



SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE

OF

SANCTIFICATION.



THE
SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE
OF
SANCTIFICATION;

BEING
A CRITICAL EXPLICATION AND PARAPHRASE
OF THE
SIXTH AND SEVENTH CHAPTERS OF THE EPISTLE TO
THE ROMANS, AND THE FOUR FIRST VERSES OF
THE EIGHTH CHAPTER:

WITH AN APPENDIX,
WHEREIN THE APOSTLE'S DOCTRINE, PRINCIPLES, AND REASONING,
ARE APPLIED TO THE PURPOSES OF HOLY PRACTICE, AND
OF EVANGELICAL PREACHING.

✓
BY THE REV. JAMES FRASER,

OF PITCALZIAN, ALNESS, IN ROSS-SHIRE. A. D. 1769.

ABRIDGED.

LONDON:
RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY,
Instituted 1799.

SOLD AT THE DEPOSITORY, 56, PATERNOSTER ROW;
AND BY THE BOOKSELLERS.

MDCCCXXXIV.

CONTENTS.

ROMANS CHAPTER VI.

VERSE	PAGE
1. What shall we say then ? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound ?	1
2. God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein ?	4
3. Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death ?	9
4. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death ; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life	12
5. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection	18
6. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin	20
7. For he that is dead is freed from sin	28
8. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him	32
9. Knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more ; death hath no more dominion over him	34
10. For in that he died, he died unto sin once : but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God	34
11. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord	38
12. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof	43
13. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin ; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God	48
14. For sin shall not have dominion over you : for ye are not under the law, but under grace	51
15. What then ? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace ? God forbid	56

VERSE	PAGE
16. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?	57
17. But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin: but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.	62
18. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness	65
19. I speak after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness	65
20. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness	66
21. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death	67
22. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness; and the end, everlasting life	68
23. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord	70
INTRODUCTION TO THE EXPLICATION OF ROMANS VII.	73

CHAPTER VII.

1. Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?	92
2, 3. For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband, so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of the husband. So then, if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man'.	93
4. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God	95
5. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members, to bring forth fruit unto death	110
6. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter	118
7. What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, 'Thou shalt not covet'.	125

VERSE

PAGE

8. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law, sin was dead	109
9. For I was alive without the law once : but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died	132
AN ESSAY CONCERNING THE PROMISE AND HOPE OF SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS, AND OF ETERNAL LIFE, UNDER THE OLD TESTAMENT. 139	
10. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death	163
11. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.	165
12. Wherefore the law is holy ; and the commandment holy, and just, and good	168
13. Was then that which is good made death unto me ? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good ; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful	168

A DISSERTATION

Concerning the general scope and purpose of the latter part of chap. vii. 14—25, in order to determine whether it represents the case of a regenerate or unregenerate person ; the case of a person under the law, or of one under grace ; wherein the particular expressions of that context are explained.

SECT. I. Containing general considerations tending to explain the scope and purpose of this context	173
II. That nothing represented in this context, ver. 14—25, is inconsistent with a state of grace	185
III. Showing that this context contains a great deal that is inconsistent with an unregenerate state	195
IV. The same subject continued, and ver. 25. explained	209
V. Marking out some of the practical uses to be made of this context, according to the foregoing interpretation ; together with the paraphrase of the several verses 14—25	219

VERSE

14. For we know that the law is spiritual ; but I am carnal, sold under sin	226
15. For that which I do, I allow not ; for what I would, that do I not ; but what I hate, that do I	227
16. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good	227
17. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me	228
18. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing ; for to will is present with me ; but how to perform that which is good I find not.	228

VERSE	PAGE
19. For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do	229
20. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me	229
21. I find then a law, that, when I would ^d do good, evil is present with me	229
22. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man	230
23. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members	230
24. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?	231
25. I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin	231

CHAPTER VIII.

1. There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit	232
2. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death	239
3. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh	247
—God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh—	250
—and for sin—	251
—condemned sin—	253
—in the flesh	255
4. That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit	260

APPENDIX.

Wherein the apostle's doctrine, principles, and reasoning, are applied to the purposes of holy practice, and of evangelical preaching.

SECT. 1. Containing a recapitulation of the apostle's doctrine and principles in the context before explained	268
11. Showing the advantage with regard to holiness, that ariseth from persons being under grace	273
111. Containing several directions, which the doctrine of the context before explained affords to the souls of sinners, who are seriously concerned about their most important interests; with the explication and solution of divers questions respecting the conversion of sinners	298
IV. Concerning true evangelical preaching	333

EXPLICATION AND PARAPHRASE

OF

ROMANS VI.

TEXT.

VER. 1. *What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?*

EXPLICATION.

THE first clause, which is in form of a question, is according to the apostle's usual style, when he is to introduce an objection to his doctrine, or a question implying an objection. So chap. iii. 5. vii. 7. ix. 14.

The objection in this place appears to take its occasion from what the apostle had said two verses before this; namely, chap. v. 20. *The entering of the law*, there mentioned, is certainly meant of the solemn promulgation of it to Israel at Sinai. Some consideration of chap. v. 20. from which occasion is taken for the objection, will tend to make the matter clear. There it is said, *The law entered, that the offence might abound.* To say, that the design of giving the law at Sinai to the Israelites, was to increase their sin, or the aggravations of it, cannot be easily received. For though the consequence might be the actual abounding of sin, and of its aggravations, on the

part of the Israelites, through their corruption and perverseness; yet it cannot be admitted, that this was the design of giving them the law. Therefore another interpretation of the words must be looked for.

In order to this, let it be considered, that often in scripture things are said to be, when the meaning is, that they appear, or are proved to be. So John xv. 8. Christ exhorts his disciples to bring forth much fruit, by this argument, *So shall ye be my disciples*; that is, So shall ye appear or prove yourselves to be my disciples. For the true order of things is, that men must be Christ's disciples, before they can bring forth good and acceptable fruit; not that they first bring forth good fruit, and thereby become his disciples. So 2 Cor. xii. 9. *For my strength is made perfect in weakness*; that is, the Lord's strength appears, is proved to be perfect, by the weakness of his servants, and the effectual support he gives them. So James ii. 22. *By works was faith made perfect*; that is, By works did faith appear, and was proved to be perfect—to be sincere; as is in scripture a very common sense of the word *perfect*. Thus, I doubt not, is to be interpreted, Rev. xxii. 14. *Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life*; that is, may appear to have right; that they are the persons who have right, as sons and heirs, Rom. viii. 17. In this way, the sense of Rom. v. 20. comes out thus—The law entered, that the abounding of sin might appear by its light.

The case then plainly is, that the apostle here suggests, in way of question, an objection, which he was aware some might make, perhaps did make,

against his doctrine of men's being justified and pardoned by the abounding of grace through Jesus Christ; and not by the works of men's own righteousness: as if this doctrine was unfavourable to holiness, and encouraged men to continue in sin. It is not the apostle's way to proceed in a logical or systematic method; but he takes proper occasion commonly to make an easy transition from one subject to another. So here, by suggesting an objection again his own doctrine of justification, as if it were unfavourable to holiness, he takes occasion to pass to that subject of holiness, and sanctification; and he answers, explains, and argues in such manner, as to prove, that there can indeed be no true sanctification of a sinner, but by means, and in consequence of grace abounding in justification by faith, and not by works.

I must here likewise observe Dr. Whitby's annotation on this verse. "Note here," saith he, "that if the faith, to which St. Paul in this epistle doth ascribe justification, did not only oblige us to, but even comprehend evangelical and constant obedience, there could be no colour for this objection. That therefore must be a mistake."

The sense of this first verse may be given in the following

PARAPHRASE. How shall we judge of this doctrine, that justification is wholly and merely by grace; even by grace superabounding where sin hath abounded; and that a sinner is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law? It seems indeed to be well calculated for those who find themselves destitute of righteousness; for the self-condemned and humbled sinners, it affords great consolation on that side. But is it not, at the

same time, very comfortable and encouraging to the flesh ; and unfavourable to holiness and good works ? For if it is the glory of Divine grace, that where sin hath abounded, it doth much more abound ; is it not a just inference, that we should continue in sin, that grace may be thus glorified ? For, however contrary the practice of sin may be to the Divine holiness, yet, as a special design of God, in the salvation of sinners, is to magnify his grace, should not we contribute to advance the glory of superabounding grace, by continuing in sin ; and so give occasion to grace to display its utmost richness and glory ?

2. *God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein ?*

EXPLICATION. The Greek words, *μη γενοιτο*, that make the first clause, do represent such an aversation, and abhorrence of an event or practice, as is commonly expressed in our language by saying, *God forbid*, or, *Far be it from us*.

Here we have occasion to observe, if the apostle had meant the faith, to which he ascribes justification, as including evangelical obedience and good works ; or, that its virtue and effect in justifying did arise from its certain connexion with subsequent holiness and good works ; he could not have missed to answer, and say to this purpose—You unhappily mistake my doctrine of justification by faith, and the true sense of my words ; the faith I mean includes good works, and its justifying virtue is from its connexion with holiness and good works, which necessarily flow from it, and which I include in my notion of faith. What absurdity, yea, what nonsense is it, to charge such a

doctrine of justification by faith with being unfavourable to holiness, or with favouring and encouraging sin ! This answer, if such was his notion of justifying faith, would be so much in point, so full, and withal so very obvious, that when he says nothing to that purpose, it gives us cause to be well satisfied, that his notion of justifying faith is not such as would afford that answer.

Another thing yet with regard to this point. According to the sentiments of those who hold, that faith justifies by virtue of its connexion with holiness and good works, it could not be truly said that a man is justified by faith. They generally hold, that the faith of the hypocrite, which is not attended with good works, is in itself of the same nature and kind with the faith of the true christian, who is fruitful in good works ; and that it is good works, and perseverance therein, that makes the distinction ; not the faith itself, which is of the same kind in both. So then the case stands thus : very many who have the same true faith, as to its own nature, that the sincere christian hath, yet not having good works, are not justified ; whereas, whoever hath good works, he is thereby justified. From this it is very plain, that it is not faith that justifies, according to these men's sentiments ; but a man's good works, which he connects with his faith.

But, for explaining our text, although he doth not answer to the objection, as the above-mentioned notion of faith would suggest ; yet he answers and suggests an argument against the practice of sin, arising from his doctrine, that is of the utmost force. Let us look into it.

It is of great consequence, not only for under-

standing the apostle's answer and argument here, but for understanding his whole discourse in this chapter, that we discover and fix the true meaning of that expression—*dead to sin*.

Elsner, a learned writer, shows, as Dr. Doddridge reports, how frequently moral writers among the heathens speak of wise and good men, as dead to sensualities, and animal pleasures. But Wolfius, who reports likewise these observations of Elsner's, says, that the learned writer himself adds, whatever fine expression the heathen philosophers used on this subject, that we are not to expect to find with them what will come up to the apostle Paul's meaning. This is very right.

Others take in here the profession, serious purpose, and strict engagements of christians against sin. The truth is, it hath of a long time and generally been understood to be the apostle's meaning, by being *dead to sin*, to denote matter of duty, (as to abstain from, to resist, to mortify sin,) in which a christian ought to advance from one degree to another. Hence hath come into use that expression, "to die more and more unto sin." This sense is in itself good and right, and agreeable to scripture doctrine. But I am not satisfied that this manner of expressing that sense is agreeable to scripture style. I do not see that the scripture expresses mere duty, and the christian's progress in it, by "dying, and dying more and more unto sin." The scripture expression here is, *dead unto sin*; and ver. 11. *Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin*; and 1 Pet. ii. 24. *That we being dead to sins, &c.* I do not see, that to be *dead* can be a proper and right expression for mere matter of duty;

and if a man is actually dead, that doth not admit of degrees or progress. If he is once truly dead, he cannot be more and more dead.

It seems therefore more reasonable to think, that to be *dead to sin*, signifies an advantage, blessedness, and privilege of a true christian's state, rather than mere matter of duty. Upon this view, the meaning of the expression may, I think, be taken from what is said of death and the grave, Job iii. 19. *There—the servant is FREE from his master.* The poor slave (such were commonly the servants of these countries and times) is free from the yoke of the rigorous lord, under whose dominion he was. As the case continued to be the same, it needs not be wondered at, that the expression, in somewhat the proverbial way, should continue in language from the time of Job to the time of Paul. We shall likewise find a great deal in Paul's discourse here that directs us to understand the expression.

