you any longer

with a display of that infinite might, which at a word, fashioned all things in heaven and earth; whether they be visible, such as the hosts of the stars, the world we live in, and every creature upon it; or invisible, as angels, potentates, powers, and by whatever name the armies above are called. I will not speak particularly of that amazing strength, by which all these things are at once supported, preserved, and provided for; nor of that wondrous influence which restrains them all, even sinners and devils, in a due subservience to the ends of divine government. I will not insist upon the power of God, manifest in his judgments, such as the chaining down the mighty fallen angels, that they cannot escape the damnation of hell; the destruction of a whole world of sinners, and the various other marks of his avenging strength recorded in the Scriptures, together with the approaching, tremendous, eternal, inflictions of his wrath upon impenitent men. I mean not to prove, or any longer to enlarge upon the infinite and almighty power of God; but supposing you all fully persuaded hereof, I will endeavour to make it useful and bring it home to you as persons intimately concerned in the power of God, by reason of that dominion he exercises over you by Jesus Christ.

I will shew you that the power of God is staked to support the promises and threatenings of the gospel, and make improvement and application as I go along.

*First.* As to the promises; they are all which a poor, miserable, condemned, helpless sinner can need, relating to grace and glory. There are promises of

pardon, peace, strength, comfort, of a resurrection, and life everlasting. There is nothing a sinner can want, which God hath not promised, and that in a covenant way, as belonging to the everlasting covenant, so that he hath engaged himself to make every part and promise thereof good, if he be indeed able. Accordingly the word is, "he will be always mindful of his covenant," for his name's sake he will fulfil his promises. In this thought Moses triumphed in his last words, confident that the arm of God was over and with his people. "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky; the eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. Happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency." Most expressly also doth God engage himself to maintain the covenant, and to stablish it by his almighty power, by the word of Isaiah, "Fear not, for thou shalt not be ashamed; neither be thou confounded, for thou shalt not be put to shame. For thy Maker is thine husband (the Lord of Hosts is his name) and thy Redeemer the holy one of Israel; the Lord of the whole earth shall he be called. For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, who hath mercy on thee." So also by Jeremiah, "Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea,

when the waves thereof roar—the Lord of Hosts is his name. If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever.” You see God stakes his almighty power for the fulfilment of his promises; so that if he be able, he will most certainly fulfil them.

Now from this part arise sundry improvements. And,

1. It should be a matter of great comfort to believers in the covenant, that he who is our God is *Almighty*. Indeed there would be no comfort in the covenant without this. Though we believe God to be true, wise, loving, righteous, and ours in all these respects, yet if we fail in believing his power, we shall miss of our comfort and confidence. But when we take hold of his power, this supports us; then we receive the covenant after God’s mind, and to the full content of our hearts; for the tenor of the covenant is, “I am the Lord your God;” i. e. I, the Lord Jehovah, am your God, first *the Lord* in myself, then *your God* by free grant and gracious condescension. Now if he makes over himself, he makes over his power as well as all his other perfections, that is, he makes over his whole self, for God cannot be divided, and believers may be sure that he who is so merciful, good, loving, condescending, is also almighty, their *Almighty*, as well as most *merciful* Father. O, believers, what an unspeakable ground of hope is here for you, whose help standeth in the name of the Lord, who hath made heaven and earth! How comfortable is it to think that your God can do what he

pleases ; nothing so difficult but he can effect it, nothing so strong but he can over rule it. You need not dread men, since you have one to restrain them ; nor fear devils, since you have one to chain them. No creature but acts by the power of God, no creature but must fall and fail, upon the withdrawing of that power. The power of the Almighty was not all spent in creation ; it is not weakened by his preservation of all things. His power is not a whit exhausted, and for whom should that eternal arm be stretched forth, and that incomprehensible thunder of his power be shot out but for the children of the covenant, for whose sake and for whose comfort it is revealed in the word ? You should be sure to seek the comfort of this under all the strivings of corruption, and the manifold temptations that beset you. “ Be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.” Put your trust in the Lord, who is “ mighty to save.” What could we wish more than the power of the Almighty, whose covenant standeth sure, and whose power will fulfil every promise of it ? You complain of your pride, your peevishness, your worldliness ; you are assaulted by the enemy, and some formidable temptation stares you in the face ; wait patiently for the Lord ; “ stand still and see the salvation of God.” It was a terrifying speech in the disciples’ ears, that it was “ easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.” They were amazed at this saying, and cried out, “ who then can be saved ? ” whereupon the Lord quiets and comforts them with this consideration, “ with God all things are possible.” Even so whatever your spiritual

grief be, let this be your consolation, that God is able to deliver you, that those that are with you are more than all that can be against you.

The same matter should be the comfort of believers under all temporal afflictions and distresses. It was an excellent spirit in David that said, "my help standeth in the name of the Lord." This was his dependance in all troubles, and God delivered him out of all of them, and as himself expresseth it, "made the bones which he had broken to rejoice." But observe the ground upon which he built all this comfort in his troubles; it was the power of God; "his help came from the Lord, who made heaven and earth," and this same ground you must seek to hold fast in all cases, saying from the bottom of your heart, "is any thing too hard for God? He hath ways that I know not of. He could open the sea for his people's deliverance from their enemies, and raise up Joseph the higher from his sufferings, and feed the prophet by the mouths of ravens, and stop the mouths of lions, that they could not hurt Daniel, and cause his servants to walk unhurt in the fire. He hath all things in his hands, and he will give me deliverance when and how he pleases."

2. Since God's power is concerned to fulfil the promises of the covenant, believers must be aware of distrusting them. "Believest thou that I am able to do this," saith Christ? To believe stedfastly in his power is the excellence of faith, as to distrust it, is to shame his omnipotence. Yes, our unbelieving hearts are sadly apt to distrust his ability. We seem to be confident in him, but when it comes to a point,

we are too ready to stagger; the enemy, the trial, pressing on us and staring us in the face, and he who should help us not seen. This is the great proof of faith, whether it be strong or weak. So Peter failed you know, when he was walking upon the water; and so did Sarah—"after I am old shall I have pleasure, my Lord being old also," for which she received this just and smart reproof, "is any thing too hard for the Lord?" Not so was the faith of her husband—"fully persuaded that what God had promised he was able also to perform, he staggered not at the promise through unbelief." So afterwards in the case of Isaac, "when he was tried he offered him up, accounting that God was *able* to raise him up from the dead." When God's word is passed for any thing, it is a very unworthy thing to distrust him, and thereby to dishonour his faithfulness or his power. And therefore since God hath taken upon himself to make good all gospel promises, we must take heed that we do not distrust him, must pray earnestly to have our faith increased, and seek more attentively into the grounds upon which we have cause to believe God will stand to his engagements, which are no less than his eternal power and unchangeable truth. By the way, this should teach us to humble ourselves in the sight of our base and abominable nature, which is ever suggesting to us a distrust of what God hath promised, and prompting us to deal by him as if he were weak or forgetful, or unfaithful. Horrid thought! and yet even thus it is. There is that in the bottom of our hearts, which will be for making us distrust God, and lie down in distress and complainings, as

if there were none that could help us, when God hath so plainly told us he can, and is ready to do so. And this also is indeed the more grievous, because, upon very slender grounds we are ready to trust upon the promises one of another. O how unbelieving, how distrustful, how dishonourable to God have we all been, and so would our wretched hearts still be this day. Can we then enough lament the sin of our nature wherein we were conceived!

3. Also this should teach us to fear God and not man. Yet the fear of man is apt to have too much influence upon us, and the fear of God too little. Corrupt nature will be stirring up many times, even in believers, fears of men's faces, and men's frowns, of the loss of men's favour, and men's countenance, very much to the disgrace of God's power who alone ought to be feared. He who knew the hearts of men was well aware of this, and therefore says, "fear not them that kill the body, and after that, have no more that they can do; but I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear, fear him who after he hath killed, is able to destroy both body and soul in hell, yea I say unto you, fear him:" and the like he hath said before by his servant Isaiah, "who art thou that art afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man that shall be as grass, and forgettest the Lord thy Maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth, and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor?" How reasonable this is every one sees, and yet every gracious heart knows how difficult it is so to fear God, as not to be biassed by the fear of man. Nevertheless to fear man, in proportion as that

fear hath influence with us, is to dishonour God, to regard him as if he were weak, and not the Lord of Hosts, who is mighty in strength ; it is to deal by him as if he had less power to help, than man has to hurt us. Let us take arms against this ungodly fear, and we shall most assuredly prevail against it, as our hearts are better acquainted with the thunder of God's power.

But *secondly*, the almighty power of God is at stake for the execution of gospel threatenings. Shall I need to prove this? Let these passages stand for a full proof, " Behold the day cometh, when the Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and they that do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire : there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven, against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness ; and our God is a consuming fire ; who, though hand join in hand, will not suffer sin to be unpunished. He that believeth not shall be damned, in that day when the Lord shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those who know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

I need not stand upon a point so manifest ; every body knows it, every sinner, at seasons at least, feels the influence of it. Consider this ye that forget God, the same almighty arm which will fulfil the promises,

will execute also the threatened judgments of the gospel. Consider what Almighty power can do. Who can stand before it? It can separate the soul and body in a moment; this hour it can lay you in the dust, and when you are there, it can call you forth again, and bring you trembling to judgment, and cast your soul and body into hell, and even reach you there, and afflict you with sad, intolerable, eternal anguish, yea, shut you up in that dark and dismal prison everlastingly. O, it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God! Why will you not think how unable you shall be to stand when the great day of his wrath is come?

Would God all such of you, as must need be sensible, from your manner of living, that your names are not yet written in the book of life; would God ye might consider the thunder of God's power. It is that power which at a word made the heavens, and fashioned the cumbrous earth. That power that supports, every moment, every thing in the universe. That power that killeth and maketh alive; that speaketh to the world in lightnings, and thunders, and storms, and earthquakes; that shall wrap up the heavens as a scroll, and consume the world with the breath of his mouth; that matchless power which reserves the wicked in chains; that power to which all things are possible. O what are ye, that ye can dare contend with the Almighty? Be persuaded it is far better the Almighty God were your friend and your Father, than your enemy and your avenger. Far better, that he should exert his power over you in making you partake of the promises, than in execut-

ing the threatenings of the gospel. Far better, that his everlasting arm should be underneath you, to bless and protect you in the courts of heaven, than to vex and curse you in the pit of hell. Be persuaded, as sure as you now live by God's power, if you will but return you shall live with him for ever. O how will ye bless this happy day in all the ages of eternity if ye now repent. How will ye praise God for ever for this word, which, however terrible it may now sound in your ears, convinced you of your danger, and brought you home to him, who came to save lost sinners. May the Lord of all power and might, cause it to be thus effectual to your salvation for Christ's sake.

## SERMON IX.

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### THE HOLINESS OF GOD.

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*Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts: Isa. vi, 3.*

“LORD of Hosts,” regards God’s power whereof we have spoken lately. The other part of the words regards God’s purity, which I intend now to treat of. What were power without holiness? It were a lawless violence. Majesty must have a law to guide the might it possesses; and this law is the holiness of God. Without this, were God any how impure, all his perfections and dealings would be unbecoming; his patience would be an indulgence to sin, his mercy a fondness, his wrath a madness, his power a tyranny, his wisdom cunning and subtilty. But holiness holds all right; this gives a becomingness to all. And what is this holiness but the integrity of God, whereby he wills every thing in a manner agreeable to his own glory, and does every thing in righteousness and equity, holding the reins of his dominion in that exercise of his power, mercy, and patience, which shall glorify himself, and maintain and preserve the dignity of his government, and the allegiance and submission of his subjects. God, whether he be considered as he

is himself, or as he is in his doings, in both is holy. Had no creature ever been, holiness were the same essential property of God, for God is holy in himself, without blemish, without passions, and in such manner perfect in every attribute, as that in the whole of them he is most pure, and therefore a most blessed God. In his works of creation and government, holiness is also manifest, and I may say holds the rein, and directs every step of the divine administration, as in the most holy manner, so to the great end of his own glory. As in himself, so in all his doings God is holy. "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts;" it is three times repeated, as it were to set a peculiar mark upon it, as if this were the very life of God, as indeed it is; he would not be God without it, however mighty, wise, merciful, all were confusion without it. What is an earthly governor whose heart is corrupt? If he have not integrity, he will exercise power with cruelty, or mercy to the hurt of himself or his subjects. In treating this matter of God's purity and holiness, I will,