Upon the one hand, sin is represented as reigning, chap. v. 21. *Sin hath reigned unto death*; so grace reigns, as in that same verse. Doth then grace greatly abound, even where sin hath abounded? It is it that doth, by so abounding, put an end to the reign of sin; so that the abounding of grace can give no encouragement to continuing in sin. Thus the apostle brings a pertinent answer to the objection from that very passage, on which it is pretended to be founded. In ver. 14. and downwards, sin is mentioned as having dominion, such as a lord and master hath over his slaves, whom he employs according to his will, in all his service and drudgery. So christians are represented as having been *the servants* (that is, slaves) *of sin*.

Thus, ver. 17. *Ye were the servants of sin*—ver. 20. *When ye were the servants of sin*—.

Upon the other hand, christians being *made free from sin* is much in the apostle's view through this discourse. Yea, ver. 7, he seems himself to explain being *dead*, by being *made free from sin*. So also, ver. 18. *Being then made free from sin*—ver. 22. *But now being made free from sin*.—Yea, when the apostle comes towards the conclusion of his explications on this subject, he says, chap. viii. 2. *The law of the spirit of life—hath made me FREE from the law of sin and death*. All this gives sufficient cause to think, that the true believer's being *dead to sin*, is no other than the privilege and blessedness of his state ; namely, to be made free from the reign and dominion of sin. More particular explications respecting this subject we may look for in the apostle's subsequent discourse and reasoning. In the mean time, what a pointed and pertinent answer he makes here to the cavil and objection in ver. 1, we may see in the following

PARAPHRASE. 2. By no means : how shall we believers, who are made free from the reign and dominion of sin, (dead to it,) prove, by continuing to live in sin, that we are not made free from its dominion ; but are yet its slaves ? yea, can it so happen, as to the common, ordinary, and final course of the believer's practice, that being made free from the dominion of sin, he should, in practice, continue under its prevailing influence and power ? or, whatever we might be capable of, considering us as we are in ourselves, free agents, in whom there is considerable remainder of corruption, can it be supposed, that the grace

which, in the superabounding thereof, hath made us free from the reign of sin, hath not provided various and effectual means, consistent with our liberty, for preserving us from continuing in sin, and so (see ver. 14) coming again under its dominion? But though there is such real inconsistency in the case, that it cannot reasonably be supposed, yet if it shall be supposed but in imagination, that a believer should be made free from the dominion of sin, and yet, at the same time, should, by living ordinarily in the indulged practice of it, affront the grace that hath abounded towards him, and give dishonour to the precious ransom, by which he hath been redeemed and made free, will not the very imagination of it give horror to every sincere heart of a christian, to every reasonable and ingenuous mind?

3. *Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?*

EXPLICATION. As to the expression in the first clause, *baptized into Jesus Christ*, there is a similar expression, 1 Cor. x. 2. *Our fathers—were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea.* Though Moses is commonly considered as the law-giver; yet from the import of baptism, and the spiritual meat and drink mentioned, ver. 3, 4. it is plain, that Moses is set forth there as a minister of grace: and being *baptized unto Moses*, must mean chiefly, being baptized unto the faith of the Saviour, and the salvation to which Moses bare witness; and receiving the typical baptism, as a sort of seal of that grace.

But we are directed to conceive of Christ

differently, as to this matter, than of Moses. Christ sets forth himself as a *Vine*, John xv. 1. and his people, as being (not by nature, surely, but by ingraftment, and by grace) *branches* of that *Vine*. He is a *Head*, which hath its body; and each believer in particular is a member of that body. The apostle says, 1 Cor. xii. 13. *By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body*. By one Spirit, and by the faith which under his influence we exert, we are truly united to Christ; as by the external ordinance we are admitted into his visible body the church. To be one Spirit truly united to Christ, is not likely to be the case of every one who is externally baptized, as all the Roman christians probably were. This is, perhaps, the reason of that manner of expression, *As many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ*. Though the apostle commonly addresses the churches he writes to as true believers, yet there is frequently the hint of exceptions; nor can it be thought, that Simon the sorcerer, though externally baptized, was by this one Spirit truly united to Christ.

But so many as are so, and to whom this grace is sealed by baptism, they are *baptized into Christ's death*. This last clause of the verse comes next to be explained. It has been indeed explained by many, as meant of the professions and vows which christians come under at baptism, to die unto sin, and to mortify it, in conformity to the death of Christ, and the design of it. That adult persons at baptism came under such engagements, is not to be doubted. This is likely to be included in that *answer of a good conscience towards God*, mentioned in view to baptism, 1 Pet. iii. 21. But that cannot be the thing here intended,

as there is not the least mention or hint of baptismal vows and engagements; and that good reasons have been here given, why being *dead to sin* should be understood, not of matter of duty and practice, which is the proper subject of vows and engagements, but rather of the blessedness and privilege of the state of believers. It is said, ver. 10. that *Christ died unto sin*, and therefore believers are directed, ver. 11. to *reckon themselves to be dead indeed unto sin—through Jesus Christ*. It is said of Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 24. that *he bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness*. They who consider being *dead to sin* as matter of duty, do refer it to men's purposes, and to baptismal vows and engagements. But in these two texts, we see being *dead to sin* referred to the death of Christ, and immediately connected therewith. So when, in the text under consideration, christians are said to be *baptized into Christ's death*, we have cause to understand by it, that baptism doth apply, exhibit, and seal to them the benefits of Christ's death, and that it is a solemn rite, whereby believers are invested in a fellowship of interest in his death, and in the benefits and happy consequences of it: so that as he died to sin, dying in their stead; so by virtue thereof they are dead to sin; that is, made free from its reign and dominion. This the ordinance of baptism doth exhibit and seal to their faith.

Baptismal vows and engagements do greatly enforce the duty of forsaking, resisting, and mortifying sin. Baptism, according to its own nature, as here explained, doth afford strong argument and powerful excitement to that duty. But to

restrict the apostle's meaning here to these, hath this great inconvenience, that it tends to hide from christians the great consolation and encouragement to that duty, which is properly and directly meant; namely, that they are by the death of Christ made free from the reign and the dominion of sin, and that the same is ascertained and sealed to them by their baptism.

4. *Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

EXPLICATION. Christ being our Representative and Surety; when he died for our sins, it is as if we by our own death had expiated our sins; and as he is said to be *raised for our justification*, the case is, that the release of our Surety is virtually, and in effect, our release. When he was raised, we might be considered as having been raised from the dead. The apostle gives this view of the matter, when he says, Eph. ii. 4—6. *God—hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.* So he speaks when he is setting forth the application of the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection to believers.

Again, Phil. iii. 10. the apostle expresses his aim and desire thus—*That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.* As to these latter clauses, it is true that christians, in their sufferings in this life, have a fellowship of suffering with Christ, and

a conformity to his death; yet there is no good reason for restricting these clauses here, in Philip-
pians, where the context hath nothing concerning sufferings, to that meaning and view, more than there would be for restricting the power of Christ's resurrection, in the first clause, to the supports the apostle had under his tribulations, by virtue of the resurrection and life of Christ, of which he speaks, 2 Cor. iv. 10, 11, which I scarce think any would agree to. The desire and aim of the apostle here, (Phil. iii. 10.) seems to be this; as he had already known and experienced the power of Christ's resurrection, he earnestly desired and longed for the full fruit and effect of it, as in perfect and final justification, so in the perfection of holiness, and in eternal life. As he had already the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, and conformity to his death, in being by means thereof dead to sin, and made free from its reign and dominion; so he earnestly desires to attain the full effect of his death, in being not only free from the reign of sin, but also from all molestation and danger by it, in the perfection of holiness, when nothing of sin should remain in him.

In these places, (Eph. ii. and Phil. iii.) the apostle does not appear to have baptism at all in his view. He considers our fellowship of Christ's sufferings, and conformity to his death; our being quickened, and raised together with Christ, and sitting together with him in heavenly places, as matters of privilege, comfort, and hope, arising from our relation to Christ, and union with him. A true believer is united to Christ, and is dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God through Jesus Christ, (as here, Rom. vi. 11.) previously to

his baptism; or if he should never have the opportunity of being baptized. So that turning the matter of being *dead unto sin* on this point of baptismal vows and obligations, falls greatly short of the apostle's argument, and tends to obscure instead of giving light to it.

The part of baptism in this matter is, that the privilege, blessings, and comfort meant by the apostle, (and from which there arise the strongest obligations and encouragements to holy living,) are represented, further applied, sealed, and confirmed to the christian's faith by it. Thus, Col. ii. 12. *Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.* Here our being buried with him in baptism, (it is in view to the baptism of adult persons he speaks,) and our rising therein with him, are both ascribed to faith; not our rising with him only. Beza's note on the place seems to be a good one: "By faith, that is, by your laying hold on, (or apprehending,) through faith, that Divine power, by the efficiency of which you become conformed to the death and resurrection of Christ."

Let it be further observed, that in this text, Col. ii. 12, christians being buried, and rising with Christ in baptism, is not ascribed to baptismal engagements to die, or (as they speak) to die more and more unto sin, and to live unto righteousness; but to their faith, by which the ordinance is made effectual to its proper purpose, and by which christians perceive the comfortable matters, which it is designed to represent and seal to them.

The apostle's argument in this place I do not

take to be, that christians are by their baptismal engagements obliged to that duty, or course of duty, which some understand by dying to sin; though undoubtedly baptism, and the grace it exhibits, doth fix such obligation to duty on them. But his argument is plainly to this purpose; that the baptism of christians doth, in way of figure, signify the blessings thereby represented, and is a means whereby they are applied to them; and is, at the same time, a comfortable, solemn, divine ratification of their interest in the fruits of Christ's death and resurrection; this particularly, of being dead to sin, made free from its reign and dominion, and so brought unto a capacity of holy living. Christians having in their baptism this comfort, with respect to the dominion of sin, and a capacity of holy living, with the strongest obligations thereto, and that by the grace which hath abounded towards them; how extremely absurd to suppose continuing in sin a consequence of that grace, or that it is at all consistent with it!

To look now more closely to the expression of this ver. 4, the first clause is, *Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death*. In the common course of things, a man's burial ascertains his death to beholders: they have no doubt of his being dead, when they see him buried. Thus the baptism of a christian represented in a very strong manner his being dead; for in it he appeared to be buried by his immersion under the water; which was anciently the most common way, at least as to adult persons, in that hot climate.

But there remains one difficulty in the apostle's manner of expression, *Buried—into death*. Now

death is previous to burial ; but by the form of the expression here, the baptismal burial seems to be previous to the death mentioned, and in order to it, a burial *unto* death. To understand this, let it be considered, that the adult believer, while yet unbaptized, was by faith truly united to Christ, and so *saved*, according to the general meaning of that word : and yet the apostle Peter ascribes to *baptism* his being *saved*, *The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us*, 1 Pet. iii. 21. Again, though when the christian did first truly believe in Christ, (under the influence of the Spirit of faith,) he was by his faith, and by that Spirit, united to Christ ; yet that union with him, and his body, is ascribed to baptism, *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body*, 1 Cor. xii. 13. So here in the text under consideration, the death meant is ascribed to baptism, as the effect of it, according to the form of the expression ; though the thing that appears to be really intended is, that the baptismal figurative burial represented, and sealed to the believer, for his greater establishment and comfort, his death, his being dead to sin. The sense may be taken briefly thus : In our baptism, as by a figure, we are buried with Christ, to ascertain and ratify to our faith, that by virtue of Christ's death we are dead unto sin.

Follows the latter part of the verse : *That like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory* (that is, by the glorious power and operation) *of the Father*. He doth, Col. ii. 12, mention our being risen with Christ in baptism. Here, after mentioning Christ's being raised from the dead, instead of adding, as there, our rising with

him, he mentions the effect of our so rising, in our practice of life, thus: *Even so we also should walk in newness of life.* So, to continuing in sin, as in the objection, ver. 1, which is expressive of the practice of sin; he, with great propriety, and very emphatically, opposes the practice of newness of life, as the proper and necessary consequence of the christian's fellowship in the death and resurrection of Christ, represented and sealed to him by baptism.