I. Lay down some propositions for the illustrating it.

II. I will make some improvements of it.

I. I will illustrate it in a few propositions. He is pure in his nature—in his hatred of sin—in the law, and the gospel.

1. God is pure in his nature. He is said in Scripture to be holy, the holy one, to be only holy. "The Lord our God is holy, he is the Lord our holy one;" "thou only O Lord art holy." "Far be it from God," saith Elihu, "that he should do wickedness, and from

the Almighty that he should commit iniquity." For your better understanding what the holiness of God means, I will observe to you that in God there is a twofold perfection. There is a natural perfection whereby God is subsisting of himself, Almighty, eternal, wise, filling all things, and the like. And there is also a moral perfection, which is his purity or holiness, as much essential to him as his power and eternity, from which he neither can nor doth depart, and which is the rule of all providences, that which glorifies all his other perfections, and guides them all in such a mode of dispensation, as to make his holiness known, and to bring glory to it. It is this which guides God's mercy in every exercise of it, which is never exerted with the least impeachment of his purity. He so pardons as to shew that he hates sin, nor may any sinner approach his holiness but in the merit of that obedience of the Mediator, which is so infinitely pleasing to God's purity. It is this too which guides the hand of justice in the inflictions of vengeance; he corrects because he hates sin, and so corrects it as to make his hatred against it known and visible. Accordingly his holiness is never more glorified and applauded, than when he hath exerted himself with the greatest fierceness against his enemies. Thus spake Moses in his song of triumph, after recital of the terrible overthrow of the Egyptians, "thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them, they sank as lead in the mighty waters." It follows, "who is like unto thee, O Lord, amongst the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness?" And so in the passage from which the text is taken, when the seraphims

magnified the holiness of God, saying, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts,” it was upon occasion of that fearful display of God’s indignation upon Israel, by spiritual blindness and hardness of heart, “go and tell this people, hear ye indeed, but understand not, and see ye indeed, but perceive not.” God cannot depart from his holiness; should he be thought to do so, he must be supposed to lose the glory of his nature, the crown of all his perfections, the life of all his purposes, the brightness of all his actions, yea that wherein he delighteth. As God is holy in himself, so

2. He cannot but manifest his purity in his hatred of sin. Holiness in the creature is a conformity with the will of God, which will is nothing else but a pattern and declaration of God’s holiness; “let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth, for in these things I delight saith the Lord.” The Lord delighteth in magnifying his holiness, by the exercise of kindness, mercy, and judgment among men, and so will have us, under the various instances of his mercy and justice, which he deals out to us, pay especial regard to his holiness, glory in it, and conform ourselves to it. Now if God hath so much regard to magnify his holiness, he cannot but detest sin, which is both contrary to it and rebellion against it. His law is holy, just, and good, because it is the law of a pure God; and as much as God delighteth in his holiness, he must be jealous for his law, and hate all manner of trespass against it. Hear what the Scripture saith on this head. “The righteous

Lord loveth righteousness, his countenance doth behold the upright; he taketh pleasure in them that fear him; but then he is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; the foolish shall not stand in his sight; he hateth all workers of iniquity." To be more particular, he hates sin *necessarily*: he is so holy, that he cannot but hate it. He hath not, nor can have any pleasure in wickedness; it is the very contrary to his nature. It were as possible to reconcile good and evil, as God and sin; to make darkness light, as a pure God to approve of iniquity. It is said of him, "thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity," it is so offensive to him. He hates it *vehemently*. Very remarkable are the expressions whereby the Scriptures mark out God's great hatred of sin, how he loathes it, is impatient of beholding it, and how it affects him with detestation. And if so, how adorable and admirable is his patience, that he bears with it as he doth, when he declares by the prophet Amos, his utter abhorrence of it in the strongest words that signify dislike and hatred, saying, "I hate, I despise, I will not smell, I will not accept, I will not regard; take thou away from me the noise of thy songs, for I will not hear." And so in Isaiah, "my soul hates them; they are a trouble to me, I am weary to bear them." Sin is the abominable thing that he hates, he is vexed and fretted at it, as we learn from the same prophet, and Jeremiah. Indeed it is the only thing God hates; he rejoiceth in his works, he saw and pronounced them all good, yea very good, but sin he hates, it is not of his making, but a monster in nature, the very oppo-

site of his holiness. Yea, he hates sin, as *necessarily* and *vehemently*, so *universally*; there is no sin he doth not hate by whomsoever committed, upon whatever pretence of doing him service. He hates sin wherever he finds it, and very often sets a particular mark upon those who commit it, though they be otherwise his dear children. How did the sword follow David's house in the matter of Uriah! What a storm did Jonah's disobedience raise for him! How was Moses for one act of unbelief excluded from Canaan, while greater sinners entered into it! Uzzah's zeal did not justify his presumption, nor did Peter escape the sharpest rebuke, "get thee behind me Satan." He hates sin likewise *perpetually*; he cannot nor will ever be reconciled to it, nor abate of his disgust against it. Just as he hated sin, when he cast the fallen angels out of heaven, pronounced the curse upon Adam, destroyed the first world, consumed Sodom, and cut off his people in the wilderness, and swallowed up the company of Dathan and Abiram, even with the same hatred he detests it now, and will eternally hate it. While sin remains and God changes not, he will hate it. He may be reconciled to the sinner by a way of his own contrivance, but that most expressive of his hatred against sin; to sin he can never be reconciled.

3. The holiness of God is manifest in the law, and the curse annexed to every transgression of it. The strictness, spirituality, and scope of God's law, do abundantly display the holiness of its author, as do the curses upon transgressors, his impatience of any manner of iniquity. The more extensive, the more particular

the commandment, the more jealous of his holiness doth God appear; and the more terrible the curse, the more eminently is his abhorrence of sin displayed. The law of God is no arbitrary thing, as if God should say, I will that ye do thus merely from the dictate of uncontrollable powers, but it is founded in his holiness. "Be ye holy for I am holy;" I will that ye do this, and ye may not depart from it without offending and transgressing my holiness. Thus one jot, one tittle of the law was not to fail: indeed God could remit nothing of it consistently with his own purity. Obedience to it in every particular, in its hidden sense, as reaching the heart and requiring a perfect image of God there, is required by it, nor can it admit of any imperfection therein. The love of God must be with all the heart, all the mind, all the soul, all the strength, and the love of our neighbour even as of ourselves. God will give nothing up, will not yield a hair's breadth of all the perfection of his law in its utmost spirituality, nor permit either defect or intermission, because he is a holy God, and a holy law becomes him. The stubborn nature of man doth indeed kick against the strictness of God's law, and so it doth also against the purity of the lawgiver. It would like the one and the other better, if they were not so holy. But from this very consideration St. Paul argues the excellence of the law. "Sin," saith he, "taking occasion by the law, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence, deceived me, and by it slew me, wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good." He approved the law as worthy of God, because it restrained and condemned that corrupt nature in him which he

found rising up against it. It would not have become the purity of God's nature, if it had given any allowance to the filthiness of his own. As the scope and spirituality of God's law doth illustrate his perfect holiness, so also doth the curse denounced against every transgression and failure of the same. How doth this magnify God's purity, that the least sin hath death for its curse! How absolute must God's hatred of sin be; how jealous must he be of the glory of his holiness; how incapable in his very nature of departing from it ever so little! "The wages of sin is death," because God is a holy God, and can never be reconciled to sin; he must eternally hate it; the smallest sin he can never endure to all eternity; yea, and every sinner is therefore accursed by him; all are children of wrath, because God hateth all them that work wickedness, and we are all guilty before God. Let the glorious purity of God justify such a sentence; yea, let it appear glorious herein. Yea, let the pit of hell be searched out in all its eternal terrors and horrors, and that as the wages of sin even of but one, and that the least sin, and what will this eternal separation and destruction from the presence of the Lord, because of sin, amount to, but a most awful demonstration and alarming proof of God's glorious holiness? The holiness of God shall vindicate his justice even in the denunciation and execution of eternal wrath against sin. "He shall be justified when he speaketh, and clear when he judgeth." For why? infinite holiness cannot but infinitely hate sin, and infinitely express a suitable detestation of it in a manner worthy itself. If God be infinitely holy, sin must be infinitely hateful

to him, and the fearful declaration of his wrath against it is but the proof that it is so. What now saith the law and the curse, what but proclaim the Lord "glorious in holiness;" what but cry out with the seraphim, "holy, holy, holy Lord of Hosts." Yet,

4. The holiness of God is most eminently displayed in the gospel. In this manifestation, a most marvellous tenderness, and compassion for the sinful creature is exhibited by the incarnation, death, and glorification of the eternal Word, while by this wonderful contrivance, the glory of God's holiness is displayed and maintained in a manner, beyond all others suited to give us the most exalted and the most humbling apprehensions of it. "Zion shall be redeemed with judgment and her converts with righteousness." The Redeemer must "magnify the law and make it honourable," and how gloriously did he set forth the holiness of God, when "he gave his soul a sacrifice for sin." Not all the vials of judgment that have been or shall be poured out upon the wicked world, nor the flaming furnace of a sinner's conscience, nor the irreversible sentence pronounced against the rebellious devils, nor the groans of the damned, give such demonstrations of God's hatred of sin, as the wrath of God let loose upon his Son! Never did divine holiness appear more beautiful and lovely, than at the time our Saviour's countenance was marred in the midst of his dying groans. This himself acknowledges in that prophetic psalm, where, alluding to the hour when God should turn his smiling face from him, thrust his sharp knife into his heart, and force that terrible cry from him, "my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken

me,"<sup>1</sup> he adores this perfection of holiness—"but thou art holy," thy holiness is the spring of all this sharp agony, and for this thou "inhabitest," and shalt for ever inhabit, "the praises" of all thy "Israel."<sup>2</sup> Holiness drew the veil between God's countenance and our Saviour's soul. Justice indeed gave the stroke, but Holiness ordered it. In this God's purity did sparkle, and his irreversible justice manifested that all those that commit sin are worthy of death. The one is the perfect discovery of his righteousness, the other of his holiness and truth. Then it was that God that is holy, was "sanctified in righteousness." Oh yes indeed, it was the death of Christ which glorified God's holiness, shewed it abroad in its full splendor, and taught sinners to own that he in truth hates sin, since by no less a means, was he reconciled to them than by the sacrifice of his well beloved son. Look up to the cross, and read the purity of God and his jealousy for the law, by what thou beholdest. Consider the dignity of his person, the Word made flesh. Consider his righteousness as well as dignity, pure without spot of sin. Consider the love the Father bore him, and the manifold testimonies he had publicly given of it. Consider the honour to which he was advanced after death; put these together, and then say if you can express the most exalted apprehension they beget in you of God's holiness and hatred of sin, while you see Jesus stricken, smitten of God and afflicted! Yea, but see too the strictness of God's holiness and the honour he puts upon it, while

<sup>1</sup> Ps. xxii, 1.<sup>2</sup> Ver. 3.

the best saint upon earth cannot be accepted with him, but for the sake of Christ's righteousness. He cannot endure sin in any shape, and therefore while he mercifully encourages our boldness to come to him in the merits of the Redeemer, he magnifies by that very thing his holiness in our eyes, as not admitting us to draw near him upon any pretence of desert in ourselves. The saints on earth can only be accepted through the well beloved; and by this way of salvation, God hath put such honour upon his holiness, that the saints in heaven, ever mindful from whence they were taken, shall eternally retain a most humble reverence of the purity of God.

By this time I suppose you may have conceived some kind of apprehension of the holiness of God. It remains,

II. To make improvement of it. And out of a multitude of inferences which easily rise from such a subject, I shall mention but four, which I suppose may have been suggested to your thoughts already as we have gone along.

I. The holiness of God ought to humble us in the sense of our own vileness. Reflect on the purity of God, and then say what you have been, and what you still are. Conceived in sin, naturally without the likeness of God in your souls, strongly inclined to carnal, earthly, devilish lusts, what a sight are you in the pure eyes of God in your very nature? But how impure hath he seen each of your hearts; what a cage of unclean birds hath it all along been, what lusts have ruled and raged in it; what pride, wilfulness, impatience, and murmuring; what distrust, anxiety, and

carefulness about worldly things ; what filthy, unclean, and carnal desires ; what love of pleasures, vanity, indulgence ! But what thoughts have lodged in you ; nay, what words have proceeded out of your mouths ; How have you abused your time in doing what you ought not, and neglecting what you ought to have done ! How little of it have you improved to God's use, and how much of it to your own ! See what you are this moment. What is there in you a holy God can take delight in ? Do you love, fear, trust in him as you ought ? Are you jealous in any suitable manner of his glory, or thankful for his gifts, or humble under his hand ? See what remains of sin this hour defile your souls. Have you considered the holiness of God, how infinitely perfect it is, how offensive sin is to it ? You need only consider yourselves what you have been and what you are, and you shall find cause enough to put your mouths in the dust, and cry out "unclean, unclean."

2. The holiness of God will teach us not to put our trust in any thing we can do, but to have our whole dependance upon the merits of Christ for our acceptance with God. Now this matter I think comes home with a peculiar force, under the views of God's holiness. How shall we stand before this holy Lord God ? Some have been more impenitent and faithless than others it is granted ; but are any of us holy or have we ever been so ? Which of us can say, "I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin ?" The question is are any of us holy ? Can a pure God find no fault in us ? If not, will he lay aside his holiness and accept us as we are for our own sakes ?