PARAPHRASE. 3. Dead, I say, unto sin. For you cannot but know concerning that baptism, by which we are externally admitted into the church, and to the participation of its privileges, and by which the new covenant, with all its grace and promises, is sealed to us; that to all those of us, to whom it is truly and effectually the seal of our ingraftment into Christ, and of our fellowship with him, (*κοινωνία*, 1 Cor. i. 9.) it doth particularly signify and seal, to our great comfort, that fellowship of his sufferings and death, by virtue of which, as he (ver. 10.) died unto sin, so we (ver. 11.) are dead unto sin.

4. Therefore (to put this matter out of question) as Christ's being actually buried, proved his being truly dead; so we have, in this divine ordinance, a baptismal figurative burial, which ascertains, demonstrates, and seals to our faith, our being truly dead unto sin, set free from its reign and dominion, by virtue of his death: and that in order to this further consolation and benefit, that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power and operation of the Father; even so we also (being by our fellowship with him in his resurrection, and by the power thereof, raised

together with him, which our baptism also represents and confirms to us, Col. ii. 12.) should be engaged, disposed, and enabled to a new manner of life, in the inward and outward practice of holiness and righteousness. How unreasonable then, how calumnious and absurd, to suggest as if the grace that had abounded towards us, with such design and effect, did indeed favour sin, or men's continuing it !

5. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.

EXPLICATION. It is generally agreed, that the apostle hath here in his eye the true christian's ingraftment into Christ, as a cion into a vine ; to which Christ compares himself, John xv. 1. I conceive the scope and meaning to be in general thus : If by our ingraftment into Christ, we have a conformity to his death, in being dead to sin, we shall also have a conformity and likeness to his resurrection.

But more particularly ; the apostle had mentioned, ver. 2, christians being dead to sin ; and ver. 3, that their baptism invested them in an interest in Christ's death, and in this special benefit thereby, to be dead to sin ; and, ver. 4, that their baptism ascertained this death to them by the baptismal immersion ; which was a kind of baptismal figurative burial. When he mentions here, ver. 5, christians being planted together in the likeness of Christ's death ; he but resumes what he had said in the three preceding verses, without any additional sense, though there is some variation of metaphorical expression and ideas. But having

added in the latter part of ver. 4. *That like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life*: this is what he had said nothing of before; and what he says here, ver. 5, is added to explain and confirm it, and to assert the connexion of these things; namely, that if by our ingraftment into Christ, our union and fellowship with him, we are dead to sin, and made free from its reign, so we shall certainly have the fellowship of his resurrection in newness of life. To be made free from sin, that is, that sin hath not dominion over us, is a negative proposition; it expresses nothing of itself concerning fruitfulness in holiness and good works. But the christian is not made free from the dominion of sin, in order only to be barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of Christ. If by means of his fellowship with Christ in his death, he is dead to sin, he, at the same time, by virtue of his fellowship with Christ, is risen together with Christ; his baptism represents to him the one as well as the other. There is, however, this difference: when the christian came into union with Christ, he from that time became free from the dominion of sin. Though it remains infest, and in several respects endanger the christian; yet it doth not reign, nor hath dominion. But as to conformity to the resurrection of Christ in the actual practice of newness of life, that is but begun. The progress in this life, and the perfection hereafter, of conformity to Christ's resurrection, is future; and that may be the reason why, in this latter part of the verse, the apostle uses the future tense, *we shall be*.

PARAPHRASE. 5. For if all we believers are

together ingrafted into Christ, and united to him, and so in a likeness to his death, and by virtue thereof, are dead unto sin, free from its dominion, we are not to conceive the matter merely under that negative notion. By no means: by virtue of our fellowship with Christ, we are risen together with him; and, as his resurrection gives us, through faith, the certain prospect of a resurrection to eternal life, when we shall be brought to a perfect likeness to his resurrection, in holiness, happiness, and glory; so on this side of that, we are, by the power of his resurrection, raised, and shall be more and more so, to a new, active, and fruitful life of holiness; by our continuance and progress in which, we are to reach a full conformity to his resurrection, in the perfection of our resurrection state.

6. *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*

EXPLICATION. The subject of inquiry in the first clause is, what is meant by the *old man*; and what by his being *crucified*.

What are we to understand by the *old man*? That certainly signifies the corruption of nature, the principle of sin, with all its various lusts, which possess and influence a man's faculties and powers; and that so far as it remains in the true christian, who is renewed by grace, and in whom is the new man; by virtue of and in comparison with which in him, and in him only, the former is the old man. In persons unregenerate this evil principle is not the old man; but continues young, in full

strength and vigour. It is the old man only in persons regenerate, in true christians.

The next inquiry on this first clause of the text, ver. 6, is, what it means, that the old man is *crucified*? The Greek word might be rendered, if the use of our language would admit the word, by *co-crucified*, without expressing what, or whom the conjunctive particle in the composition of the word hath respect to. The English doth for that, with good reason, supply *him*—*crucified with him*, Christ.

The apostle Paul says, Gal. ii. 20. *I am crucified with Christ*. But there is great difference between Paul's being crucified with Christ, and the old man's being crucified with him: they mean very different things. The crucifixion of the one, the old man, tends to his death and destruction; the crucifixion of the other, of Paul with Christ, imports his interest in Christ's crucifixion, and tends to the man's consolation and life.

Again, it is said, Gal. v. 24. *They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts*. But this seems to express the christian's doing his duty in mortifying sin with its lusts; opposing and repressing their motions. Whereas the old man's being crucified with Christ, seems to mean an effect and virtue of the cross of Christ, that is previous to the christian's practice in mortifying sin. Except we take the matter thus: The christian hath taken an effectual course to crucify the flesh by his believing in Christ; whereby the virtue of his cross reaches the flesh, the old man, to crucify him, with the affections and lusts; and whereby the christian himself is enabled to resist it effectually, and mortify it.

I think, however, that our text may be best explained by Col. ii. 15. *Having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.* Here, with principalities and powers, may justly be included, in the apostle's view and meaning, sin. So bishop Davenant on this place: "Therefore those spiritual princes and commanders being overcome, there is overcome whatever served them against man's salvation; the old Adam, death, hell, the world, and *our sins*." A little downwards, after citing divers scriptures, particularly 1 Cor. xv. 55—57, he adds, "You see, that death, the grave, the law, and *sin*, have been in the number of the enemies whom Christ hath overcome." So this eminent person. Surely when it is said, Gen. iii. 15, that the Seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent, there is meant not only Satan, but sin likewise; that with him it also should be deprived of its power and dominion, and be finally destroyed: as it is said, 1 John iii. 8. *For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.*

Now, what is the effect of Christ's cross against principalities and powers, and against sin? The apostle says to the Colossians, that he *spoiled* them; he deprived them of their armour wherein they trusted, as Luke xi. 22. Christ, by his expiatory sufferings and death, redeemed his people from the curse, brought them under grace, and procured for them the blessing of the Spirit, who creates in them the new man, and dwelling in them, supports the new man against the old man, and gives complete victory over him at last. It is said there (Col. ii. 14.) of the hand-writing

of ordinances that was against us, that Christ *nailed it to his cross*. So may the apostle's view as to devils and sin be understood—Christ *nailed them to his cross*; and so to the eye of faith made an open show of them. He himself victorious left the cross and grave, and left principalities and powers, and sin nailed fast to the cross, crucified, and hard bound, in order to final destruction. The virtue of his cross reaching in due time his people in their own persons, they are justified, delivered from the curse, brought under grace; and they are to consider the old man in them as crucified; in order to his death, and total extinction.

The true meaning of the *old man's* being *crucified with Christ* is as hath been said. At the same time, we may consider crucifixion as representing otherwise, as by a very just metaphor, the condition in which the *old man*, sin and the lusts thereof, do remain in the believer; not, as sometime, at full liberty, and in full force and prevalence, but, though alive, living in pain, checked, resisted, repressed, and mortified. His efforts, as of one in desperate condition, may be with considerable force, and too often with ill effect to the slothful, unwatchful christian. Yet at last, like what happened outwardly to the crucified thieves, this malefactor, the old man, will, in the end of the day, be slain by one blow of Almighty grace.

The worthy Dr. Doddridge says, in his paraphrase of this first clause: "The whole system of our former inclinations and dispositions—hath now, as it were, been crucified together with [Christ]; the remembrance and consideration of his cross co-operating in the most powerful manner, with all the other motives which the

gospel suggests, to destroy the former habits of sin, and to inspire us with an aversion to it." This is in itself a just thought, and of high importance in religion. Among the *arguments* and *motives* that can be suggested against sin, the *remembrance* and *consideration* of Christ's cross hath the most special virtue and efficacy. Yet this doth not come up to the full meaning of the old man's being crucified with Christ. For that I refer to what hath been here above said, on Col. ii. 15. The cross of Christ hath virtue against sin otherwise than merely as a motive.

Concerning the second clause of this sixth verse, *That the body of sin might be destroyed*, there come in like manner to be explained, 1. What is meant by *the body of sin*; 2. What by its being *destroyed*.

As to *the body of sin*, one learned writer hath paraphrased it thus: "The appetites of the body, which subject us to sin." By the first clause, the *old man*, is certainly meant sin, in all the extent of its power and influence in us; and the *body of sin* can be understood in no less extent of meaning. But have we sin no otherwise in us to be crucified and destroyed, than by the appetites of the body?

If we speak with strictness and propriety, all lusts, affections, passions, and appetites have their seat and root in the soul, in the spiritual substance; mere body is not capable of any of these, nor of moral good or evil. But as man is composed of soul and body, so united that the one powerfully influences the other, he hath propensities and appetites by the influence of the body, which receive excitement from it, and in the

gratification of which he hath pleasure by means of the body; as he hath at the same time propensities, affections, and appetites, such as a mere spirit might have that hath no connexion with body. In the one sort, man partakes with the brutes; in the other sort, with mere spirits, with angels. In man's corrupt, fallen state, he hath spiritual lusts, such as pride, hatred, malice, envy, deceit. In view to such sort of unholy lusts and passions, our Lord says to the Jews, *Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do: he was a murderer—and abode not in the truth*, John viii. 44.

If the apostle does in Gal. v. 19, 20, ascribe all sinful lustings and works to the *flesh*, he is far from thinking or meaning, that all sin hath its root or source in the body. For elsewhere (2 Cor. vii. 1.) he distinguishes between *filthiness of the flesh*, and *of the spirit*. It is true, indeed, that in man's embodied state, the influence of the body doth give a turn or bias even to these lusts and passions, that have their special root in the spirit or soul, towards things external and earthly. But if man's pride, selfishness, and ambition (for instance) are in this life turned towards things earthly or bodily, pertaining to this life; yet it were most unreasonable to say, that therefore these lusts have their source and root in the body. Let us consider how sin entered, as recorded, Gen. iii. If it be allowed, that, in our first parents' considering and desiring the forbidden fruit, as good for food and pleasant to the eyes, there was what some mean by appetite of the body, yet it is not easy to conceive how their considering and desiring it, in order to be wise, and as God,

knowing good and evil, can be ascribed to bodily appetite.

If sin hath its root in the body, it seems to be a natural consequence, that when the soul comes to be separated from the body, it should have no sin in it. Yet I scarcely think that any will say so. Can we not hold, that fallen angels have sinful lusts and propensities, without holding that they have bodies in which sin hath its root?

What then is meant by the *body of sin*? Plainly as the expression in the preceding clause, the *old man*, is figurative; so is this other, the *body of sin*; and doth not mean the human body, but that whole system of corrupt principles, propensities, lusts, and passions, which have, since the fall, possessed man's nature, and co-extend and are commensurate with all the human powers and faculties. Let us observe how bishop Davenant on Col. ii. 11, explains this expression, *the body of the sins of the flesh*: to this purpose: This inward circumcision abolisheth the whole body of sin, *the body of the sins of the flesh*; that is, the mass of vitiosity and sin which springs from the flesh; that is, from our original corruption, with which flesh the soul of every one is no less vested than with the natural flesh. This learned writer had more extensive views of sin in men, than to express it by appetites of the body. To say that the body is the chief seat and source of sin in men, and that sin in them hath its root in the body, as it is an error in divinity, it is a downright blunder in philosophy.

The remaining thing in this second clause to be explained is, the *destroying* the body of sin. It is true that the Greek word signifies sometimes, to

be *abolished* or *destroyed*. If we take it so here, the meaning must be, that the old man is crucified with this design, that sin may in due time be totally destroyed and extinguished in God's people. But at the same time it is true, that the word often signifies, to *render ineffectual* or *useless*; to deprive a thing of its substance, virtue, or force, to quite enfeeble it. For this sense are adduced Rom. iii. 31. iv. 14. 1 Cor. ii. 6. xiii. 8. xv. 24. Eph. ii. 15. 2 Tim. i. 10. There might be added, Luke xiii. 7. According to this sense of the word, the meaning is, that the present effect of the old man's being crucified is, that the body of sin hath not now its reigning power and force, but is enfeebled and enervated.

Then follows the third clause of this sixth verse, *That henceforth we should not serve sin*; that is, might not be the servants or slaves (*δουλεύειν*) of sin, now that it is enfeebled, and deprived of its reigning power and dominion; but might assert our liberty by resisting, repressing, and mortifying it.

PARAPHRASE. 6. I have said, that the consequence of Christ's rising from the dead is, that we, in conformity thereto, should walk in newness of life; in which we bear the begun likeness of his resurrection. But this is not to be so understood, as if this newness of life were already perfect. Alas, no! sin remaineth in us; we have still *our* old man, and this is very nearly connected with us. It is we, our own very selves, in an unholy and vile form. All the sin he doth is my sin, which the holy and righteous law of God would charge against me, though grace allows me to distinguish, and say, It is not I, but sin that dwelleth in me;

while I do truly distinguish myself from this old man, this evil principle, by habitually resisting it, having sorrow and regret for it. This evil principle, which, like another man, is superinduced upon me, pervades all the faculties, powers, and affections of my soul ; and so hath the dimensions, form, and members of a man. But happily this man is become old ; the new man created in us hath made this become the old man ; and (let me here allude to Heb. viii. 13.) that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away, and to be quite extinguished. Yea, we know by our faith, that this old man, by a power superior to that of the new man in us, even by the power and virtue of the cross of Christ, is adjudged to death, crucified, and bound fast, as to Christ's cross ; so that as surely as the cross of Christ exists in virtue and efficacy, so surely shall he die ; and the present effect of this his crucifixion is, that this old man, the body of sin, is deprived of its force and reigning power, is enervated and enfeebled ; so that from henceforth we are not in servitude to it, or under its dominion, though it remaineth in us.

7. *For he that is dead is freed from sin.*

EXPLICATION. It is to be observed, that the word here rendered, *is freed*, (or made free,) should, according to its common use and meaning, be rendered, *is justified* ; and so the margin of our books have it. I see that the apostle's using the word *justified* (the Greek word that so means) has given some difficulty to the learned ; and they have accounted for it somewhat differently, though they seem to be generally agreed, that the scope

of the place directs us to understand it of being made free from sin, as we translate it.

The apostle having mentioned, ver. 2, the christian's being dead to sin, he comes now to speak in a more particular way, to distinguish and explain, in order to show more clearly how by the death of Christ, and the believer's fellowship and interest therein, he becomes dead to sin, and is made free from its dominion.

As to the reign and dominion of sin, there is to be made this distinction, which we shall find the apostle hath in his view in the following discourse. There is, 1. The reign of sin as to penal consequence, which hath respect to the penal sanction of the law, and is derived from it, as it denounces death to the transgressor. This is the reign of sin mentioned, chap. v. 21, *sin hath reigned unto death*. There is, 2. The dominion of sin with regard to inherency in nature; its reigning prevalence in men's nature and practice, with respect to which men are the slaves of sin; it requires and commands their obedience to it, in all its work and service. The reign or dominion of sin in these two respects is connected. Whilst a man is under the reign of sin as to penal consequence, obnoxious to the penal death which the law denounces against transgressors, he is, at the same time, under the dominion of sin in the second respect before mentioned; he is the slave of sin, detained and employed in serving it. But when he is made free from the reign of sin as it reigneth unto death, and from that penal consequence of it, he is at the same time made free from the dominion of sin in nature and practice.

Now, let us look closely into the words of the

text, ver. 7. *For he that is dead*—This is to be understood, as it is more largely expressed in the next following words, ver. 8. *If we be dead with Christ*—This expresses the believer's fellowship and interest in the death of Christ. When his blessed Representative and Surety underwent the death denounced by the law, it was the same virtually as if the sinner himself had undergone in his own person the punishment of his sins, and had died for them; and so the christian is taught to conceive the matter by faith. The consequence is, that by virtue of Christ's death, of the redemption that is in Christ, and by his blood, and by faith in his blood, the believer is justified; and what now is the consequence of his being thus justified? It is, that his sins being pardoned, he is at peace with God, is relieved from the curse of the law, is dead to sin, that is, made free from its reign, as it reigned unto death, and from all the penal consequence allotted to sin by the law; instead of that sad view and prospect, being by the adoption of grace a son and heir, he hath cause to rejoice in hope of the glory of God, and in the prospect, by virtue of his fellowship and interest in Christ's death, of living eternally with him. Thus *he that is dead*, as here, ver. 7, that is, *dead with Christ*, is justified from sin; so delivered from the reign of sin as to penal effect, and hath the prospect of eternal life. This purpose and view the apostle seems to insist in to ver. 11.

Then he brings into view what I may call the practical dominion of sin; and after a few words of exhortation, he expresses his comfortable doctrine clearly, and says, ver. 14. *Sin shall not have*

dominion over you : for ye are not under the law, but under grace. Now, let us consider what respect the sinner's being justified hath to this matter. It is plain, it is by justification he is brought from under the law and its curse; it is by justification he is brought under grace; it is by justification that he is brought unto that state in which sin shall not have dominion over him, to hold him as a slave in its service.

We see then how much to the apostle's main purpose is what he asserts here, ver. 7, that *he who is dead, namely, with Christ, is justified from sin.* It is a principle he improves to great account in the following discourse; and the mention of being justified is in this place exceedingly congruous and fit. It was against his doctrine of justification by grace through faith, and not by works, that the objection, ver. 1, was brought, as if it favoured men's continuing in sin. In opposition to this, the apostle, by the principle he lays down here, ver. 7, and by what he derives from it in his following discourse, shows that justification through faith doth indeed deliver a man from sin, with respect to its legal reign and its practical dominion at once. How unreasonable then, and absurd, to charge such a doctrine with favouring sin!

There is this advantage likewise by the explication given of ver. 7, that it gives to justification in that verse the precise meaning the word hath in all the apostle's preceding discourse on the subject of justification.

As to that manner of expression, *justified FROM sin*, we see the apostle expressing himself in a similar manner concerning the remission of sin, *By him all that believe are justified FROM all*

things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses, Acts xiii. 39.

PARAPHRASE. 7. For (to come now to give a more full answer to the cavil above suggested) he who is dead with Christ, who hath fellowship and interest in his death, is justified from sin by grace superabounding in pardoning it; which is the point from which the cavil pretends to derive its strength. For the truth of the matter is, that this justification by abounding grace, through faith, is that which effectually destroys the interest of sin, puts an end to its reign and dominion in those who are justified, and insures their sanctification; as will appear clearly by the explications I proceed to give.

8. *Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.*

EXPLICATION. The first clause, *If we be dead with Christ*, has been explained already. It has been taken to signify our being *dead to sin*; as the expression is, ver. 2. I take it as meaning, more precisely, a man's fellowship and interest in the death of Christ, the actual benefit and comfort of which he attains through faith; and then being justified, ver. 7, the consequence is, being dead to sin, that is, made free from its reign and dominion. This seems to be the true order of things.

In the mean time, the conclusion which the christian's faith infers is, as here, that *we shall also live with Christ*. As Christ rose from the dead to life, his people, included as it were in him, and represented by him, have (as Eph. ii. 5, 6.) been *quicken'd together with Christ*; and have been *raised up together, and made to sit together*

in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. The fellowship and part which christians have in the resurrection of Christ being so expressed in that place, it gives us cause to think, that here, being *dead with Christ* hath a similar meaning, and is to be understood, as I have said, of the christian's fellowship and interest in the death of Christ.

If Christ died, he also rose again to life, even to a new and never-ending life; and by the fellowship and part his people have in him, and in his resurrection, this insures to them a happy resurrection to eternal life. There is in this a great deal against the practice of sin, and to recommend and enforce newness of life, mentioned ver. 4. The christian hath cause to think, that perfect freedom from sin and the perfection of holiness is included (Phil. iii. 11, 12.) in this his hope; and, therefore, agreeably to that hope, he should, not having already attained, nor being perfect, follow after, and reach forth unto what is before him in this respect; pressing toward the mark, the perfect holiness, as well as the happiness of the resurrection-state; and to consider the practice of sin as quite inconsistent with that hope. But though this argument for holy living is implied, and by most just inference deducible from what is said in this second clause of ver. 8, yet I take the words (*shall also live with him*) to have, for their direct and most proper meaning, the attainment and enjoyment of eternal life. This seems to be most agreeable to the expression; and we shall find in the following verses what tends to establish this sense.

PARAPHRASE. 8. Now if we have fellowship and interest in the death of Christ, surely we have so also in his resurrection to life; (which affords

arguments of the utmost force for newness of life ;) and if we are risen together with Christ, what a glorious prospect opens to us, and what a sure and blessed hope ariseth thence, through faith ! even that we shall live a happy and glorious life with him, that shall not be cut off or interrupted by death.

Let me explain a little this most comfortable subject, by saying a few words, ver. 9, 10, concerning Christ's resurrection to life ; and then, ver. 11, concerning its consequence to you, and all true believers.

9. *Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more ; death hath no more dominion over him.*

EXPLICATION. The import of this 9th verse is very clear, and needs little or nothing to be said for explaining it ; unless it be what is said in the second clause concerning the dominion of death ; which implies, that death had sometime dominion over Christ. So indeed it had ; but its dominion over him was not absolute. When he came in the room of sinners, charged with their sins, death had a right to have him subjected to it, by virtue of the law. But the law being satisfied, death could not retain its dominion, nor hold him in subjection. God his Father raised him up ; yea, he rose by his own power, (John ii. 19. x. 18.) victorious over death ; which cannot seize him, or bring him under its dominion any more.

10. *For in that he died, he died unto sin once : but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.*

EXPLICATION. The expression here of greatest difficulty is, that Christ *died unto sin*. The learned

appear to have been much at a loss to account for the expression, and have given various senses of it. Some have interpreted it by saying, he died to procure to us power and grace to mortify sin ; or, to give us cause, reasons, and motives to do so. But there is nothing here of our mortifying sin ; not the least word that imports it. It is of Christ himself it is said directly and expressly, that *he died unto sin*.

For interpreting this expression, I venture to offer what follows.

Being *dead to sin* signifies being made free from the reign of sin ; as hath been shown on ver. 2. I see no cause for understanding the expression otherwise here ; Christ *died unto sin*, that is, he became free from the reign of sin. This implies, that our blessed Lord had been under the reign of sin ; which, at first sight, may appear shocking ; but will soon cease to be so, if the matter be duly considered.

It hath been already observed, that it is said, chap. v. 21, that *sin hath reigned unto death*. So sin exercises its reign in giving death. Now, Christ having put himself in the place of sinners, and bearing our sins in his own body on the tree, he was there, and then, under the reign of sin ; that reign which I have called the legal reign of sin, the power of which it derives from the law. Sin finding him in the place of sinners, and bearing their guilt, it reigned over him unto death.

The apostle says, 1 Cor. xv. 56. *The sting of death is sin ; and the strength of sin is the law*. Now, it will be acknowledged by every true christian, that Christ came under the strength and power which the law gives to sin ; and that the

sting of sin was truly and fully in the death which he underwent, in order to unsting it to his people. Now, this amounts to as much as to say, that he was under the reign of sin in so far, and in the sense that hath been explained; and that in regard to him sin reigned unto death.

Further, this view makes the connexion clear between this and the preceding verse, yea, that connexion seems to make this sense necessary. He had said, ver. 9, that *Christ dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him*. It is plain, that the words here, ver. 10, are intended to give the reason of this; and, by the interpretation given, the reason is clear and strong. Death derives its dominion, mentioned ver. 9, from the reign of sin; and where sin hath no right or power to reign unto death, there death can have no dominion. So it is then, that Christ by dying and expiating sin fully satisfied the law; and so the law gives no more strength to sin to reign over him unto death; and death can have no more dominion over him; which is the thing asserted, ver. 9, that is meant to be proved by this argument, ver. 10. As by once dying he took away sin, even that guiltiness by which his people, and himself, when substituted in their stead, became obnoxious to death; he at the same time became dead to sin once for all, and for ever: that is, he became free from the reign of sin; so that sin cannot, and death by virtue of sin cannot, any more reign, or have dominion over him.