Hath Christ too died in vain, and may we come to life in our own sufficiency, when it cost so dear to glorify God's holiness, and to save our souls? Alas, the pride of man must be brought low. We must come down before the footstool of a holy God, and thankfully receive that favour at the hands of a Redeemer, which we are utterly unworthy of ourselves.

Mean time let none forget that God loveth righteousness, as much as he hateth iniquity; that he is more highly pleased with his Son our Jesus, than he can be displeased at us, and therefore that we shall but injure his holiness if we distrust his mercies in not coming under the protection of him in whom he is well pleased. Wherefore, believing souls cannot too much consider their own impurity and the perfect righteousness and obedience of Christ, to the end that both they may see more abundantly their want of this Redeemer, and may also be more confirmed in his sufficiency, with a pure and holy God on their behalf. This will both humble and embolden them in all their approaches to the divine majesty, and keep them in that temper of reverence, humility and watchfulness, which becomes our condition and our circumstances.

3. The holiness of God ought greatly to alarm the impenitent sinner, who seems to have no care how he may stand before this holy Lord God. "The Lord is righteous in all his ways and holy in all his works," saith David; he cannot depart from the holiness of his nature in his doings, nor any more cease from hating sin than from being God. And if so thou art hated of God, O sinner, and all the declarations of his abhorrence at sin are levelled at thee. Thou liv-

est daily hated of God; his displeasure rests upon thee day and night; wherever thou art, however employed, he cannot endure thee. He hath set a mark upon thee, and his curse is hovering over thee. In very deed dost thou not think he hates thee? What otherwise canst thou think, while thou art hugging to thy breast, that only thing he abhors, and to which he can never be reconciled, unless he forget that holiness of his which is the life and glory of his divinity? And will God ever change; if not, wilt thou ever see his face, or escape his vengeance unless thou repent? Alas, my brother, he tarrith a little moment for the sake of his beloved Son, he waits a little for thee. But how soon will he declare his hatred of sin to thee in another manner than thou hast yet known? Death is drawing near; methinks I see him creeping up to thee, he his ready to lay his cold hand upon thee. Dost thou not see him, miserable man? Dost thou not feel him shaking thy crazy body to ashes? Where is he hurrying thee away? Stay thou king of terrors: mercy thou holy God! Yet a little moment; this sinner is unready, he is not washed nor cleansed. O spare him a little, delay to execute the terrible separation of his soul from thy presence and favour for ever! Thou knowest that thus dying he must perish, perish in a destruction suitable to the jealousy of a holy God! But sinful man, should God spare thee a thousand years, thou must repent and believe the gospel, else after all he can never be reconciled to thee. O that thou wouldest be wise, that thou wouldest consider this one thing, that God is not less holy because there are many sinners in earth and hell.

4. The holiness of God should stir us all up to seek and improve holiness in ourselves. We are naturally without it, and without it we can never see a holy God, yet the gospel is designed to minister it unto us. The blood of Christ invites, and his righteousness encourages us to it, while also his word and Spirit will teach and work it in us. And this is the end of all, that he may "purify to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works." Christians, this is your business upon earth, to be conformed to the holy God. See that ye be found so doing, having the purity of God, and his hatred of sin, so manifestly revealed in the law and the gospel, continually before your eyes. Seek that this work in you a growing hatred of sin, and love of the blessed God. Mortify your lusts, die to sin daily, cherish every gracious disposition in your souls, by prayer, meditation, and every means whereby ye may derive down upon you the sanctifying influences of the blessed spirit. Nor be discouraged because ye are much defiled. Go to Jesus, he will present you in his righteousness, he knoweth whereof you are made. He will stand by you, and save you, till he present you to himself without spot. Only see that you faint not, for this is your trial, it is for your life. "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

## SERMON X.

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### THE ETERNITY OF GOD.

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*From everlasting to everlasting thou art God: Ps. xc, 2.*

CAN we by searching find out God? Can we find out the Almighty to perfection? Such knowledge is too wonderful for us. It is as high as heaven; what can we do? Deeper than hell, what can we know? Yet we may, we must, stand still and consider the wondrous works of God. We must weigh with attention what he hath revealed of himself—the unchangeableness of his truth, the thunder of his power, the fearfulness of his purity. We must put every faculty of the soul to the stretch, in search of that eternity of his, which is from everlasting to everlasting. Some other of God's perfections we have discoursed upon as occasion was given, and I mean now to speak of his eternity, and to make improvements from it.

Concerning the eternity of God, I will mention these three points, in order to our gaining some apprehension of it.

- I. What we mean by eternity.
- II. That God is eternal.
- III. That he is so in his nature.

I. What we mean by eternity. Eternity is opposed to time. Now time is nothing else but a succession of

moments, and were this succession carried out to any degree, to thousands and millions of ages, yet the whole were but time still, whereas eternity knows no such succession; there is no saying *it was* or *will be* with regard to eternity. We cannot well comprehend what eternity is; we can easily comprehend what it is not. It hath no beginning, no end; succession is not the measure of it. Time grows older, eternity doth not. Since the beginning, the world is grown six thousand years older; eternity hath advanced nothing, for eternity hath no relation to time. It is like a rock in the sea which hath no connection with the tides which pass along by it, but stands unchangeable in itself, insensible as I may say of the succession of waters which roll by its side. Eternity bears no relation to, and feels nothing of the successions of hours, and days, and years, which measure out time, but is stedfast, immoveable, unchangeable, without beginning, end, or succession.

II. God is eternal. Time is not the measure of God's existence. It cannot be said of him that he hath beginning or shall have end, or that there is any succession with him. He is the rock of ages which pass along, finding and leaving him the same. God hath no beginning—"before the day was I am he." Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever he had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting, he is God. To suppose God had any beginning, were to make him dependant upon some other which gave him that being that before he had not; it is to make him a creature. Whereas, "his goings forth have been from of old from everlasting." God

hath no end, his years are "throughout all generations." The Lord shall endure for ever. "To everlasting thou art God." He could not be the living God should his years fail. His life knows no succession; "he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Just what God was before the worlds were made, he remains and will ever be. He changes not, nor is capable of any alteration. Though ages and worlds rise up and pass away, they effect not his eternity, who is ever the same, independent of all things, confined by no bounds, and incapable of any change. How glorious is that being, who, self-sufficient and independent, possesses all perfection in himself; of mere condescension orders into being the hosts of earth and heaven; considers and directs them in their several progresses; commands some to abide, and others to decay and perish after a shorter or longer continuance, himself ever the same; sees, as it were, at a distance, the old mountains mouldering into dust, heaven and earth dissolving into nothing, the inhabitants of glory and destruction growing up to the ages of many generations, beyond the number of the stars, or the sand ten thousand times multiplied, yet himself the same eternal God! Yes, God is eternal; a million ages make him not older. In every perfection he is eternal, in wisdom, power, truth, holiness, mercy, goodness, justice. From everlasting to everlasting he is God; not *was*, or *will be*, but he *is* to the years of all generations. From everlasting he *is*, to everlasting the same blessed, perfect God, without variableness or shadow of turning. For,

III. God is eternal in his very nature. He is a living

God, living in a peculiar manner in the excellence of his nature, so that it is impossible for God not to be. He lives in and of himself, as is plain, from his being the author of all things, from which, therefore, he cannot receive any addition to his life; and if a living God, then incapable of beginning or ending. To ascribe either to him were to take away his life, as a God living of himself by the necessity of his excellent, all-perfect nature. He is incapable, too, of any alteration, because living independent of all things, and so, because incapable of beginning, ending, or succession, absolutely eternal. God in his nature is eternal, because a living God. So he speaks of himself, "I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever." "I AM, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another." "I am the first and the last, and beside me there is no God." The appeal for his eternity is every where made to his life, and for this reason he is said "only to have immortality," because he only hath it of himself, by the necessity of his nature, as being the living God. Angels and men are everlasting, but they had a beginning, and their immortality they hold not by necessity of nature, but by the will or power of the living God. Were these all reduced to primitive nothing, still the living God must abide for ever, seeing he is a living God. The life of God which is the foundation of his eternity is nobly expressed in the words of the text, "from everlasting to everlasting thou art God;" thou art from everlasting, thou art to everlasting, not thou *wast*, thou *shalt be*, but thou *art*, signifying the necessity of his eternity to consist in the glory of his nature, as a liv-

ing God. This language can be used of no other than God. We may say of an angel thou *hast been* from the day of thy creation, thou *wilt* be for ever, but not thou *art*, both because an angel holds his life from God, and because the successions of time are the measures of his continuance: of God only it can be said thou *art* from everlasting. I AM, is the nature of God; and therefore in his unchangeableness of nature is grounded the absoluteness of his eternity. "I am, that I am," and whatever I am, I change not, I am eternally the same; the same mighty, wise, holy God, filling all things and upholding all things. This I am, from everlasting to everlasting. Now if God be eternal in a manner peculiar to himself, subsisting without beginning, end, or succession, because a living God, then eternity being in the same manner ascribed to the Son in Scripture, will be a proof of his being the living God. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and for ever," that is eternal in that peculiar manner wherein God liveth for evermore. So he calls himself I AM: before Abraham was I AM, not I WAS but I AM, viz. the living God. He speaks also of the "glory which he had with the Father before the beginning of the world," and he is plainly spoken of by the prophet, describing in this peculiar manner his eternity, "out of thee (that is Bethlehem) shall he come forth to be a ruler in Israel, whose goings have been from of old from everlasting." A double going forth is here described, one from Bethlehem, another from eternity.

Let us come now to improvements, and the psalm before us, presents so many and those so very suitable

to the subject, that I shall go no further for matter whereby to improve God's eternity.

I. God's eternity should strengthen our faith in the covenant he hath condescended to make with us in the everlasting gospel, by Jesus Christ. God is not only an eternal God, but also an eternal God in covenant with us. This is the use Moses makes of God's eternity in the two first verses, "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations." In thee hath been the refuge and salvation of men trusting upon thee at all times. Well may we depend upon thee, who doth vouchsafe to make us thy care, seeing "before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God." Thou art almighty, thou art all merciful, and in might and mercy eternal; we may well trust in thee. As God is an eternally living God, he can well fulfil his engagements to us in time and eternity. The life of God hath suffered no decay since before the worlds he purposed the covenant in himself. He liveth every hour to make good the promises of it to us in this life, and his years shall not fail in glory to accomplish our happiness for evermore. Could any take away the eternal life of God, his covenant might be disappointed; but he saith, "I live for evermore; and heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away;" yea, and more expressly, "because I live, ye shall live also." Yea believers, your hopes are as long as God's eternity, as sure as his life. The life of God is the great foundation of all. What were his power, wisdom, holiness, mercy without it; but while in all these he is eter-

nal, what can ye have to fear, ye that flee for refuge to the hope set before you ?

2. The eternity of God should continually impress us with a lively sense of the shortness of our lives. So it is marked out in the third and fourth verses, "thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, return ye children of men, for a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night." The eternal God hath set us all our bounds: out of the dust we are taken, and to it we must return. But how soon, how speedily! What is the life of man in comparison of the eternity of God? A thousand years in his sight are but as the remembrance of yesterday is in ours. And what is that in your eyes now? Alas! you hardly see it had a being. The life of a patriarch is no more in the eye of the eternal God; his thousand years no more than this, or but as a watch in the night. What then is your life; your three score years and ten at most? What a vain thing indeed in comparison of the eternity of God! And yet, how are you contriving, and laying out all your heart and spirit upon earthly things—pleasures, wealth, honour, as if your moments were to endure as long as God's eternity. Before the mountains were made, and to everlasting he is God; but we, what were we a very little while ago, and what shall we be a very little while hence? In respect of God's eternity, we have not the abidance of a child that is born and dies the same day. Surely this is enough to confound all projects which look no higher than this miserable world; and this more especially, when to the absolute shortness there is added,

3. The uncertainty of life ; for so it follows in the fifth and sixth verses, “thou carriest them away as with a flood,” they are taken off with violence. “They are as a sleep, they fall insensibly into death. They are like grass which groweth up. In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up, in the evening it is eut down and withereth.” How uncertain the life of man, in comparison with the unchangeableness of God! He beholds worlds rising up and passing away, and abideth the same ; man knows not what a day shall bring forth, whether before the evening he shall not be eut down. Few there are that live out three score years and ten. By various ways one and another go untimely to the grave, to warn the living dust, to tell them they are not sure of a day. All have seen this, have felt it for a moment ; but custom hath made it familiar to us ; the more we see it, the less we feel it, the less we believe that this night our souls may be required. Yet this perhaps we have little considered, that the great I AM liveth for evermore, that he changeth not though all things below perish, the earth and all its inhabitants, that his years do not, cannot fail. What then so desirable, as that frail man should seek a sure interest in the eternal God. That we should cast away our pride of every sort, and humble ourselves in the sight of that God who liveth for ever either to bless or punish us ! And this especially,

4. As it follows in the next verses, because the shortness and uncertainty of our lives, together with the manifold ills we suffer in them, are but notices of God’s displeasure against us for our sins: “we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath we are

troubled. Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance. For all our days are passed away in thy wrath; we spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are three score years and ten, and if by reason of strength they be four score years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow, so soon it is cut off, and we fly away." You see because of our *sins*, we are given over to misery and death. Now what should this call us to, but to humble ourselves for our iniquities? Consider the eternity of God, and wonder not if sin provokes him to displeasure. Doth not every sin treat God as if he were not the living God? St. Paul set out the sin of idolatry as consisting in this, that thereby men "change the glory of the incorruptible eternal God, into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things." He doth not only accuse them of unreasonable falling, but of a grievous dishonour they brought upon the living God, dealing with him as if he were mean and contemptible as a mortal or a worm. Likewise every sin disgraces the incorruptible God, makes not account of his eternal power and Godhead, and esteems him of less value than that pleasure, interest, gratification, for which we deny him. Horrid to think of, that we should thus have insulted the eternal God! Yet the Lord liveth. We know he doth. All we suffer is to make us know he doth. He hath set our iniquities before his countenance, and by his wrath we are troubled, while we labour under misery of every sort, and are consigned over to the dust. Every stroke we feel should teach us the jealousy of the eternal

God; and as we draw nearer to our end, we should more eagerly humble ourselves in his sight for the trespasses wherewith we have provoked him.

5. Most especially should impenitent sinners tremble upon the apprehension of God's eternity. "Who knoweth the power of thine anger? Even according to thy fear is thy wrath." Who knoweth the power of thine anger, since thou art the eternal living God. How severe, how ceaseless it is. The angels that sinned know it by experience; sinners in hell know it; they know and feel that eternity of God's wrath, which now it is impossible to describe. Heedless men, though God be least in your thoughts, though ye make a mock at sin and make light of Christ, yet the thoughts of God's eternity when he comes to judge the world, must make ye tremble. The judge and avenger lives for ever, this is the fearful thing. God pledges his eternity for the punishment of obstinate sinners, and engageth it by an oath that he will "whet his glittering sword, that his hand shall take hold of judgment, that he will render vengeance to his enemies, and a reward to them that hate him;" a reward proportioned to the greatness of their offences, and to the glory of an eternal God. "I lift up my hand to heaven and say, I live for ever;" that is, as surely as I do so, I will whet my sword and take vengeance. It is an awakening thought, "according to thy fear so is thy wrath." We cannot dread him, beyond what his wrath is—surely not, if his wrath be that of an eternal God; and eternity will sharpen the severity of every lash of his vengeance. Wherefore it becomes us all in the

6. Last place to pray God that he will give us grace “so to number out our short and miserable days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”<sup>1</sup> If God be eternal, and we but for a moment, to be religious is to be wise. To seek his everlasting favour, and repent truly of our sins, hath as much of reason as of duty in it. O that we were all thus wise, that we might apply ourselves to it! We want no motive; the mention of God’s eternity is enough to rouse us. “This God is our God for ever and ever.” Who doth not wish he could say so? We are not without the means; Christ liveth for ever at the right hand of God. Let the expectation of favour with the eternal God move us. Let that thought be near your hearts, that God is a dwelling place in all generations, because before the mountains or the world were made, from everlasting to everlasting he is God. Thus the psalmist improves the consideration of God’s eternity to quicken faith and diligence. He proceeds on arguments as plain as they are forcible—God’s eternity and our vanity. But these are seasons when the strongest arguments receive an addition of force, and we are obliged to feel the power of them. This will be the case in times of danger, and most signally so when there can be no help from man, and all is evidently resolved into the almighty pleasure. You know the point I have in view.<sup>2</sup> When your houses were shaken under you, and threatening to fall upon you, what human means could there be of escaping instant

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 12.

<sup>2</sup> The remainder was added on the occasion of an earthquake felt at Truro, in 1757.

death? Who could say to the trembling walls, just thus far shall ye move and no further? If the shock, proceeding from whatever second cause, had been some degrees more violent, what had become of you? At my return I might have found the most of you, whom I now meet with the most sensible joy and thankfulness, even you my dear people, buried in ruins! But God spared you. Surely your own consciences have been saying, for what end? The solemn thought pressed in upon the most thoughtless, whose heart cried, not thus unprepared would I enter eternity; while the more pious found one thing and another of which to lament the want or the weakness. Eternity gains in importance on our souls, when the views of death are at hand; but the importance cannot be less, because the fear of death is passed away. Be doing therefore what you then wished done, and you will not fear the messenger sent out to bring you into a happy eternity, in whatever formidable shapes he may appear. It is faith ye want; faith in the all-sufficient eternal God; faith in his mercy and his love who is unchangeable; faith that purifies the heart; faith that enters into that within the veil. It is faith must relieve our fears, and support us in the hour of danger. Have faith in God, a faith that unites you to him, and gives you boldness through the confidence you have in his love, power, wisdom, and protection. Then hanging upon him, you will not fear though the very earth be moved, yea, though the hills should be carried into the midst of the sea. Such an interest in God we all want, and at least in seasons of danger, wish for. Now therefore, now when the evil day is passed by, let us

seek it diligently, and death, come as it will, shall only remove us to a blessed eternity, where earthquakes, and thunders, and lightnings, and whatever else makes the heart of mortal man tremble, shall affright us no more. Let us be warned that this is not our rest, and seek the better country. To which the Lord of his mercy conduct us all for Jesus Christ's sake.

## SERMON XI.

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### THE OMNIPRESENCE OF GOD.

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*Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him, saith the Lord: do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord?*  
Jer. xxiii, 24.

WHILE I think upon God, my brethren, wonder seizes me, I am lost in the depth of his perfections. I reach to comprehend him, but I cannot prevail. I sink, I fall back, at the unsearchableness of his glorious nature. We see what he is not, but what he is, how mighty, holy, righteous, how he liveth for ever, and filleth all things—such knowledge is too wonderful for us, we cannot attain unto it. Alas, what is man! Shrink into nothing thou son of the dust, thou thing of a day, thou creature of a span long. Say what art thou, mortal man? In thy best estate, of strength, health, and vigour, what art thou? What art thou in comparison of all those thou seest here? And what then in respect of all that live this day in a thousand kingdoms, over the face of the earth? And what are all these to that eumbrous globe the earth? Yet that earth is but a speck, a little twinkling star in regard of the hosts of heaven; if reduced to nothing, its place would not be found wanting! What art thou

then vain man in comparison of God, who filleth heaven and earth? How insignificant art thou; how beneath all notice! O that ever such a thing should be proud! I would you should see some of the least dazzling parts of God, that you might know yourselves. I would make some shadows of his glory pass before you, that impressed with a solemn awe of the fearful God, ye might remember yourselves and humble your souls in the dust, and return unto the Lord. Some former discourses have engaged your attention to the power, the holiness, the eternity of God; and now I mean to shew you that this almighty, eternal, sin-hating God, is ever with you, the witness of all you do, privy to all your thoughts, and perfectly acquainted with every word of your tongue. “Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him, saith the Lord; do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord?”

The immensity or infiniteness of God is meant of his nature and being; that he is infinite in direct opposition to the nature of all creatures, who are finite in respect both of time and place, inasmuch as they, in their very nature, are measured by time and place, whereas God is measured by neither, by reason of his infinite nature. Yet though God be infinite, as being neither confined by time or place, yet his infiniteness doth most strictly belong to his omnipresence, or being every where.

To give you some apprehension, and what I study more, impression of the divine presence, I observe,

I. All creatures are in some place, in which place they evidently are, and cannot be in another at the

same time. This is the case with men, and with angels and spirits; they are not in two different places, cannot be in heaven and earth at once. But God is every where at once, he filleth heaven and earth; he is not so in heaven that he is not also in earth, nor so in earth that he is not also in heaven, but so in both that he filleth them both, yet is confined to neither. David illustrates this in an enumeration of the most distant places, "Whither shall I flee from thy presence? Shall I go up to heaven? Thou art there. Shall I make my bed in hell? Thou art there also. Shall I take the wings of the morning (the rays of the rising sun, for these are the wings of the morning) and fly with them, and upon them, to the uttermost parts of the sea and earth into which they dart their light? Still there shall thy hand lead me, for there too thou art." Nay, but not only is God in places of the utmost distance, saith the psalmist, but most intimately so:—"he knoweth my down-sitting and uprising, my path and my ways, he understandeth my words and my thoughts. Darkness cannot hide me from him; his presence is as it were, a hand laid upon me, which holds me, which I cannot escape; I am beset by him, behind and before." It is the very nature of God to be in all places at once, and to be with all creatures at once. "In him we live and move and have our being." He is the life of all, which he could not be, unless in his nature, he were with all, through all, and in all. There is not an angel in heaven, nor a devil in hell, who is not filled by God's powerful presence, for he filleth all things, and upholdeth all things. Yea, so unsearchable is

the immensity of God, that while he is in all creatures, he is above and beyond them all. "Behold," saith Solomon, "the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee." The expanse of heaven is but a little speck, in comparison of the vastness of God. Yet,

II. That we may not conceive any gross apprehensions of God's presence, it may be remarked, that though God be every where, and filleth all things, yet he is not so every where as if he were a great body, one part of which filleth heaven, and another earth. "Do not I fill the heaven and the earth?" The same I AM filleth the heaven, that filleth the earth. In an inconceivable manner he is with us, in all the fulness of his divinity; while also in the very same fulness, he is every where in and beyond the world. "Who can by searching find out God?" We are lost, we cannot reach unto the comprehension of that glorious truth, that the great God is every where at once, filleth and therefore upholdeth all things, and that with all the fulness of the Godhead, so that it may be said to, and of every thing in the universe, the eternal, almighty, gracious, glorious God is with thee, near thee, thou art, thou livest in him.

III. Though God be thus every where, yet he is not every where seen and manifest. The manifestations of God are diverse from his essential presence. He is working at all times and in all places: seeing it is in him that we live, move, and are; yet as to manifestations, this is as he will. Declarations of his presence there are enough every where; but the opening of himself is to the *hearts* of men upon

earth, to the *eyes* of saints in glory. Some are so blind that they do not discern God, though he be indeed near them, and are ready to say, "is there knowledge in the Most High," though by him they live, by his providence they are directed in all things, and he, compassing them behind and before, spieth out all their ways. God must manifest himself by his *grace*, else men will say in their hearts, "there is no God," or "he doth not regard." Clearly seen as he may be in his works, yet we know by experience we shall forget his presence, unless he manifest himself to us by his Spirit. Nay, however evidently he hath revealed himself in his word, and however visible he may be also in his works of nature and providence, there must be a special manifestation of him in the *heart*, else we shall see little of him, and take no more notice of him than if he were a God far off. I mention this that none may stumble at this doctrine of God's presence, because so many live as if there were no God. Who doubts that God is present in heaven, when the numberless number of saints and angels stand before him day and night, and cease not falling down before Him that sitteth on the throne, and the Lamb for ever and ever, singing hallelujah? But he is equally present on earth, though not equally manifest. Not God's absence, but our blindness, hides him from us. Naturally he is an unknown, and unseen God to us. Yet he hath diverse ways of manifesting himself, and making his presence known to, and observed by us. The first is by his word, by which alone we gain any knowledge of him, or could possibly conceive that the things we see in heaven and

earth are the work of an almighty Spirit, who filleth, upholdeth, and ordereth them all. Discovering God in his word, we may, secondly, see him in his providence, guiding and governing us with infinite wisdom, goodness, mercy, and power. Yet thirdly, we shall neither see him in his word or providence, unless he take away the natural blindness that is upon our hearts, and give us spiritual discernment to see him who is invisible. Though sometimes he appears in such convincing marks of divinity, in miraculous doings, in terrible interpositions and judgments, in the devastations of the sword, the plague, or the earthquake, insomuch that the most of those who have ever heard of him, cannot but see it and say, "this hath God done," perceiving that it is his work; yet our seeing God as he is ever present with us, so as to walk and live in the light of his presence, is owing to a peculiar manifestation of himself in the heart, when he disposes and turns it by his Spirit to look after him, and then shines into it, with the light of his countenance. This is that gracious way, whereby believers in Jesus Christ hold communion with him, and influenced by his presence, delight in, trust upon, obey and serve him, according to the greater or less degree of that divine communication they are partakers of; therefore, although many live as if there were no God, or as if he were a God far off, it is not because he indeed is so, but because they do not seek to know, find, see, and walk with him, by opening their hearts to the discoveries he makes of himself by his word and Spirit, which are the ways whereby he manifests his presence with us. Ye see now, my

brethren, that the eternally living, almighty, wise, holy God is ever with us. We are all naked and open to him; nothing can hide us from him; his eye is upon us wherever we are, whatever we do; he looks into our hearts, and sees every secret motion that moves upon our souls; he is above, around, and through, and in us. This is saying little, and how can we well conceive more? He is not so much in us, as we in him; in him we live and move; we subsist in the immense God that filleth all; can be no more out of God, than out of that air wherein we find ourselves in every remove we make from one place to another. Yea, in all the fulness of his divinity, he is with every one of us always; the great, the faithful, the glorious, the unchangeable, the holy, the omnipotent God is with us every one in the fulness of his divinity; not a part of his glorious essence here, and a part there, for he is without parts; but the living I AM with every one of us, in the fulness of his divinity. With us too not only by the necessity of his immense, infinite, and unbounded nature, but with the exactest observation of the whole and every part of our conduct. His eyes, to speak in the language of men, are in every place, beholding the evil and the good; beholding, observing, attentively remarking and contemplating them. What an awful thought is this, how fruitful of important and interesting reflections. I hasten to set some of them before you by way of improvement.