With respect to the explication that hath been given, there may occur to some a difficulty, arising from the connexion that hath appeared, in the case of mankind universally, between being under the

curse of the law, or the reign of sin, as it reigneth unto death, and being under the practical dominion of sin, with regard to inherency in nature, and prevalence in practice : so that to say, Christ was under the reign of sin in the one respect, would give cause to say, he came under its dominion in the other respect also ; which were very absurd.

But if the matter be considered, this difficulty will soon disappear. Whatever connexion hath appeared in the case of mankind between incurring guiltiness, and becoming corrupt and depraved in nature and practice ; yet it is certain, that this corruption or depravation (however it may be justly reckoned to be, in itself, death in a moral sense) is not included in the death threatened by the law for transgression ; such as was to be inflicted by the supreme Judge. So it is no part of the punishment of sin, which Christ was to undergo for us : and when he underwent that punishment in our stead, he had the perfect purity of his own human nature ; he had the Holy Spirit, that was given him without measure, dwelling in him ; and also the continued union of his divine with his human nature, to keep him even from the possibility of sinning. So that however depravation was the consequence of incurring guiltiness and the curse of the law, in the case of mankind ; yet nothing similar to this can be inferred from Christ's coming under the reign of sin, as it reigned unto death ; which, as to the reality of things, imports no more than what christians have ever held, according to the scriptures, namely, that Christ underwent the death that was the punishment of our sins.

There remains the second clause of this 10th

verse, *In that he liveth, he liveth unto God.* The meaning of this will be more clear by what will be largely and more fitly suggested in explaining the latter clause of the following verse. Here I give for it the short note of the judicious Samuel Clarke. *He liveth unto God*—an immortal, heavenly, glorious life, in the presence of God, and to the glory of God.

11. *Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

EXPLICATION. This last clause, *through Jesus Christ our Lord*, is to be considered as connected with the first, as well as with the second clause; thus, *dead unto sin through Jesus Christ—alive unto God through Jesus Christ.*

As to the first clause, it is not, ye are obliged to die, or be dead to sin; but RECKON *yourselves to be dead* INDEED *unto sin*: not merely by virtue of profession, vows, and gospel obligations, as if matter of duty were meant; but through Jesus Christ, and by virtue of union and fellowship with him; it being the advantage and blessedness of the believer's state, through Christ, that the apostle means. So Calvin chooses to render it more precisely according to the Greek, (*εν Χριστω*,) *in Christ*, as more expressive of our ingraftment into Christ, and our union with him, by virtue of which we have fellowship with him in his death, so as to be dead with him; rather than as others render, *by*, or *through Christ*. But in the one way or the other, it comes to much the same thing. He had said, ver. 10, that Christ *died unto sin*; and it is with a view to the union of christians, and their

communion with him in his death, that now, ver. 11, he directs christians to infer, and *reckon themselves to be dead indeed unto sin*. Christ being dead unto sin, that is, having become free from the reign of sin he had been under, sin cannot any more reign over him unto death. In like manner, the believer being in Christ, in union and fellowship with him, and so dead with him unto sin, it cannot reign over him unto death. The law, which is the strength of sin in this respect, will never give it strength or power so to reign over the believer.

But doth not every christian, even the best, die? True; but there is nothing penal in his death: whatever there may be of fatherly chastisement in the circumstances of it, there is nothing of the reign of sin in it. By a constitution of Divine wisdom, (happy for the general interest of this sinful world,) it is appointed for all men once to die. With regard to those who are under the law, and its curse, there is in their death the reign of sin. Not so in the death of those who have interest and fellowship in the death of Christ. Tribulations, afflictions, sickness, and death came originally by sin, and the curse of the law for sin, for the breach of the first covenant. But now these are adopted by the new covenant, not for penal but for salutary purposes. Sin did originally reign in them. But now the reign of sin, as to penal effect, being at an end with regard to true believers, what succeeds to that reign is, (Rom. v. 21.) that grace now reigneth. Tribulations, afflictions, and death do, in their case, belong to the reign of grace, terminating in eternal life. There is no sting of sin in their death; nor

is it by the strength that the law gives to sin, that they are chastised, or die.

The sense of the second clause, *But alive unto God*, is, I think, to be taken from these words of our Lord, in arguing with the Sadducee concerning the resurrection of the dead, *Now that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him*: Luke xx. 37, 38. which may be understood thus: All, who have part in the covenant, and to whom the Lord is their God, do live unto him: they are in a state of life in his sight; they have passed from death to life; they are by Divine grace entitled to life; and so shall be raised in their bodies to eternal life: which was the point which our Lord's argument was designed to prove.

Now if this be the consequence of being interested in God's covenant of grace, and of persons having him, by special relation and interest, to be their God, that they live to him in the sense now given; it follows, that believers, from the time they come into union with Christ, and have part in the covenant, do even in this life on earth live unto God, in the sense in which Christ meant the expression; that is, are the heirs of eternal life; to the full possession and enjoyment of which they shall be brought in their complete persons at the resurrection. In this sense doth the apostle desire the christians to *reckon* themselves to be *alive unto God*; that is, heirs of eternal life, *through Jesus Christ our Lord*.

This may satisfy us concerning the true meaning of the words concerning Christ in ver. 10. *In*

that he liveth, he liveth unto God. To interpret this, as some have done, merely of his living a life acceptable to God, and to his glory, doth not come up to the present purpose, and argument. He lived such a life before his death and resurrection, as truly as after these. Whereas it is evident, the words mean some special thing, that is the proper consequence of his death; by virtue of which it was that he became dead unto sin, and liveth to God, and a consequence of his resurrection; namely, that he is entitled to, yea, possessed of an eternal life; out of the reach of the reign of sin, and of that dominion of death mentioned in the immediately preceding words of ver. 9.

It is needless to perplex things here, by asking an account, how a right to, and the certainty of eternal life, should come to be expressed by *living unto God*. Some account of that may be learned from what hath been already suggested. But without that, the use of speech is enough for determining the meaning of words, whether the manner and view on which they came to that use and meaning can be accounted for or not. It is evident our Lord used the words in the meaning now explained, Luke xx. 38. The scribes understood him so, and approved; the Sadducees so understood, and were put to silence; while the multitude understood in the same way, and were astonished, Matt. xxii. 33, 34: nor do I see that any other sense better suits the similar expression of the apostle here, ver. 10, 11.

The sense of these three verses I have been last explaining, may be conceived thus:

PARAPHRASE. 9. Having said, (ver. 8.) that in consequence of our fellowship in the death of

Christ, being dead with him, we shall certainly live with him ; I come now to explain that matter by a few words concerning his living, and ours. So it is then, as we know with the utmost certainty, that Christ having, in his resurrection from the dead, overcome death, he is no more obnoxious to it. If he was once, for a time, under its dominion, it now can no more for ever have dominion over him.

10. For the dominion of death, which it exercised over him for a season, being no other than the reign of sin, as it hath reigned unto death ; our blessed Lord being substituted in the place of sinners, and so coming under the reign of sin in that respect, and actually undergoing death ; he did by that expiating death fully satisfy the law ; and it, according to its perfect justice, can never more give strength or power to sin to reign over him unto death. It is the consequence of his dying for sin, that he hath thereby died unto sin, and become for ever free from its claim to reign over him, once for all, and for ever ; and that having gloriously overcome sin and death, in rising anew to life, he liveth a glorious, eternal life, out of the reach of all reign of sin or death.

11. In like manner, as I have said, (ver. 8.) that in consequence of our fellowship with him in his death, we shall also live with him ; so accordingly from what I have said just now, (ver. 10.) you have cause to reckon, with assured faith, that through Christ, and by virtue of his having died unto sin, you are indeed dead unto sin, and so are made free from it, as it reigned unto death ; and it never can give you death in the penal way, in which the righteous law enabled it to subject you

to it : and at the same time, that you have through him a sure and unquestionable title to eternal life, wherein you shall live with him, in a perfect conformity to his life, in holiness, happiness, and glory.

12. *Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.*

EXPLICATION. The apostle now proceeds to exhort the believers against sin, and to the practice of holiness ; and insists to that purpose to the end of the chapter. Having represented the privilege, advantage, and blessedness of the state of the believer, of the sincere christian ; what he had brought forth on that subject gave him great advantage with regard to the exhortation he now enters on ; and suggests the strongest arguments and motives imaginable to enforce it. The grace that hath made believers free from the reign of sin, hath put them under the greatest obligation to avoid, resist, and mortify it ; under the greatest obligation to all duty, and to the practice of holiness. If by being made free from the reign of sin, in the sense that hath been here explained, they are alive unto God, and have the prospect of eternal life ; they are to consider that they are to enjoy that life in the perfection of holiness : so it becomes them to have greatly at heart to advance in their practice towards that perfection of holiness, which is included in their most comfortable hope.

Besides, it is to be remembered what was said before, namely, that while one is under the reign of sin, as it by virtue of the law reigneth unto death, he is at the same time under the dominion of sin, as a slave in its service, and no longer.

So the apostle having asserted that believers are made free from sin in the former respect, his exhortation proceeds on this view, that they are made free from it, at the same time, in the latter respect also : which he brings forth more clearly a little hereafter, in order to be explained and established.

It appears by this same text, that whilst christians are in this life, they will have sin and the lusts thereof in them. For the exhortation is not to resist temptations from without ; but not to obey sin or the lusts thereof within them : and why should christians be warned (as it will be allowed to be a warning fit to be given to every christian, in every time of life) not to obey sin in the lusts thereof, if there would be no such lusts in them ?

Further, when he speaks of *obeying* ; this, I think, imports something deliberate and voluntary, For it would seem, that what a man doth with absolute reluctance, by surprise and force, doth not deserve to be called obedience.

Further yet ; the exhortation proceeds on this view, that the christian, made free, is in such condition to resist the reign of sin, and to refuse obedience to it, as he was not in formerly. Christians are now in condition to resist it effectually, and to prevent its reigning, or prevailing in their practice. If sin shall now reign and prevail, it must be owing to their own indolence, unwatchfulness, faulty weakness, or treachery. Sin hath not now force enough to restore and maintain its own dominion. However, as unholy lusts are not quite eradicated, it should be the care of the christian to resist their motions carefully and

seasonably, and to endeavour, through Divine grace, that they do not take effect, or prevail.

It is fit now to offer some explication of that expression, *your mortal body*. Let it then be observed, that, according to the Hebrew idiom, and that of some other languages, *soul* is often put for *person*; and *his soul*, or *our soul*, often mean no more than *he*, or, *himself*; *we*, or *us*. This hath been so often observed, that it were not needful, for the sake of any of the learned, to produce such instances. However, here are a few. *Then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul*; that is, for *himself*, Exod. xxx. 12. *His soul* (that is, *he*) *draweth near unto the grave*, Job xxxiii. 22. *Our soul* is (that is, *we are*) *dried away*, Numb. xi. 6. *Our soul* is (that is, *we are*) *bowed down to the dust*, Psal. xliv. 25. *The stream hath gone over our soul*, (that is, *over us*,) Psal. cxxiv. 4. So when God is said to swear by his *soul*, it is rightly rendered, that he swears by *himself*. Hundreds of instances may be given, wherein *soul* may be rendered by *person*, or by the pronoun denoting the person.

The word *body* is often used in the same manner. So Rom. xii. 1. *Present your bodies* (that is, your *persons*, or *yourselves*) *a living sacrifice*. *Christ bare our sins in his own body* (in his own *person*, or, on *himself*) *on the tree*, 1 Pet. ii. 24. Of the Hebrew servant it is said, *If he came in with his body*, (so the Hebrew, and the English margin,) *he shall go out with his body*; Exod. xxi. 3. justly rendered in both clauses, by *himself*. So the Hebrew in the last clause of ver. 4, *he shall go out with his body*; which we render as before, by *himself*. Thus

also Matt. vi. 22. *Thy whole body* (that is, thy whole *person*) *shall be full of light*; for otherwise the body by itself is not luminous, nor hath a seeing faculty. So James iii. 6. *The tongue defileth the whole body*; that is, the whole *person*. According to this use and meaning of the expression, the apostle is to be understood thus: *Let not sin reign in your mortal persons*; or, in you, in this your mortal state.

Yet it is not without special reason that the apostle, exhorting against sin, and the danger of it in this mortal state, mentions the *mortal body*. For it is certain, that much sin hath its source and root in the body; and that the christian hath great cause to be watchful against the danger from that side.

There is this further reason for the apostle's using this expression here; that indeed death hath the chief unfavourable effect on the body. The soul, separately considered, is immortal, not capable of being dissolved into corruption and dust, as the body: and as to the soul of the believer, except that death dissolves its natural union with the body, the effect otherwise is altogether favourable. It departs, and is with Christ, which is far better.

PARAPHRASE. 12. Alive you are, I say, unto God, through Jesus Christ; through him, and by virtue of his resurrection, entitled to eternal life, to a happy immortality; when there will be no molestation or danger from sin, no cause of fear. But on this side of that, in your present embodied mortal state, there is much danger of sin. It remains in you, its law is in your members, and its various lusts, as the particular command-

ments of that law. But as you are made free from its reign, as it reigned unto death, and at the same time made free from its dominion by which it enslaved you ; and so are brought into a capacity to resist it, and maintain war against it : let me earnestly exhort you to maintain your liberty by doing so ; and to be anxiously careful that sin be not allowed to resume its dominion in any sort or degree, in this your mortal embodied state, so as that you should yield a voluntary obedience to the lusts which infest that state. Oh, maintain your liberty against the dethroned tyrant, by constantly refusing obedience to these his commandments ; however much they be urged upon you during this your mortality, when sin hath so great advantage from the wretched condition of your bodies ; besides the deep root it hath otherwise in your souls. If I have been thus putting you in mind of your mortality, and your danger from sin during the continuance of it, until your actual death ; yet be encouraged concerning this. There is nothing of the reign of sin, by virtue of the law and its curse, in your mortality, or in the tribulations connected with it, or in the dissolution you are to undergo. Now life and death, things present and things to come, (1 Cor. iii. 22.) all are yours, and under a powerful influence and direction, to work for you, and not against you. Yea, let the consideration of your mortal state, as a state that will soon be at an end, encourage you with respect to these lusts, the motions of which will so often perplex and distress you. Not one of them in you will survive that state for a moment. Therefore, as the time of your warfare and conflict is short,

acquit you against them like men, like christians, like Christ's freed men.

13. *Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin : but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*

EXPLICATION. The apostle's exhortation in these two verses implies two things. First, that the christian, now dead to sin, was come to a capacity of avoiding and resisting sin effectually, and of declining its service. In the next place, made free as he was, that possibly he might, much to his own hurt, return, in too great degree, and in too many instances, to the service of sin. The freed man might perhaps retain a considerable attachment to the master he had served, and perhaps a great liking to the service he had been used to ; so as voluntarily, habitually, and commonly to do the service, yea, the meanest and coarsest drudgery of his former master. As to a Roman freed man, gratitude might make a good and laudable reason for such conduct. But sin is a master, to whom being once made free we owe no gratitude ; nor can expect better from its service, than hurt and mischief to ourselves ; with the charge of the greatest ingratitude and undutifulness to Him, whose grace hath made us free.

In this verse there is mention of two masters ; *sin* the first mentioned, and *God* the other. The service of the former is termed *unrighteousness* ; the service of God is *righteousness* : and a man's *members* are represented as employed in the one sort of service or the other.

As to the mention of *members* here, it is true that sin, and the lusts thereof, do exert themselves by the members of the body. Yet the apostle's view and meaning here is by no means to be restricted to these. By comparing other texts, we shall find that under the name of *members* are comprehended the various faculties, powers, passions, and affections of the soul, as well as members of the body. Thus James iv. 1. *From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?* pride, revenge, covetousness, &c. (that are such common causes of outward wars and fightings,) having their inward warring, even when there is no outward exertion of them by the members of the body. These unholy lusts war against judgment and conscience: and thus mind, will, affections, all that is within, have inward war before the members of the body come to be employed. So these lusts raise war in and among all the faculties and powers of the soul. Again, Col. iii. 5. *Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.* Surely by the working of these inwardly there is much unholiness and sin, when the members of the body are not at all employed.

Now, as servants or soldiers should present themselves, with their arms or tools, (*οπλα* signifies both,) to their sovereign or master, to be employed in his service; so the apostle here exhorts christians not to present (so the word we render *yield* more properly signifies) their members, as weapons or tools for serving sin; but first to present their whole selves to God, and then to present all their

members, that is, powers of soul and body, to be the instruments of righteousness by which he is served.

Upon the word *obey*, in the preceding verse, I observed, that obedience implies being unforced and willing. This is still more to be observed concerning the word here, which signifies to present. For a man to present himself, or his members, to sin and its service, implies as when one man says to another, I am at your service, that is, quite willing and ready to serve you. This is the real disposition of an unregenerate man's heart, the prevailing disposition; however conscience, aided by considerations that may be ascribed to prudence rather than to conscience itself, may give restraint, especially as to the outward work. But the prevailing disposition and purpose of the sincere christian is according to the latter part of the verse.

The argument by which this is urged, is implied in these words, *as those that are alive from the dead*. It is the happy state of all true christians, as ver. 11, that they are dead, not in sin, but to sin, and alive unto God; and the words here, ver. 13, are evidently used with a view to these words in ver. 11.

PARAPHRASE. 13. And do not present the faculties, affections, and powers of your soul, or body, to sin, that usurper, to be the tools of unrighteousness in his service; but present your whole selves to God, in a constant and willing readiness for his service, who is your rightful Lord; and that as becomes those who, by his wonderful grace, are dead unto sin, (made free from its reign,) and are become alive unto God: and present all your

powers to God, as weapons or tools fit and ready for the warfare and work of righteousness in his service.

14. *For sin shall not have dominion over you : for ye are not under the law, but under grace.*

EXPLICATION. It is of much importance to conceive aright the meaning of this verse. What is fit to be first considered and explained is, the dominion of sin mentioned in the first clause. I have before observed a distinction between the reign of sin, with regard to its penal consequence, as it hath reigned unto death, (chap. v. 21.) and its practical dominion in men's nature and practice ; and have shown, that ver. 10, 11, are to be understood to respect the former.

Divers commentators appear to think that this is the dominion of sin meant here. However, as I am convinced that the dominion of sin here means that power which sin hath in the nature and practice of persons under the law, by which they are its slaves, obey it, and do its service ; I will give my reasons for understanding it so.

1. I observe, then, that the apostle appears to have much in his view, a dominion of sin by which men are its servants, (slaves, as was in those times the common condition of servants,) doing its service, and obeying it. So ver. 16. *His servants ye are to whom ye obey ; whether of sin unto death—*ver. 17—*Ye were the servants of sin.* ver. 18.—*Being made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.* ver. 20.—*When ye were the servants of sin—*ver. 22.—*Now being made free from sin, and become servants*

to God. Now as having dominion, and being slaves, are characters and states that have a mutual relation ; as it is the scope of the exhortation that begins ver. 12, to exhort christians not to obey sin, but to serve and obey God ; and as he encourages christians with this consideration, that having been the slaves of sin, they had been made free from that slavery and dominion, and with this consideration, that sin shall not have dominion over them ; it is exceedingly clear, that the whole drift and scope of the discourse and reasoning leads us to understand, by the dominion of sin here, ver. 14, that dominion by which it holds men as its slaves, and employed in its service.

2. The same thing will appear in a clear and strong light, if we observe what he hath concerning this subject in the seventh chapter. There, in the first context, (ver. 1—13.) it appears the christians are required to be dead to the law, and to be married to Christ, in order to bring forth fruit unto God ; this, ver. 4, and ver. 5, we see such a prevalence of the flesh (of depravation) in those who are under the law, that sinful motions and lusts do prevail, even by occasion, in some sort, of the law itself, to bring forth fruit unto death. One must (ver. 6.) be delivered from the law in order to be capable of serving God in newness of spirit, in an acceptable manner. Yea, such is the prevailing of sin, and of sinful depravation, in persons under the law, that (ver. 8.) it takes occasion by the commandment itself, to work in a man all manner of concupiscence. It takes occasion (ver. 11.) by the commandment, and slays a man. Though the commandment is holy, just, and good,

yet sin discovers its most malignant nature, and its power, by working death in a man by that which is good.

It is true, there is frequent mention in that context, chap. vii. of sin's working death to a man. But it doth so, by working in him all manner of concupiscence, and by bringing forth fruit unto death.

We see in that context sin holding men, who are under the law, as in strong fetters, detaining and disabling them from serving God acceptably, or bringing forth fruit unto God. We see in it sin putting a man, under the law, to its service, in defiance of the light and authority of the law. Surely according to this, men under the law are the slaves of sin, and it hath great power and absolute dominion over them, to command their service. Now, as it is generally agreed, that in the first context of chap. vii. the apostle is explaining what he had said here, chap. vi. 14, can any unbiassed and thinking person doubt, after the account he gives there of the condition of persons under the law with regard to sin, that by the dominion of sin, connected with being under the law, he means its practical dominion in men's nature and practice?

The next inquiry is, What is meant by being *under grace*?

To understand being *under grace*, merely of being under a dispensation or constitution of grace, that accepts sincere obedience, and pardons imperfections, will make the apostle's declaration in our text not consistent with truth. For how many millions are under grace in that sense, who are under the dominion of sin, and perish!

Some may endeavour to make this right by giving it thus—If you decline obeying sin, and endeavour to mortify it; and if you shall yield your faculties to God and his service sincerely; then sin shall not have dominion over you, being under grace. This, however, is making the declaration and promise in the text conditional; whereas it is given forth by the apostle as absolute and certain, not suspended on the christian's endeavours, but insured by the grace they are under. As there is nothing in the apostle's speech, so neither is there any thing else, to make a good reason for understanding otherwise. There are many conditional promises, but this is none of them.

If we observe the apostle's own doctrine and style, it will direct us how to understand being *under grace*. In the beginning of the preceding chapter he acquaints us, that christians, being justified through faith, are reconciled, and at peace with God; and further, that they have access, *προσάγωγην*, the bringing or introducing them unto that grace, *wherein*, saith he, *we stand*; not in a fleeting and changing condition, but as in a fixed state. It is said, John iii. 36. *He that believeth not the Son*, (that doth not so truly and sincerely,)—*the wrath of God abideth on him*. But the christian being by his justification through faith delivered from the wrath and the curse he had been under, he is now personally under the actual grace and favour of God, and in a state of grace, as to his real spiritual state before God.

Though it has been observed, that grace doth commonly signify favour, even free unmerited favour; yet in this place grace certainly signifies more than being in favour at present with God.

Being at present in favour with God, would not secure things for the future, as in our text. Whilst Adam continued in his innocence, he was under Divine favour; but this did not secure against his falling under the dominion of sin. If the apostle meant nothing here, but that christians being under grace, would be secure against falling under the dominion of sin, upon certain conditions, depending merely and altogether on themselves, the comfort would amount to little. If man in his state of perfection fell short of the conditions prescribed to him, how likely would fallen man be to fall short! But the grace of the new covenant doth, as chap. v. 21. *REIGN unto eternal life*; and makes it *sure to the seed*. So chap. iv. 16. *It is of faith, that it might be by GRACE, (the consequence is,) that the promise might be SURE to all the seed*. The first covenant, though it promised much good, upon most reasonable and equitable conditions, yet it made nothing sure. But the grace and promise of the new covenant made all sure. It secures to the believer eternal life, and the safety and success of his course and way to the enjoyment of it; according to Jer. xxxii. 40.

In what manner, and by what means, grace doth contribute to preserve those who are in a state of grace from falling again under the dominion of sin, must be referred to another place, where the important matter may be explained more largely than would be fit here. (See Appendix, sect. 2.)

There remains this clause of ver. 14. *Ye are not under the law*. But this falls to be explained at some length in the explication of the following

chapter ; and it is not fit to anticipate here what must be there said. See on chap. vii. 4.

PARAPHRASE. 14. For animating you to refuse the service of sin, and earnestly to resist its demands and urgency, and to endeavour through the Spirit to mortify it, you have this great encouragement and consolation, that being made free from the reign and dominion of sin, you certainly shall never come again under its dominion. And of that you may assure yourselves from this, that you are not now, as formerly, under the law, which could not subdue sin, nor enable you to subdue it ; so that you then remained the servants (the slaves) of sin ; but that you are under that grace, which hath made you free ; and which, according to the tenor and promises of the covenant of grace, will preserve and uphold you in that freedom from the dominion of sin, until it perfectly accomplish all its purpose, to your eternal comfort and happiness.