1. The consideration of God's presence is suited exceedingly to humble us. However holy God be, and however infinite his hatred to sin, yet it is plain

by experience, that when his presence is not regarded, our sins do little abase us. Would so much as one of those multitudes, who every where practise the grossest iniquities, every man after the lust of his heart, would so much as one of them be easy and rest quiet, as they all seem to do, were it not that they had forgotten God in their hearts? This thought abiding continually upon the mind,—God sees thee *now* drunkard, glutton, swearer, fornicator, thief, *now* God sees thee,—would it not make the hardiest of them tremble? And be we what we will, what can we think of ourselves in the presence of a heart-searching God? Say what God hath seen in thee; what doth he now see in thee, whoever thou art, most holy as he is? Alas! when we bring our sins before us, looking over the years that are past, and reflect with attention on what we are in our nature, what we have been in disposition of heart, what in thought, word, work, what we are daily, what this very hour, and consider the whole as naked and open to the eyes of that infinitely holy God, with whom we have to do, how do we shrink into nothing in the estimation of ourselves! How do we see ourselves utterly vile and unclean! How cry out, who can stand before this holy Lord God—“God be merciful to us sinners!” In such a view of ourselves, as being open altogether to God’s notice, because of his presence with us, the unbeliever trembles and hastily retires from the sight, while the believer takes shelter under the wings of the Lord our righteousness. Both the one and the other must take up the confession of Bildad, “how can man be justified with God, or how

can he be clean that is born of a woman? Behold even the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in his sight; how much less man that is a worm?"

2. The presence of God should be the great comfort, aid, and support of believers in all cases. Faith respects God as a God in the covenant, and laying hold of it takes comfort in God, as always present to fulfil it. It hath regard to God as manifest in the flesh, for completing this covenant, and while it considers the Redeemer in his human nature as gone away into heaven, is confident in his continual presence in his divine nature. In this respect it considers that Christ in his divinity, is as much on earth now that his manhood is above, as in his divinity he was above when his manhood was on earth, according to his word, "no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." Yes, Lord, the voice of faith cries, thou art ever with me, for thou art God, and therefore every where ever present with thy church. Thou hast said, and therein I believe and rejoice, "I am with you always, even unto the end of the world;" and again, "whosoever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." It is the consideration of God, as a covenant God in Jesus Christ, which makes his presence delightful, and the rock and support of the believer in all cases. That God is at hand, and not a God far off, is his only confidence and comfort; a God in covenant, fulfilling his promise and engagement to his church—"I the Lord do keep it, I will water it

every moment, lest any hurt it. I will keep it night and day." With full consent and contentment, faith makes answer to such a promise—"this God is our God for ever and ever, he shall be our guide unto death."

The presence of God is a special comfort in time of temptation. Though Satan be near, yet God is nearer both to us and him; to our support, and to his restraint and confusion. Satan would fasten a thorn in the apostle's flesh, but Christ was at hand, that it should not hurt him—"my grace," said he, "is sufficient for thee."

So also in times of sore affliction, this is the great support of God's children. "God is a present help in trouble," said David, and again—"when my father and mother forsake me (in the greatest absence of earthly help) the Lord taketh me up." It is a comfortable thought in the day of distress, that his eyes run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of those whose hearts are perfect towards him.

Nor is it less comfortable or quickening in all duties of worship. These are nothing unless God's presence enliven them. We should diligently stir ourselves up to see God in them, lest we profane his presence and our service. Then worship is delightful, when we enjoy God in it, and surely he is there. He considers and hearkens when we come before him, according to his will, as he saith by Haggai, "now be strong, O Zernbbabel; be strong O Joshna; be strong ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work, for I am with you, saith the Lord of Hosts."

3. The consideration of God's presence must influence us to a heart religion. We are dealing with a God that trieth the hearts and reins, that knows the principles which sway and govern our conduct. We must inquire therefore, whether at the bottom we be guided by a zeal for his glory, or whether any worldly or selfish consideration have the pre-eminence. Now, the deceitfulness of the heart considered, it will be of great use, and it is of absolute necessity that we should endeavour always to see ourselves, not as men see us, not as through self flattery, we are but too apt to think of ourselves, but as nearly as we can, just as God sees us. It will be a mighty help to godly simplicity, often to consider how intimately God knoweth us, and so to open our hearts, and survey them before him; for our Lord hath told us, that "that which is highly esteemed among men, is often an abomination in the sight of God." This was David's practice upon the consideration of God's presence—"search me O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

4. Lastly, this consideration ought to startle and alarm the impenitent sinner. "Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him, saith the Lord; do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord?" See, sinner, God, the whole God, is present with thee, he knows thee altogether. He beholds thy naked soul this moment, sees the filthy lusts that defile thee, sees thy stubborn pride which will not yield to his will. He sees the love of pleasure, wealth, indulgence, that lie working in thee; sees how void thou

art of every gracious disposition, how thou dost not love, nor almost dread him, how he is forgotten, dishonoured, in thee. No sinner, God doth not see in thee one pang of remorse or shame for all thy sins, or one emotion of self indignation and abhorrence at all thy ingratitude, for all the blessings thou hast abused. What object hast thou before him in his house? What meanest thou to tread his courts? What dost thou when thou comest into the sanctuary? God and thy careless irreverent heart can tell. And it is always thus—always impenitent, unrelenting, with hardly a thought of God; and when there is a thought of him, so unbecoming his majesty, his holiness? Alas what an object in the eye of God! Let me ask you, yea, rather ask yourself, would you, could you, live in this sort, did you remember that God was with you? You live as if no eye saw you, you have forgotten the eye of God. Oh think of it, and be confounded. His eye follows every sinner of you, in all your several ways. He is with the ungodly that call not upon him, when they lie down and when they rise up; he is with the drunkard in his nightly haunts; he notes the curses that issue from the mouth of the profane swearer; he sits with the sabbath breaker, while he turns the sacred hours to vanity and amusement, or business; he knows ye all, nor doth he need any man to tell him what ye are, and what ye do, or how ye live without him and abuse your talents, your time, and yourselves, one with another. Do but think how ye pass but one day, think how plainly he sees it all, and then think of his patience while he sees you forgetting, yea, de-

spising him. O think of the state of your souls so utterly alienated from all the delight in the presence of God, in which alone is fulness of joy. Ye seem now to hide yourselves from God in cares and pleasures, while he forbears to punish, but shall ye be able to do it for ever? Even in hell, God will be there. Or could ye wish never to see his face, when that, that only, ye are sure in your consciences makes heaven to be heaven? But I have done. It may be, the Lord will look upon you and hear my prayers, and turn your hearts; even so, blessed God, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

SERMON XII.

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THE SALVATION OF SOULS,  
THE DESIRE AND ENDEAVOUR OF EVERY FAITHFUL  
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.

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AN ADDRESS TO MINISTERS.<sup>1</sup>

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*Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved: Rom. x, 1.*

THE subject before the apostle here, is the rejection of the Jews for their infidelity, and the calling of the Gentiles to partake of the privileges of the gospel. Lest however what he had to say might be looked on, as flowing either from want of love and regard towards his countrymen, or from spleen and ill will against them, he expressed himself in very strong terms, concerning his sincere affection towards his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh<sup>2</sup>—"I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also

<sup>1</sup> On what occasion this admirable discourse was delivered is not recorded. Probably it was written for the use of the Clerical Society, of which Mr. Walker was the founder and chief support.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. ix, 1, 2, 3.

bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness, and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren my kinsmen according to the flesh." In my text he repeats the same things, though in softer terms, and protests his fervent desire for the salvation of Israel—"brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." He was now writing to Christians at Rome, many of whom might be his brethren according to the flesh, as being Jews, and all of them were his brethren by grace, as being Christians born of the same heavenly Father, God, and the same incorruptible seed, the word of God. Thereby also they were partakers of the same divine nature, had the same elder brother, Christ, and were heirs of the same heavenly inheritance. His heart's desire and prayer to God for them was, that they might be saved, not only from that temporal destruction which was coming on their city and nation, and did a little time after overtake them for their manifold and heinous sins against God, which cried aloud to heaven for vengeance, especially for that great sin of rejecting the Messiah, but from that eternal destruction which will be the portion of all impenitent sinners, who finally reject the grace of Christ declared in the gospel. That they might be saved was his heart's desire and his prayer to God. The expression "my heart's desire" is strong, and very significant. Chrysostom and Theophylact explain it, "my will and earnest desire." It was the pleasure and delight of his soul, to promote the salvation of his countrymen. And because all his wishes, all his endeavours

would be fruitless, and of no effect without the aid of divine grace, therefore it was also his prayer to God. For this he bowed his knee and made humble supplication, that God would take the veil of ignorance from their eyes, and cure the hardness of their hearts, remove the prejudices they laboured under, and bring them to the acknowledgment of Christ as the promised Messiah, and only Saviour. I consider Paul here as a minister of the gospel, and an ambassador of Christ; one to whom grace was given to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ to the world, and from his words I observe, that the saving of souls ought to be the chief aim and desire, the earnest prayer and endeavour of the ministers of the gospel. Thus it was with the apostle Paul; it was his heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel, that they might be saved; and thus it ought to be and will be with every faithful minister of the gospel. For this end Paul, though he was free from all men, yet he made himself servant unto all, that he might gain the more; that he might gain them, not make gain of them; that he might gain them not to himself, as his peculiar disciples, but to Christ, as their only Saviour and Lord. In a word, he became all things to all men, that by any means he might save some. The saving of souls was the end of all his condescension. Hence he says, "I please all men in all things,"<sup>3</sup> that is, things that are lawful or indifferent. His end in so doing was not a selfish end, for his own profit, but for the profit of many that might be saved. We must

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. x, 33.

not commit the least sin or omit any duty for the sake of pleasing of men, for if we thus please men, we shall not be the servants of God ; but in things indifferent, we ought to yield to the weakness of men for their spiritual profit, that they may be saved. The saving souls then, is the work a minister of the gospel ought to prosecute with care and diligence. For this end Paul exhorts Timothy, “to take heed to himself and to his doctrine, that in so doing he might save himself and them that heard him.”<sup>4</sup> In speaking to this doctrine I shall endeavour to shew,

I. What is meant by saving souls.

II. What ministers may do and ought to do, in order to save souls.

III. I shall offer some considerations, why this ought to be the chief aim and desire, the earnest prayer and endeavour of every minister of the gospel.

IV. Make application.

I. What is meant by saving of souls.

1. It is not only to bring men to the knowledge of the principles of religion, and to an outward profession of Christianity. These things are necessary, but not the all that is necessary to save souls. Without knowledge, and the profession of Christianity men cannot be saved. “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge,”<sup>5</sup> says the prophet Hosea ; and Christ says, except we confess him before men, he will deny us before his heavenly Father. “With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” saith St. Paul.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Tim. iv, 16.

<sup>5</sup> Chap. iv, 6.

Men may have a great deal of knowledge and yet perish eternally, if their knowledge be merely speculative, floating in the head, and not sinking into the heart, and transforming the soul into the divine image. If it doth not engage men to practise the Christian life, instead of tending to the salvation of their souls, it will only tend to aggravate their sins, and make their condemnation more heavy. For if they had no knowledge of the principles and duties of Christianity, they would have no sin in comparison; but having this knowledge, they have no cloak for their sins. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them;" not happy if ye know them only, but if ye practise them according to your knowledge. As for an outward profession of Christianity, without the spirit and temper of that holy religion, and a practise conformable to its holy precepts, how vain a thing is it—a form of godliness, without its life and power. If we be only hearers of the word, and not doers, we deceive ourselves. Our Saviour assures us, that "not every one that saith unto him Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but they only that do the will of his Father who is in heaven." Such as rest in an outward profession of Christianity, without an inward temper of mind, and an outward practise agreeable to it, are like the foolish virgins, who had lamps, but took no oil with them; who when the bridegroom came, had the door shut upon them, and were not allowed to enter in with him. So these have a lamp of profession without the oil of grace in their vessels, and when Christ comes, shall have heaven's gates shut upon them, and shall not be allowed to enter

into the mansions of glory; for they only who “do his commandments shall enter in through the gates into the city.”

2. It is not engaging men in a party or faction in religion. The Pharisees were exceedingly zealous that way. They compassed sea and land to make one proselyte; they went to all the regions of their dispersion to gain one to their party, and when they had gained him, what had he gained? Nothing but loss. He was made tenfold more the child of hell than themselves—more opposite to the gospel and true religion. For as Justin Martyr tells us, in his dialogue with Trypho, these proselytes did not only disbelieve the doctrine of Christ, but were much more blasphemous against him than the Jews themselves, endeavouring to kill and torment Christians wherever they could, that they might equal their masters.

3. I proceed now to shew positively what I mean by saving souls. I mean the delivering them from the wrath and just displeasure of their Creator, to which they are exposed by their sins, and from all that misery that shall be the everlasting portion of impenitent sinners in another world. It is a deliverance from the power and dominion of their lusts, into which they are bond-slaves by nature; from that enmity that is in their carnal minds against God and his laws, and from a course of disobedience to his holy commands. It is a bringing them to a state of favour and friendship with God; to a conformity to his image, and subjection to his laws. It is a bringing them to Christ the author of eternal salvation, that they may be justified through his righteousness, sanctified by

his Spirit, and enabled to walk in a course of holy obedience to his laws, and imitation of his example—in a word, “turning them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified, by faith that is in Christ.”

II. I come now to the second thing in my method, viz. to shew what ministers may do and ought to do in order to promote the salvation of souls. But before I enter upon this, there are a few things I must premise,

1. Whatever was necessary in a way of merit, to purchase the salvation of souls, was done by Christ our blessed Redeemer. He is the author and the only author of eternal salvation to them that obey him. He is the propitiation for our sins, and “in him we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.” It was he that “was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our sins: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we were healed.” He it was that “delivered us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.” He has purchased that grace which alone can subdue our corruptions, sanctify our natures, and enable us to walk before God in newness of life. He has purchased for us the heavenly inheritance, and has “opened to us a new and living way into it, through the vail, that is to say his flesh.”

2. It is the Holy Spirit that applies, and makes us partakers of that salvation which Christ has purchased. It is he that begins a good work of grace in us, and thereby unites us to Christ. He awakens us out

of our security, convinces us of our sin and misery, enlightens our dark understandings in the saving knowledge of Christ, as willing and able “to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him.” It is he that subdues our stubborn wills, conquers our obstinacy, and persuades and enables us to receive Jesus Christ as our only Saviour and Lord, according to the terms of the gospel. It is by the powerful operation of his grace, Christ is “made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.”

3. The word is the ordinary means that the Spirit makes use of in working a work of grace in the soul. By the law he convinces of sin and misery; by the gospel he enlightens our minds in the knowledge of Christ. He sets some of the terrors of the law on the conscience, to awaken us out of our security, and proposes the motives of the gospel to persuade us to flee to Christ as our only city of refuge. The word is the incorruptible seed by which we are born again, and except we be born again, we cannot enter the kingdom of God. It is the means by which we are built up in holiness and comfort, and are at last brought to the inheritance among them that are sanctified.

4. Ministers are instruments in the hand of the Spirit, for applying the outward means of grace. Wherefore they are called “labourers together with God,” and “workers together with God.”<sup>6</sup> They are heralds to publish and proclaim the glad tidings of salvation, the terms of peace and reconciliation to a

<sup>6</sup> 1 Cor. iii, 9.

lost world, and ambassadors for Christ, to persuade men to accept of those terms, to lay down the weapons of their warfare, and be reconciled to God.

II. I come now to shew what ministers may do, and ought to do, in order to promote the salvation of souls. There are three ways whereby ministers may promote the salvation of souls—by *their doctrine*, by *their practice*, and by *their prayers*.

*First, by their doctrine.* Now there are two things in our teaching we should carefully attend to, if we would promote the salvation of souls, our *matter* and our *manner*.

As to the matter of our teaching, there are some things we should study to impress the minds of the people with, some things we should carefully caution them against, as dangerous rocks on which many souls have shipwrecked and perished eternally, of which we must warn the people, setting up beacons, as it were, upon them, that they may be aware of them, and avoid them.

There are some points of great weight, that we must study to impress a deep sense of upon the minds of the people. As,

1. We must study to impress the people with a deep sense of the worth of their souls, and beget in them a deep concern for them. The small concern people shew about their precious souls, is much to be lamented, and a plain evidence of the little sense they have of the worth of them. The children of men are generally cumbered about many things, but neglect the one thing needful. They “spend their money for that which is not bread, and their labour for

that which satisfieth not." All their care is about the body, where they shall lodge, what they shall eat, what they shall drink, and wherewith they shall be clothed. But how little care is there about the soul, either what its present state is, or what its future shall be, or what shall become of it when it goes out of this body, and where it shall take up its eternal lodging, whether in the regions of light, where there is fulness of joy, or in utter darkness, where there is nothing but weeping and gnashing of teeth. Surely if men had a just sense of the worth of their souls, they would not be so little concerned about their state, either present or future. We must therefore study to make the people sensible of the true value of their precious souls, which they throw away for trifles; that they are of a divine original, and an immortal nature; that they are their principal part which raises them above the brutes, to a dignity but little lower than the angels; that by them they are allied to those pure spirits, are capable of conformity to God, and of being for ever happy in the eternal enjoyment of him, or miserable in being for ever shut out from his presence.

2. We must study to impress on the minds of the people a sense of the vanity of the creature, and its utter insufficiency to afford them happiness; that God is their chief good, and in him lies their chief happiness. It is the voice of nature, "who will shew us any good?" But how grossly are men mistaken as to the nature of true happiness, how miserably bewildered as to the way that leads to it! We must therefore study to set the people right as to these matters, and let them see that the creature is but vanity, yea

vanity of vanities; that it is but a broken cistern, which can hold no water; that God is the fountain of living waters, the inexhaustible source whence all the streams of happiness flow; that the creature is neither suitable to the nature, nor commensurate to the duration of an immortal soul, but God is every way suitable to both; therefore they must endeavour to draw their affections off from the creature, towards God their proper centre.

3. We must study to make a deep impression on their hearts of their lost state by nature through guilt and corruption. Till once people be sensible of this, they will never seek after a Saviour, nor have a just value of salvation. It is a great part of the cure of souls, to make them sensible of their diseases. "The whole need not a physician but they that are sick." We must therefore open to them their guilt; that they are transgressors of the law, and so obnoxious to the curse of it; that if God should mark their iniquities, they could not stand; that if he should enter into judgment with them, they could not be justified in his sight. We must open unto them the corruption of their natures, the blindness of their minds, the perverseness of their wills, the carnality of their affections, the hardness of their hearts, and the enmity that is in them to God and his laws, and the proneness of their nature to that which is evil. In a word, we must study to acquaint them with all the plagues of their hearts. Till once men be made sensible of these things, and become deeply affected with them, they will never cry out, "What shall we do to be saved," or "who shall deliver us from this

body of sin and death?" Nothing but a deep sense of guilt and corruption, can give men a just notion of the worth of Christ's atoning blood and renewing grace. While men think themselves increased in goods, and standing in need of nothing, they will never come to Christ and buy of him gold tried in the fire to enrich them, white raiment to clothe them, and eye salve to anoint their eyes that they may see. Whilst they are crying "peace, peace," to themselves, they will never betake themselves to Christ the peacemaker. We must therefore endeavour to awaken them out of their security, and make them sensible of their danger, by setting the terrors of God before them, and representing to them that wrath of God which is revealed from heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, and will infallibly come upon the children of disobedience; and this we must do in order to induce them to fly to Christ, who alone can deliver them from the wrath to come.

4. In order to promote the salvation of souls, we must acquaint them with the necessity of a saving change, both of their state and temper. First of their state. They must be taught that their state by nature is a state of guilt and condemnation, for "he that believeth not is condemned already;" that they are under the curse of God's law, which they have broken, for it is written, "cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them;" and they must be told that while they continue in that state, they must infallibly be miserable. They must either be justified freely by God's grace through the redemption that is in Christ, and

then there is no condemnation to them, or fall under the sentence of his justice for ever; for though God hath declared himself the Lord, "the Lord merciful and gracious, pardoning iniquity, yet he will by no means clear the guilty." And as there must be a change of the state, so also must there be of the temper and disposition of their souls. It were but a poor salvation to deliver men from the punishment of their sins, while they still continue under the power and dominion of them. We must therefore open unto them the necessity of conversion and regeneration—that except they be converted, and born again, they cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. It is as inconsistent with the purity of the divine nature to receive an unrenewed, corrupt soul into heaven, as with his justice to receive a guilty one. While guilty we are unworthy of heaven; while corrupt unfit for it. Souls therefore must be renewed and purified, before they can enter within the gates of the new Jerusalem, where no unclean thing can enter. They must be partakers of the divine nature, before they can be admitted into fellowship with a holy God.

5. If we would promote the salvation of souls, we must direct the people to Christ, the author of eternal salvation; and to urge and encourage them to come to him, we must let them know that he is the only Saviour, neither is there salvation in any other, for "there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we can be saved." He is the only mediator between God and man, and no man can come to the Father but by him. As he is the only,

so he is an all sufficient Saviour ; he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him. He has fulness of merit to purchase their pardon and peace with God. He has fulness of grace to sanctify and renew their natures, and so make them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, and to keep them by the power of it through faith unto salvation. We must shew that he is willing, as well as able to save, for he has declared that “ whoever comes to him, he will in no wise cast out.” He invites the weary and heavy laden to come to him, and has promised rest unto their souls. We must therefore direct men to his atoning blood, as the only propitiation for sin ; to his perfect righteousness, as that through which alone they can stand justified before the tribunal of a righteous God, and be accepted of him ; to his powerful grace, which alone can subdue their strong corruptions, sanctify their corrupt natures, and enable them to walk and persevere in a course of holy obedience, till at last they are presented before God, not having spot or wrinkle, but holy and without blemish, and are received into those mansions of glory where they shall dwell with God for evermore.

6. We must open to the people distinctly and plainly the terms of salvation—repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. We must shew them that repentance is not a few tears and a little sorrow for sin, nor forsaking a few grosser sins, while men continue in the love and practice of others ; but such a sense of its evil nature and dismal consequences, as being dishonourable to God, contrary to

his holy nature, a transgression of his holy law, and the ruin of their precious souls, depriving them of their greatest happiness, and subjecting them to the greatest misery, with such an apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, as engages the soul, with grief and sorrow for sin, and hatred and abhorrence of it, to turn from all sin to God, with firm purpose and resolution never to return again to it, but to cleave to God, and continue in a course of steady and sincere obedience to his laws, through the help of his grace, to the end of their lives. We must shew them that faith is not a naked assent to the truth of the gospel, nor a confident reliance on Christ and his merits, being persuaded that Christ is theirs, that they shall have life and salvation through him, and that whatever he did for the salvation of mankind, he did for them, while their hearts continue impenitent, and their lives unreformed; but such an assent to that revelation of God concerning Christ, and the way of saving sinners by him, as engages the persons assenting to act suitably to that revelation, by accepting and resting upon Christ, as he is offered to them in the gospel; as their prophet to teach them; their priest to satisfy an offended God for them; their king to subdue their corruptions, govern them by his word and Spirit, and defend them against all their spiritual enemies, till at last he confers eternal salvation on them. We must shew them that faith is a grace that purifies the heart, and is fruitful in good works; that faith that hath not works is dead, being alone, and that such a faith cannot save them. And as we must open the nature of these terms of salva-

tion, so we must direct the people to that grace, by which alone they can be enabled to perform them, shewing that it is God who has promised to take away the heart of stone, and give a heart of flesh; that Christ is exalted to be a Prince, and a Saviour, to give repentance; that faith is not of themselves, it is the gift of God, and that therefore they are to seek these things of God by prayer.

7. We must carefully impress the minds of the people with a deep sense of the necessity of holiness and good works. We must represent to them that without holiness, none can see the Lord. We must always reckon it "a faithful saying, and what we are always to affirm, that they who have believed in God be careful to maintain good works." We must shew them that even the blood of Christ, though of infinite value and virtue, cannot save those whose hearts and lives are unconformed to the law of God, while they continue so; that they only are blessed who do God's commandments; they only have right to the tree of life; they only shall "enter in through the gates into the city." The doctrine of good works is disagreeable to some; they are ready to call it legal preaching, but it is gospel preaching, if Christ and his apostles understood how to preach the gospel. Some want to have only the sweets of the gospel preached unto them; they cannot endure those doctrines that cross their corrupt appetites; but to use the words of the apostle, "be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap; he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life

everlasting." This doctrine then of the necessity of good works we must preach, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear. Were not holiness and goodness the end of Christ's work; did not he die that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works? Are we not created in Christ to good works, that we should walk in them? We must therefore teach the people, what the grace of God that brings salvation teaches them, to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. Nor must we rest in general recommendations of holiness, but descend to the particular virtues and graces of the Christian life, and exhort the people to "add to their faith, virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity," and to charity I might add humility, meekness, self denial, and heavenly mindedness. We must open the nature of these virtues, enforce them with all the powerful motives, and direct them to all the proper means whereby they may be helped to practice them. Especially we must set before them the example of the holy Jesus, and warmly recommend it to their imitation; that as they profess to abide in him, so they would walk even as he walked; that as they call him Master and Lord, so they would follow that example he has given them, and do as he has done, for he has left us an example that we should follow his steps. We must press them to the conscientious practice of those duties that are

incumbent on them in the stations, and relations, wherein God has placed them in the world, as husbands and wives, parents or children, masters or servants, subjects under a civil government, and members of a Christian church. In the practice of these relative duties, a great deal of the life and power of our holy religion lies, and without the practice of them no man can be a good Christian—without the practice of them, they cannot adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things, nor approve themselves as the servants of God and the disciples of the holy Jesus. We must above all things warmly recommend to them the prevailing love of God, and their neighbour. These are the two great commandments of the law, in which the whole law is summed up, and on which hang all the law and the prophets. These will prove a fruitful principle of holy obedience, and will dispose men, nay constrain them, to perform all those duties they owe to God or their neighbour, for love is the fulfilling of the law, and the whole law is fulfilled in this word, love.

8. We must direct the people to the grace of God in Christ, by which alone they can be enabled to all obedience, and to the merits of Christ, through which alone their obedience can be accepted. We must make them sensible of their weakness and insufficiency of themselves, for any good word and work, and teach them the necessity of depending on divine grace. We must shew them that without Christ they can do nothing, and that except they abide in him, and he in them, they cannot bring forth fruit; but if they abide in him, and he in them, they shall bring forth much

fruit; for without him they can do nothing, but through him strengthening them they can do all things. Yet we must carefully caution them against abusing this doctrine of the necessity of the aids of divine grace, to sloth and laziness, as if they were to do nothing, and God were to do all. We must shew them that the only way to obtain further measures of grace, is to improve what they have received; “for unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.”<sup>6</sup> We must also exhort them to exert all their powers in “working out their salvation,” and giving all diligence to “make their calling and election sure.”

9. We must press upon them the practice of holiness, as the particular grace of the Christian life, by all those powerful motives, that either reason or revelation affords. We must shew them that it tends to purify and refine their natures, to dignify and make them honourable, and more excellent than their neighbours, that it will redound to their profit and advantage both here and hereafter, for “in keeping God’s commands there is great reward,” and “godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.” We must set before them the great and gracious promises of the gospel, to excite their diligence in cleansing themselves from all pollution of flesh and spirit; the infinite love of God in Christ, to excite their gratitude; the terrors of hell, to work upon their fears, telling

<sup>6</sup> Matt. xxv, 29.

them that if they live after the flesh they shall die ; and the joys of heaven to influence their hopes. We must exhort them to have respect to the recompense of reward, that they may not faint in the Christian course, and by faith to look to that crown of glory, which the righteous Judge shall bestow upon them at his appearance, to animate them with zeal and vigour in their Christian race. In a word, we must exhort them not to be weary in well doing, seeing “in due time they shall reap if they faint not ;” but to “be stedfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that their labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.” These heads I have mentioned are the good old divinity, the great points of Christian doctrine delivered in the Scriptures of truth, taught by the first preachers of Christianity, and revived by our worthy reformers, which I hope every minister will adhere to, and God grant they may be handed down to the latest posterity. These things we ought deeply to impress on the minds of our hearers, if we would promote their eternal salvation. There are also some things we must caution them against in order to this ; as,

*First.* Against entertaining prejudices against religion ; that serious religion would be a damp to all their joys, an unreasonable restraint upon their liberty and a hindrance to all their profits and advantages in the world, filling them with sorrow and sadness, putting an intolerable yoke upon their necks, and reducing them to want, if not beggary. We must shew them that these are unreasonable prejudices ; that religion forbids them no pleasure but what has a

deadly sting in it, and tends to pain, yea, everlasting torment; that religion affords the truest and most lasting joy, and pleasures most refined and suited to the nature of the soul. "Wisdom's ways," says the wise man, are "ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." We must shew that religion delivers from the vilest slavery, and restores to the truest liberty, for till the Son makes us free from the tyrannous power of Satan and sin, we are never free indeed; that God's commands are not grievous, but on the contrary, Christ's "yoke is easy, his burden light;" that religion tends to our real profit and greatest advantage, in its own nature, and the wise providence of God, "having the promise of the life that now is, and that which is to come."

*Secondly.* Against carnal security in an unconverted and impenitent state. Alas, how many of our hearers are sleeping soundly on the very brink of destruction, though there be nothing betwixt them and eternal ruin, but the brittle thread of life; yet how secure are they. They are crying "peace, peace," to themselves, while destruction is at hand. Out of compassion to their perishing souls, we must study to awaken them and persuade them to flee from the wrath to come.

*Thirdly.* Against delaying their repentance. How many who purposed to repent are this day in the place of endless misery! They designed to repent some time or other, but put it off from time to time. Thus it was with Augustine, as he tells us in his confession. When God was calling him to repent, when he could not refuse the reasonableness of the call, yet he put off and delayed complying with it, *modo, ecce*

*modo, sine paululum, just now, just now, let me alone a little.* But as he tells us, *sed modo, et modo, non habebat modum, et sine paululum in longum ibat,* his *just now, just now* was never like to have an end, and his *let me alone a little,* was like to continue for a long time. Thus it is with many, till at last death snatches them away, and they lose the opportunity for ever. O then, let us by all the powerful motives we can, exhort men to set about repentance without delay; to-day to hearken to God's gracious call, and not harden their hearts against him. Above all things let us caution them against trusting to a death-bed repentance. I will not say any thing against the validity of a death-bed repentance, and how far it may be accepted of God. I doubt not but even then, God can make men monuments of the power of his sovereign grace, and the riches of his infinite mercy. But we must by all means shew the people committed to our care, what a desperate risk they run who put off their repentance till a dying hour; how extremely hazardous it is, seeing repentance then is rarely sincere, and can hardly be comfortable. Therefore let us earnestly exhort our hearers, as Rabbi Eliezer did his scholars, to repent the day before they die; who being asked by them if a man knew the day of his death, answered, "therefore let a man repent every day, because he knows not what day he shall die." So let us exhort the people to repent before death, seeing every day may be their last, and no man can tell what a day may bring forth.

*Fourthly.* Let us caution them against trusting to their own works, as deserving justification and salva-

tion; against trusting to an outward profession, without the inward power of godliness, and the outward fruit of it, holiness in all manner of conversation; against trusting to a barren and ineffectual faith, and a presumptuous reliance on the merey of God, and the merits of Christ, while the heart is impenitent, and the life unreformed; against allowing themselves in any known sin, or the neglect of any known duty, particularly against those sins which are as it were peculiar to hypocritical, and pharisaical professors of religion—pride, conceit of themselves, despising others, saying, “stand by, I am holier than thou.” We must shew them that “if any man among them seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, that man’s religion is vain,” and he deceives his own soul. We must caution them against placing religion in lesser matters, that are far removed from the vitals of true religion, while they neglect the weightier matters; against a blind zeal, and a misinformed conscience, which many times hurry men on to actions inconsistent both with reason and religion; against the love of the world, and conformity to the vain and corrupt courses of it; in a word, against every thing that is contrary to, or inconsistent with the pure and undefiled religion of the holy Jesus, in its life and power.

I proceed now to the second thing belonging to this head, viz. the *manner* of teaching in order to promote this great end, the salvation of souls. And there are these three things I mention—the manner of our teaching must be *plain*, that our doctrine may be understood; *methodical*, that it may be remembered; *grave, warm, and affectionate*, that it may

make impressions on the hearts of those that hear us.

1. It must be *plain*, fitted to the capacities of the audience. As the matter of our teaching must not be obscure, intricate questions, but the plain truth of God, so the manner of teaching must be with the greatest plainness, so that we may condescend to the capacities of the meanest of our hearers.

We must avoid all abstract reasoning, which cannot well be understood even by few, but is entirely lost on the generality. We must abstain from strange terms, and great swelling words of vanity. Plainness and simplicity of style ought to run through all our discourses, else we but teach men to be ignorant, and instruct them how to know nothing, for it is impossible men can ever profit by what they do not understand. For this manner of teaching, we have the authority of one of the best of preachers next to our blessed Saviour, the apostle Paul, who, though he was of all the apostles the most learned, and though he spoke with more tongues than any of them, yet declares, that in the church he had rather speak five words with his understanding, that so he might teach others, than a thousand words in an unknown tongue; for he knew, that the design of preaching was not to amuse people with sounds, but to inform their judgments, and awaken their consciences, and reform their hearts and lives. And I am persuaded there is not one minister of the gospel, who is serious and faithful, who has the honour of Christ and the saving of souls at heart, but will be entirely of the apostle's mind. A plain Scripture still is the most becoming the pulpit, nor do the truths of God ever appear in a better

dress, than when delivered in words, not such as man's wisdom teaches, but in which the Holy Ghost has delivered them to us. A florid style may please upon the stage, and divert an audience, but does not at all become the pulpit.

2. Our teaching must be *distinct* and *methodical* that the people may remember it. Teaching that is not understood can never be the means of saving souls; so neither teaching that is not remembered, "by which also ye are saved," says St. Paul, "if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you."<sup>7</sup> Therefore as the people ought to give the more earnest heed to the things they hear, lest at any time they should let them slip, or run out like a leaking vessel, so we ought to use all proper means to rivet our doctrine in their minds. One way to answer this end, is to divide our discourses into distinct and proper heads. Without such proper holds and stages, people will be at a vast loss to remember what is taught; therefore loose and general harangues, or in a concealed method, are by no means fit for a popular audience, or capable of retention by the greatest part of our hearers. Such soft, easy, and gentle discourses, that flow smoothly without being divided into distinct heads, may please and divert people for the time; but they go in at one ear, and out at the other, and it is almost impossible that any thing of them should be remembered. Perhaps some few of better capacity may perceive the connection, and discern the thread of the discourse, though finely spun, but all is lost on the generality. To those

who have most need of instruction, and perhaps desire most to be instructed, it is all amusement ; little they can understand, and less they can remember.

3. As our teaching must be plain that it may be understood, distinct and methodical that it may be remembered, so it ought to be *grave, warm, and affectionate*, that it may make an impression on the hearts of those that hear us. If we consider the temper of our hearers, or the errand we come upon, we shall clearly perceive, not only the decency and fitness but the necessity of this. A great many of our hearers are labouring under a natural and contracted hardness and insensibility, so that it is not easy to make the least impression upon them ; or if at any time some small impression be made, as was on Felix by the preaching of Paul, they have a woful and perverse elasticity, as I may call it, in their temper, so that the impression quickly wears off, and they return to their former stupidity. Therefore we ought to study, by our grave, warm, and affectionate way of preaching, to make the impression as deep and as lasting as we can.

The errand we come upon is of the last moment. It is no small matter to stand in the face of a congregation, and there deliver from the living God, in the name of our Redeemer, a message of salvation, or condemnation, to perishing sinners. May such persons be treated with, and such a message delivered in a cold and indifferent manner? Do not both call for warmth and zeal? It is not enough that we inform the judgments, and enlighten the heads of our hearers ; we must study to awaken their consciences, move their affections, and bias their wills. Our teaching,

therefore, especially in the application, should be with such an affectionate pathos, as may show that it comes from the heart of the speaker; that he speaks because he believes, and so may tend to reach the hearts of his hearers. It is recorded of one excellent minister, that he never went into the pulpit, but he raised in his audience what affections he pleased. Of this way of preaching we have many examples in Scripture. I only mention one of St. Paul, 2 Cor. 5. After he had laid down the doctrine in verses 18, 19, when he comes to application in ver. 20, 21, with what warmth of affection does he deliver it; with what strength of motive does he enforce it;—"now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we may be made the righteousness of God in him." When I speak of warmth of affection in teaching, I do not mean noise and violence of pronounciation, but such as is calm and sedate. Our discourses must not come from us like a violent torrent, that carries down all before it, but like a thick gentle shower that sinks into the earth and softens it.

I proceed now to the second way in which ministers may promote the salvation of souls, namely, by their *practice*. Can the people believe what we speak, or be influenced by our preaching, if our practice be contradictory to it? The apostle James says, "be ye doers of the word and not hearers only;" so if we would be instruments in promoting the salvation of souls, let us be practisers of the word, and not

preachers only; let us take heed that our example does not give the lie to our doctrine, else we lay stumbling blocks before the people, and instead of promoting their salvation, harden them in their sins, and may prove the occasion of their eternal ruin. A bishop must be blameless, free from those vices he reproves in others and tells them the danger of. Can the people believe us when we tell them the wages of sin is death, and that a chain of miseries both in this life and that to come, will be the certain consequence of their continuing impenitently in sin, while they see us continuing in those very vices for which we tell them the wrath of God comes on the children of disobedience? If then we would convince the people of the evil nature and bitter fruits of sin, let us forsake the practice of it ourselves. Not that ministers can be free from failings; they are not angels but men, exposed to the same temptations, and of like passions with others, but they ought to watch the more, and never allow themselves in the habitual and deliberate practice of any known vice; yea, they ought to abstain "from all appearance of evil." This will capacitate them to be reprovers of others, and shew that they are in earnest when they do so. And as a bishop must be blameless, so he must be a pattern of good works, an example to the flock, a pattern of Christian virtue, that so he may recommend the practice of religion by his example as well as his doctrine. Therefore if we would promote the salvation of souls, let us be examples to the people in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in purity; let us convince them by our holy lives, and the practice of every Christian grace,

that religion is a thing to be chosen, and of absolute necessity to happiness. We must not be like the Pharisees, that bound heavy burdens on other men's shoulders, but would not touch them themselves; we must take up the same yoke of Christ that we exhort them to take up, and thus convince them that we press no duties upon them but what God has made necessary by his express command, and easy by the aids of his grace. We must not only point out holiness to them, as the way to happiness, but we must go before them in the path, that we may be able to speak to them as the apostle did, "be ye followers of us, even as we also are of Christ;" we must be able to say, "what ye have seen in us do," and appeal to them as St. Paul did to the Thessalonians,<sup>8</sup> "ye were witnesses and God also, how holily and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe."

I come now to the third way in which ministers may promote the salvation of souls, (*viz.*) *by their prayers*. Without this all our other pains may prove to no purpose: we may labour in vain, and spend our strength for nought, for the success of all our labour depends upon the influence of divine grace. Without this all our preaching, all our practising, will be but as water spilt on the ground. Except the Lord build the house, the builders are in vain. Paul may plant, Apollos may water, God alone can give the increase. Now the divine grace is only to be obtained by prayer. God has indeed promised

<sup>8</sup> 1 Thes. xx, 10.

his Holy Spirit, but it is to them that ask it. He gives grace freely, but it is to them that seek it. We must therefore be humble supplicants at the throne of grace in behalf of our people, that God would send down his Holy Spirit to accompany the means of grace, and render them effectual for the salvation of their souls; that when we sow the good seed of his word, he would water it by the influences of his Spirit, that it may take deep root in the hearts of our hearers, and bring forth fruit abundantly in their lives, to the praise and glory of his grace.

III. I now proceed to the third thing proposed, (viz.) to offer some considerations why the salvation of souls ought to be the chief aim and desire, the earnest prayer and endeavour of the ministers of the gospel. And the *first* consideration I offer is the value and worth of the soul. I may say of it as Job says of wisdom, "it cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire. The gold and the crystal cannot equal it, and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of fine gold. No mention shall be made of coral, or of pearls, for the price of the soul is above rubies. The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold." Man is the most excellent part of the creation, the soul the most excellent part of man. Its excellency does appear *first* in its original; it is of a divine descent. The body however curiously wrought is of the earth, it was formed out of the dust, but the soul is the im-

mediate production of the Father of Spirits. When God had formed man's body out of the dust, he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.

*Secondly.* In its spiritual nature. The body as it is of the earth, so in its nature it is earthly, gross and compounded, but the soul is of a pure, simple, and uncompounded nature.

*Thirdly.* In its immortal duration. As the body is of the earth, earthy, so it must resolve into earth again, and be crumbled into its first principles of corruption in a little time; but the soul has no principles of corruption in it. It dies not with the body, but is of immortal and everlasting duration—"the dust returns to dust as it was, but the spirit unto God who gave it."

*Fourthly.* In the noble faculties and admirable powers wherewith it is endowed. How noble a power is that of understanding. It receives and forms ideas, compares one with another, observes their agreement, or disagreement. It can reason, infer, reflect, carry on a chain of thoughts with a clear connection, and lay up a vast stock and treasure of knowledge. It can discern between truth and falsehood, good and evil, and direct the will in its choice. The will is another faculty of the soul, the principle of freedom, without which we should be incapable of virtue or reward. It is like a queen sitting on her throne, and swaying the sceptre of liberty in her hands, with all the affections waiting and attending upon her. It can chuse or refuse, and by a sort of sovereign empire check and control the most violent and impetuous

inclinations of the sensitive appetite. The memory is the storehouse of knowledge, where the soul lays up its stock. The conscience a self reflecting principle, whereby the soul can judge its own actions, accuse or excuse, acquit or condemn itself according as it has done good or evil.

*Fifthly.* Let us now view the soul in its actings. How quick and nimble, how vigorous and indefatigable, how vast and comprehensive are its actings. It can penetrate into the secrets of nature, and reach where the vulture's eye hath not seen. It can survey the whole system of created beings, yea, ascend above them and contemplate Him who is being himself, and the glorious author of all being.

*Sixthly.* If we consider the soul in its capacities, how incomparably excellent does it appear! The body lives and moves in the lower region of the senses that are common to brutes, yea, the worms that crawl on the earth, but the soul is capable of conformity to God, and communion with him in grace and glory.

*Lastly.* Let us view the soul in its comparative excellency. The world with all its pleasures, profits, and grandeur, how big does it look in the eyes of carnal men, but when weighed in the balance with the soul, it will appear lighter than vanity. Our Saviour who well knew the worth of souls, compares them together, and declares that the gain of the whole world could not compensate the loss of the soul—"what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" He thus intimates that supposing the case, which never has been or can

be, that a man should gain the whole world at the rate of losing his soul, instead of being a gainer, he would lose by the bargain. Seeing then that the soul is so inestimably precious, its worth and excellence so vastly great, how ought this to excite our most earnest desires, and engage us to use our utmost endeavours, to prevent its eternal ruin and promote its eternal salvation.

*A second* consideration, why the saving of souls ought to be the chief aim and the earnest endeavour of the ministers of the gospel, is that the salvation of souls is a thing well pleasing to God. It was the subject of his counsels of grace from eternity; there was a purpose of grace before the world began. It is the end of his dispensations of grace in time; he is long suffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance; he hath sworn that he hath no pleasure in the destruction of sinners but would rather they should turn and live. He calls and invites to repentance; he is ready to receive penitents upon their return, to shew merey to them, and abundantly pardon them. Our blessed Saviour spoke three several parables recorded Luke xv, and the scope of all the three, is to shew how acceptable and well pleasing to God the repentance and salvation of sinners is. There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth; the great God himself rejoiceth therein, as it tends to advance the glory of his rich mercy and almighty grace, and promote the happiness of his reasonable creatures. Now seeing the salvation of souls is so acceptable and well pleasing to God our Master, ought it not to engage the most earnest desires and

diligent endeavours of those who profess to be his servants ?

*Thirdly.* This is the great end for which Christ came into the world, and all he did and suffered while in it. He came to call sinners to repentance, to seek and save that which was lost. He came not into the world “to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.”

“This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ came to save sinners.” For this end he came down from heaven, tabernacled among men, and clothed himself with rags of our humanity, and was made in likeness of sinful flesh. For this end he made himself of no reputation, took on him the form of a servant, humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. For this end, though he was Lord of glory, he lived a mean and miserable life, and submitted to a shameful, painful, and an accursed death. If we have any love to Christ, let us testify it by studying to promote the great design of his incarnation, humiliation and death. He says to Peter, “lovest thou me ;” and as a testimony of his love to him, he bids him feed his sheep. What a rate did Christ value souls at ? He thought them worth his labour and sufferings ; and shall not we think them worth our labour and care.

*Fourthly.* Let us consider how unweariedly active all the enemies of souls are to ruin and destroy them. Their adversary, the devil, is still going about, either as a roaring lion, seeking to devour them, or as a cunning serpent to deceive them. The world with all its allurements, is ever ready to bewitch them, and the flesh

that home-born enemy, to betray them, all conspiring to hinder and defeat their salvation, and promote their everlasting destruction. Shall ministers of the gospel then be unconcerned, slothful, and negligent? Ought they not to use their utmost unwearied endeavours to prevent their ruin, and promote their everlasting happiness.

*Fifthly.* This is the great end and design of the gospel ministry. For this end Christ the Saviour of souls, when he ascended up on high, settled such an order of men in the church for the conversion of sinners, for the edification of saints, for the perfecting of the saints in the work of the ministry, for the edifying the body of Christ by adding new members to it, and promoting the spiritual growth of those who are already united. For this end is the word of reconciliation committed unto them, that as ambassadors for Christ they might beseech men to be reconciled to God. Now if this be the great end of our office, ought we not to pursue it with the greatest concern and diligence?

*Sixthly.* Let us consider the relation we stand in to souls, and the account we must make to God for them. We watch for souls as those that must give an account. We are watchmen for souls. As God says to Ezekiel, so he says to every minister of the gospel, "I have made thee a watchman." Now it is the watchman's duty, to be solicitously concerned for the preservation of that which is committed to his charge, to foresee any danger it may be exposed to, to give warning, and use all proper means to ward off and prevent the evil threatened. So ministers of the gos-

pel ought to be solicitous about the souls committed to their charge, observe the danger they are exposed to, and give them fair warning. Therefore they should not be negligent, slothful, and unconcerned, but as Isidore of Pelusium says, they should be all eye, seeing every thing, neglecting nothing that respects the hurt of souls; and the rather, that they must give an account to God for them, and of what is become of the souls committed to their trust, whether any have perished eternally through their default, or whether any have been converted and built up in the most holy faith by their ministry. If ministers be negligent and give not warning, God will require the blood of souls at their hands; if they give faithful warning, though the people perish, yet the ministers have delivered their own souls.

*Seventhly*, and I add no more, to excite us to a serious concern and zealous endeavour for the salvation of souls, let us consider the reward of it. The work is glorious to save a soul from death; the reward no less glorious. Such ministers, when Christ the great Shepherd of the sheep shall appear, shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Such as turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.

IV. I come now to make some short application,

And *first*. If the saving of souls ought to be the chief aim and desire, the earnest prayer and endeavour of the ministers of the gospel, then we may remember our faults this day. Surely it becomes us whom God has honoured to be his ambassadors, to preach to perishing sinners the unsearchable riches of

Christ, to beseech them in his stead to be reconciled to God, seriously to lay it to heart, and be deeply humbled in the sight of God for our manifold shortcomings in this matter, that we have not had the saving of souls so much on our hearts, and be deeply humbled for our not performing to the utmost of our power the charge laid upon us. How oft has self mixed with our performances! Have we never preached rather to please our people and gain applause from them, and a following after ourselves, than to profit them, and promote the salvation of their souls? Have we never vented our passions and endeavoured to stir their passions, in matters that were far from having a tendency to promote their spiritual and eternal interests? Have we walked so unblameably and exemplarily before them as we ought? Has it been our care to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, that we might recommend it to them, not only by our preaching but also by our practice, and convince them of the necessity of a holy life, not only by what we say, but also by what we do? Have our hearts been deeply affected with the miserable state of souls committed to our care? Have we been earnestly and fervently wrestling at the throne of grace for a blessing on our labours; that God would come in a day of his power, and by the powerful influences of his grace, awaken secure sinners, convince and convert the obstinate, and build up saints in holiness and comfort, through faith unto salvation? Surely it becomes us to be deeply humbled in the sight of God on account of our manifold failings; it becomes us to lay our mouths in the dust, and cry out guilty before

him; it becomes us to deprecate his displeasure, and cry, enter not into judgment with thy servants.

*Secondly.* If we have sincerely desired and endeavoured the saving souls, so far as we have, let us take comfort in it, though our success has not been answerable to our wishes and endeavours, and though we may have but too good reason to make complaint with the prophet Isaiah, “who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed.” Though Israel be not gathered, our people be not converted, but fail of the grace of God we have pressed upon them; though with sore hearts we may say, we have laboured in vain, and spent our strength for nought, yet our judgment is with the Lord, and our work and reward with our God. He will not judge us according to our success, but according to the sincerity of our aims, and our diligence in our work.

*Lastly.* Let us all be exhorted to make the salvation of souls our chief aim, and sincere endeavour. Let it be our heart's desire and prayer to God for our people, that they may be saved. Let us not study to gratify their humours, but to save their souls. Let us please them for their good to edification. And that thus we may do, let us endeavour to have upon our spirits a deep sense of the worth of our souls, and of the inestimable price that Christ paid for them; a tender compassion for perishing souls, and a just concern for the salvation of our own; for he that is not concerned for the salvation of his own soul, will never be duly concerned for the souls of others. Let us study to have our hearts inflamed with love to God, love to Christ, and love to precious souls; to have a sense of

the awful account we are to make to God for the souls committed to our charge. Under the powerful influence of these principles, let us set about our work in a dependance on divine assistance; let us travail in birth till Christ be formed in our souls; let us study to promote their spiritual growth in all the virtues of the Christian life, till they finish their course with joy, and receive the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls. Thus we shall be a blessing to the people and they a comfort to us, yea, a crown of rejoicing in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming. And that thus it may be, may God of his infinite mercy grant for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

THE END.

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