15. *What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.*

EXPLICATION. I do not take this to be a new objection different from that which was suggested, ver. 1. But the apostle having here, ver. 14, asserted that the christian is not under the law, he supposes an adversary might from this reinforce his argument and objection, putting it in a new form, suited to the expression of ver. 14. I cannot express my views of this verse, or explain it better than by the following

PARAPHRASE. 15. What then may I suppose that a christian, who mistakes my doctrine, or

inclines to abuse it, or that an adversary of grace, may infer or object? Possibly such may suggest and argue thus—You have said, that where sin abounded, grace hath much more abounded; namely, in pardoning. This hath great appearance of encouraging persons to continue in sin. But now you have made things much more strong to that purpose, by saying, that the christian is not under the law. The law strictly prohibits sin, and denounces fearful judgment for transgression, and might by that means greatly discourage and repress sin. But if it be indeed the state of the believer, to be under the covert and protection of grace, that superabounds in pardoning, and at the same time to be delivered from the law, and to be no longer under the law, that breathes forth so strongly against sin, particularly in its awful threatening, may not such sin freely; for what cause can they have to apprehend hurt or danger to themselves by doing so? So some may argue; but far be it from us so to abuse the happy privilege which we have by grace. Surely the doctrine of grace imports nothing that would encourage us to do so.

16. *Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?*

EXPLICATION. One might readily think at first sight, that the apostle doth not here answer so directly and clearly to the objection and argument in the preceding verse as might be wished. But on considering this text closely, we shall find two things in it. First, that the apostle doth here insist in

the exhortation he had begun, ver. 12, : and next, that he doth so in such a manner in this verse, as to make a very sufficient answer to the argument or objection in the preceding verse.

I say, the apostle here insists in the exhortation begun, ver. 12, 13. One may be satisfied about this, by observing the style of this verse, so suited as it is to the style of ver. 13, and the argument here, so much suited as it is to the purpose of the 13th and preceding verse. There he exhorted christians not to *yield* themselves, or their members, to the obedience or service of sin ; but to the service of God. Here again is mention of *yielding* themselves, and of both sorts of service. So the conformity of style is evident.

It was observed before, that the word we render by *yielding*, properly signifies to present one's self, with his arms or weapons, to a master or commander. I also observed, that one's thus presenting himself, is something fully voluntary and deliberate. In the latter context of chap. vii. there is much represented of the motions and strength of sin. But there is much regret, sorrow, conflict, and outcry of misery. The case directly opposite to that is here hinted ; the case of one deliberately and voluntarily presenting himself, and his faculties, to sin and its service. A christian may sin through mere infirmity, or by the surprise and force of temptation ; the effect of which becomes afterwards very bitter to him. But for a man to present (deliberately, voluntarily) himself and his faculties to the service of sin, whether in his general course of life and practice, or in the service of a particular predominant and indulged lust, this makes a very ill case, against which christians are

here earnestly exhorted ; and this enforced by a strong argument.

The argument seems to be to this purpose. A person, thinking that he hath been made free from the dominion of sin, may imagine himself to be acting with liberty in serving sin in this and the other, and in very many instances. But the reality of the case is, that by thus presenting himself to sin and its service, he doth prove himself to be indeed the servant of sin, and its slave. Now, to a christian, who hath been made sensible of the misery of such a slavery, and of the valuable privilege and advantage of being made free from that slavery, the thought of coming in any sort or degree into it again, and showing so by his practice, would be so frightful and shocking, as to awaken him to earnest carefulness to keep himself at the utmost distance from it. This I take to be the import of the argument, as it respects the subject of the exhortation in ver. 12, 13.

I said, that the apostle manages this argument, so as, at the same time, to suggest a sufficient and very proper answer to the objection in ver. 15. He had said, ver. 14, that sin should not have dominion over the believers, they not being under the law, but under grace. Ay then, says the supposed adversary, if so, the stroke of the law cannot reach us, we not being under it ; and grace will protect us and keep us safe : therefore we may without any apprehension take full liberty in sinning. But by no means ; such an abuse of grace were horrible, and the reasoning is vain. By taking such liberty to sin, a man will prove that he is truly its servant and slave, and so demonstrate that he is not under grace, but indeed

under the law, whose curse and judgment will yet reach him with fearful effect. Thus ver. 16 contains this very pointed and striking answer to what was suggested in ver. 15.

One thing yet on the last clause—*or* (servants) *of obedience unto righteousness*. The service of God is (as ver. 13, and here) *righteousness*, and men fulfil and do that service only in way of *obedience*, which presupposes Divine command and institution. Therefore superstitious practices in religion, and will-worship, which have not the warrant of the Divine command and institution, and do not come under the notion of obedience, whatever show they may have of wisdom, yet do not truly belong to the service of God, or to the practice of righteousness.

PARAPHRASE. 16. But let me not be diverted from the exhortation I have begun; but let me still earnestly entreat you not to obey sin in the lusts thereof, nor to present your faculties to its service; but to yield yourselves, with all your faculties and powers, to God and to righteousness, in way of obedience. For if I have said, that ye are not under the law; it was far from my meaning, that you might withdraw yourselves from the authority and obedience of the holy commandment, which is the rule of righteousness: so that nothing can be counted righteousness or the service of God, that is not obedience and conformity to that rule. Let me then enforce my exhortation by the consideration of what you know, what every one knows; namely, that to whom one presents himself voluntarily and habitually to obey and serve him, he thereby proves, that he whom he so serves and obeys, is indeed his master and

lord; whether it be sin, who gives death for wages, (ver. 23.) or God, in way of obedience to his will, commandment, and institutions, in order to complete that service of righteousness, which will issue in eternal life. Have you then been sensible of the great wretchedness of being the servants of sin, and of the great good that grace hath done you, in making you free from that thralldom; be warned to keep yourselves at the greatest distance from that way of practice, that would give suspicion that you are again entangled and engaged therein.

Now, will any say, because persons are not under the law, but under grace, that therefore they may freely and safely go into a course of sin? surely if any, with the high praise, perhaps, of grace in their mouths, shall so believe, and shall presume so to live, the reproach and real abuse of grace will recoil, and fall with fearful weight on their heads. There is no fallacy in the promises of the new covenant, or in the doctrine of grace; but there may be much fallacy and deception in men's notion and opinion of their own state. They who so argue, and so live, as I have been just saying, will prove nothing truly dishonourable to grace; but they will prove, to their own confusion, that they have not been truly under grace, but indeed under the law, in the flesh, under the dominion of sin, serving it; for which the stroke of the law will reach them fearfully; especially in the great day of the vengeance of grace, and of the *wrath* of the *Lamb*; when grace, which they have so much counteracted and affronted, will not interpose to screen them from the righteous judgment.

17. *But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.*

EXPLICATION. When the apostle says here, that they had been *the servants of sin*, it may give occasion for some question concerning the ground on which he says so. If the Roman christians had been universally converted immediately from heathenism, some might suppose he had no other in view than their former state of heathenism. But that was not the case. There were in that church many Israelites, or Jews, as appears in chap. xvi. who were brought up in the church of God. There might be also many, who were brought up from childhood in a state of proselytism, and in the early knowledge and faith of the holy scriptures, as was Timothy, under his pious and believing mother and grandmother. Though the Romans, who had been converted from heathenism, had certainly been the servants of sin; yet how comes he to say of that church universally, and without the hint of any exception, that they had been formerly the servants of sin? How can we account for it, but on this ground, that it is the common and natural condition of all men to be the servants of sin?

The last clause of this text (*which was delivered you*) is as Castellio renders; and which Beza calls a perverse rendering. The word rendered *form*, doth signify, form, rule, or pattern. Sometimes it signifies a mould: and it seems to be here determined to that sense by the expressions connected therewith; which as they run in the Greek, are to be thus rendered, *into which ye were de-*

livered over, or cast. Here are very different ideas. Obeying respects the authority of the doctrine. Being delivered over, or cast into it, respects the doctrine under the notion of a mould, which gives its own, a new form to that which is cast into it. This verse then doth in the general represent the doctrine of the gospel, and men's obeying it, yielding it the obedience of faith, as the great means of sanctification, and of freedom from the slavery of sin—*Ye were the servants of sin ; but ye have obeyed.*

For explaining the matter briefly, as here set forth : 1. The word of Christ is, as hath been said, the means of purifying, and of freedom from the slavery of sin. So John xv. 3. *Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.* So also John viii. 32. *Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.* 2. The truth, or doctrine of faith, hath this effect, through men's obeying it, or yielding it the obedience of faith ; and that with great freedom of will. To this obedience the matter is ascribed in our text. But is this obedience *merely* from man's own will ? By no means ; for, 3. There is in it the influence of the Holy Spirit. This is expressed with regard to a main branch of holiness, namely, brotherly love, 1 Pet. i. 22.—*Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth* THROUGH THE SPIRIT, *unto unfeigned love of the brethren.* Here christians are represented, in obeying and purifying their souls, as acting with the freedom that is essential to moral agency ; yet so acting and purifying their souls by the Spirit and his powerful influence. There seems to be some hint of this intended in our text, *εις ον παραδοθητε, into which ye were delivered, or cast.* The verb here is passive : the

christian hath been so delivered over and cast by another hand. They obeyed the doctrine heartily ; in this they were active : yet they were cast into the mould of this doctrine ; and thereby received the new form of faith, obedience, and holiness from another hand and influence. So that they were active in obeying the truth ; and at the very same time and instant were passive with regard to the superior influence.—*Beholding—the glory of the Lord, (2 Cor. iii. 18.) we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.* No created being can absolutely, and by immediate influence, determine the will. But cannot the Creator do by his instruction and influence what no created being can ? The psalmist thought so, when he argued and prayed, as Psal. cxix. 73. *Thy hands have made me and fashioned me : give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments.* They who hold, that the superior influence of the Creator, effectually determining and disposing the heart to that which is good, is inconsistent with free agency, are as destitute of foundation in sound reason, as they are grossly contrary to the scriptures.

PARAPHRASE. 17. But I hope better things of you than to present yourselves to the service of sin ; and see cause of thankfulness to God, the Author and true Cause of the great effect ; that, whereas though you had been the servants of sin, you have sincerely and heartily obeyed the doctrine of the gospel, into which, by the power and efficiency of a superior hand, as into a mould, ye were delivered over and cast ; and so the truth hath made you free from the dominion, which sin unhappily had sometime over you.

18. *Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.*

PARAPHRASE. 18. Being then, through your obeying the truth, which conveyed the knowledge of Christ, and of Divine grace through him, into your hearts, and through the faith thereof, under the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit, made free from the wretched thralldom of sin, ye became the servants of righteousness; I mean, the servants of God, (ver. 22.) having the principles of righteousness prevailing and dominant in your hearts, in place of the vile principles of sin, unrighteousness, and impurity, which formerly reigned therein.

19. *I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.*

PARAPHRASE. 19. You have, through the infirmity of your present condition in the flesh, such disadvantage and weakness of understanding, in conceiving spiritual things, except they be set before you under the similitude of things earthly, (John iii. 12.) that I have judged it needful to speak of what concerns your spiritual condition, with regard to sin and holiness, in language, and under a similitude, taken from the manner and affairs of men, respecting masters and their bond-servants; which you Romans are well acquainted with. Upon the same view to your infirmity, though I might, upon comparing both sorts of service together, reasonably require of you a zeal,

fervency, and assiduity, in the better service of righteousness, incomparably beyond what you showed in the service of sin ; yet, as this perhaps goes beyond any attainment which, in your present infirmity in the flesh, you are likely to reach, and so might, through your weakness, occasion your forming conclusions too unfavourable and discouraging concerning your condition ; let me exhort you to some parity, at least, of endeavour in the better service you are through grace engaged in ; and that as you have heretofore yielded your members servants to impurity and iniquity, to the practice and increase of iniquity ; so now that you present all your faculties, affections, and powers, servants of righteousness, to the practice and advancement of holiness.

20. *For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.*

PARAPHRASE. 20. It may be a very cogent argument to move you to this, that when ye were the servants of sin, you were free from the dominion of righteousness. However you might, even from carnal motives and ends, comply with the natural notions of men concerning virtue and decency, at least in the appearance of these, yet ye were in no true subjection to righteousness, or to the law of God, which is the rule of it ; nor had the necessary principles of acceptable righteousness any influence in your hearts. Should you not then be excited by the consideration of this, to be very careful, now that you are the servants of righteousness, (ver. 18.) to maintain your liberty from the dominion of sin, not to allow it to prevail with you in any sort, to yield yourselves, or your

members to its service ; but that you should, as I have been exhorting you, be faithful and assiduous servants to your new and better Master ; ever yielding all your powers of soul and body ready for his service, in the practice of holiness ?

21. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.

PARAPHRASE. 21. Let me further argue from the comparative consideration of the fruit and consequence of both sorts of service and practice. First, as to the service of sin, what fruit, may I ask you, had ye by yielding your members to its service ? Did not pride, envy, malice, wrath, revenge, covetousness, and deceitfulness, that defiled your spirits, bring present disturbance, distress, and misery upon your souls ? Did not the gratification of brutal appetites, that are the filthinesses of the flesh, waste your bodies and estates, and bring misery upon your families ? Were not these malignant passions, and foul pleasures of sin for a season, always attended with pricking and painful remorse in time, and with sad misgivings of heart with respect to future judgment and eternity ? Indeed now that the Lord has been gracious to you, these practices, in which ye served sin, do, on recollection, give you that shame and confusion of face, which ever accompanies true repentance : and that is all the fruit that remains with you of a practice and course, which, if the rich grace of God do not interpose, doth always terminate in death, and eternal misery. Let me next observe the matter to you on the other side.

22. *But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.*

EXPLICATION. The apostle having designed to give a comparative view of the fruit and consequence of both sorts of service, that of sin and that of God ; he did so as to the former in the preceding verse : and now he proceeds here to give a view of the fruit and consequence of serving God in righteousness and holiness.

The servant of God here is the same as the servant of righteousness, ver. 18. . God is the Lord and Master ; righteousness is the service.

It hath been observed before, that the notion of *servants*, according to these times, includes the notion of *slavery* ; by which a servant was the property of his master, as to his person ; and was required to be absolutely subject, as to his service and employment, to his master's will, to be commanded and disposed of as he pleased. The servant of God is absolutely his, as to his person, by the original right of creation and sovereignty, and by the superadded right of grace and redemption. Yea, the servant of God hath freely and fully, by his own choice, given himself up to the Lord, to be his ; as a man's bond-servant is his, being bought with his money, or born in his house. So the psalmist acknowledges, *I am thy servant, and the son of thy handmaid*, Psal. cxvi. 16. But there is otherwise a greater difference with regard to the liberty of mind and spirit, the confidence, consolation, and hope, very opposite to a state of slavery or bondage, which the christian hath in the service of his natural

and rightful Lord ; whom he is, at the same time, to consider as his Father, and himself as a son by the adoption of grace, and an heir. On these accounts, though the christian is the absolute property of his Lord, and absolutely subject to his sovereignty and will, yet his state is not that of slavery and bondage. To him the law, which expresses his Master's will, and is the rule of his service, is *the perfect law of liberty*, James i. 25.

We may now be fully satisfied concerning the distinction suggested with regard to the reign and dominion of sin. If Christ died *unto* sin, ver. 10. this can be understood in no sense suiting the expression, but that of his becoming by his own expiating death free from sin, as to its penal consequence, as it reigned unto death. Sinners under the reign of sin in that sense, are not so properly the *servants* of sin, but rather the victims of justice, in consequence of their having served sin. But in this exhortation, which was begun at ver. 12, and is insisted on downwards throughout the chapter, till we are now at the end of it ; when we have, on the one hand, mention of sinners as the servants of sin, presenting themselves and their faculties to its service, and obeying it, and some made free from that slavery, and engaged in the service of God and of righteousness ; and when we have, on the other hand, sin set forth as a master, whose service is done, and as *κυριος*, a lord having dominion ; it is clear, that this can be understood of no other than a practical dominion, a dominion by which sin powerfully holds sinners its slaves, employed in its service.

One thing yet on this first clause, and its connexion with what next follows. Those who have

at heart to be the servants of God, and have some perception of the happiness of that state, should be very solicitous, that, in order thereto, they be made free from the dominion of sin. For that is the connexion of things in our present text, *Being made free from sin, and become servants of God.* There is needful here, not merely good purposes, and some sort of change of practice; but a change of nature, and of a man's spiritual state: that the death of Christ, and his resurrection, with the benefits thereof, be truly and effectually applied to him by the Holy Spirit, and by faith; the Holy Spirit renewing the heart, and being in it the Spirit of faith. Good purposes and resolutions, and some sort of endeavours, without this, may make a self-deceiving and shining hypocrite, but will not make a genuine, sincere servant of God.

PARAPHRASE. 22. Let us next, then, consider the other side of the comparison, and the advantage of being the servants of God. For now, being, by means of Christ's death and resurrection, brought under grace, made free from the dominion of sin, and become the servants of God, (which ye could not be without being so made free from your former master,) ye have your fruit in that service, to the advancement of holiness; fruit at present sweet, healthful, and comfortable, and as to futurity, terminating in eternal life.

23. *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

EXPLICATION. The original Greek word, rendered *wages*, was commonly meant of the pay of soldiers in provisions or money. Dannhauerus,

cited by Wolfius, gives an account of it to this purpose and sense : It commonly signified, he says, the wages, in particular, by which gladiators were hired to sell their blood, to give pleasure to the populace. So, as the gladiator, for wages and provisions afforded him, gave himself up to butchery and destruction, for the amusement and diversion of the cruel and barbarous Roman rabble ; so the sinner doth, for the present pleasure of sin, give himself up to eternal destruction ; whereby he gratifies and satiates the malice of devils.

Let this be further observed. The apostle had said of men's sins, ver. 21, that *the END of those things is death*. So to believers in a course of holiness, ver. 22, *the END is everlasting life*. But these ends severally do happen in a very different way ; as is represented here, ver. 23. Death is the proper wages of sin, and is given according to the law, and the true demerit of men's works. Eternal life is the gift of God, *χαρισμα*, the most free gift. But though eternal life is freely given to *us* of God, yet it is *through Jesus Christ our Lord*, by his mediation and merit. Yet still not the less to *us* the free gift of God, who hath of grace provided and accepted the price of our redemption and life.

PARAPHRASE. 23. For the wages which sin, by the strength of the law, and according to the tenor of its righteous sanction, doth pay, is eternal death, suited and justly proportioned to the true demerit of the work and service. But eternal life, in which the believer's course of holiness terminates, is not for any merit of ours, but is to *us* the most free gift of God, and that through our Lord Jesus Christ, and through his mediation and merit.

Now what arguments, motives, and means of suasion can any created mind conceive more strong and powerful in themselves? When the prospect of eternal life, so clearly set forth in God's word and promises; and the terrors of eternal death, the just punishment of sin, so much inculcated by the word of God, so agreeable to the light of reason, and to the dictates and impressions of conscience in every man; do not prevail with sinful men to lead them to Christ by faith, to forsake their sins by true repentance, and to engage them in the service of God, what a demonstration is it of the dominion that sin hath over them, and how absolutely it hath subjected them, with all their faculties and powers, to itself, and its service, in so far that no means of suasion whatsoever are sufficient to work the good effect!

Therefore the apostle goes to show, that the law, however much its precept and sanction be inculcated on the minds and consciences of men, cannot make them free: that no other than the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (chap. viii. 2.) can make them free from the dominion of sin, from that unhappy law of sin and death, by which they have been ruled.

INTRODUCTION

TO THE

EXPLICATION OF ROMANS VII.

SHOWING

THAT THE APOSTLE'S DOCTRINE AND REASONING IN THIS
CHAPTER, DO NOT RESPECT THE MOSAIC CEREMO-
NIAL LAW, OR THE ABOLITION THEREOF.

It is of great consequence, in explaining the first context (ver. 1, 13.) of this chapter, to determine what is to be understood by *law* ; and from what law the believers are therein said to be delivered. This requires to be more largely treated of than were fit in explaining any particular verse.

Many have understood it of the mosaic law. This, in the largest sense, comprehends the whole system of laws given to Israel in the wilderness ; but more strictly, it signifies the law that prescribed the ordinances of worship, the rites, ceremonies, and peculiar observances of the church of Israel ; commonly called the *ceremonial law*. When I observe every place in this epistle, in which *law* is mentioned, I do not see cause to think, that the ceremonial law is meant in any one of them, or that the apostle's explications and reasoning have respect to it. If in some places he hath at all in his eye the

mosaic law, as chap. v. 15, 20, it is only the mosaic or sinaitic promulgation of the moral law he means; his argument doth not appear to have any respect to the ceremonial law. In proving the sinfulness of the gentiles, chap. i. they are only sins against the moral law he mentions; as indeed they could not be charged with transgression of the ceremonial law, which had not been given them. It is plain, it is the same moral law, that was common to Jews and gentiles, (chap. ii. 14, 15,) that he hath in his eye, even the law of which some light and impression remained in the consciences of the gentiles, when he says, chap. ii. 26. *If the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?* It is plain, that the ceremonial law is excluded from all concern in the argument; for the uncircumcised had not access to observe the ceremonial law.

In that second chapter, reasoning with the Jew, who, ver. 17, *rested in the law*, he charges only transgressions of the moral law, ver. 21, 22; and when, chap. iii. 10—18, he cites several texts of the Old Testament, to prove sin against them, in many instances there represented, every instance he cites respects the moral law, and none other.

The apostle doth indeed manage his argument, respecting justification, in such a way, that he had no occasion to mention the ceremonial law; at least, when he might take occasion to mention it, it is evident that he avoids it. For making this clear, it is to be observed that moral and accountable agents may be justified in one of two ways. 1. Such may be justified as are personally and perfectly righteous; and so the angels, who kept

their first state, stand justified before God, according to the law they are under. It is a point the apostle labours much, that no man, Jew or gentile, can be justified in this way ; as he proves that all have sinned. .2. The way, and the only way, for the justification of the sinner, is by grace : and he shows that this grace, in the exercise of it, is founded on expiation, or redemption ; even *the redemption that is in Christ ; whom God hath set forth as a propitiation, through faith in his blood* : so he says, chap. iii. 24, 25. Here indeed he might have taken occasion to treat of the expiations and purifications of the mosaic law, and to have proved their insufficiency for taking away sin, or removing the guilt of sinners. This indeed he does in the epistle to the Hebrews. This was especially needful for them, the Jews of Palestine and the east, who were so exceedingly zealous for the levitical service and mosaic institutions. But the Romans were a church of christians who were, for most part, of the gentiles, whose liberty from the ceremonial law had been declared before this time. This liberty the gentiles had cause to value much ; and it appears that the apostle saw no occasion for proving to them the insufficiency of the ceremonial expiations (which they had nothing to do with) for the justification of sinners ; and it is evident, that in treating of that subject in this epistle, he doth not touch that point at all.

In the sixth and seventh chapters, sanctification and deliverance from the dominion of sin, is the subject ; and it is clear that there, particularly in this seventh chapter, it is the moral law he hath still in his view. As it is by it that there is the

knowledge of sin, it is by it he came to know sin ; giving an instance only of a transgression of the moral law : so ver. 7.

To proceed the more distinctly in our inquiry concerning the matter ; I observe, that there are two things on which the apostle labours in this epistle, and in that to the Galatians, which is thought to have been written before it.

1. That a sinner is not justified by the law, or by the works of the law. This he proves by principles and arguments that have no respect particularly to the mosaic law and institutions, or to the abolition thereof. This is the subject of the first five chapters to the Romans, wherein he establishes the one way of justification, common to both Jews and gentiles.

2. He proves, that the gentile converts were relieved by the gospel from the necessity of undergoing the mosaic yoke. This he is zealous about, and considers it as an essential point of the gospel. The truth is, as the mosaic or judaical law was originally given to the Jews, and not to the gentiles, there were divers institutions in it, which it was morally impossible for the gentiles generally to observe ; for instance, the three great annual feasts in Jerusalem. The case was, that the wisdom of God thought fit to have, in those times, one nation only for his church ; and so he appointed ordinances of worship, and other various institutions, suiting that one national church. If particular persons of other nations came to be converted, and would enjoy the privilege of members of the church of God, they were required to accede to that one national church, and submit to its rules and institutions. But

when, under the gospel, the church became catholic, or universal, consisting of people of all nations, it was thought fit by Divine wisdom, that those of other nations, the gentiles, should be declared free from the obligation of mosaic ordinances, which were not suited to such a state of things, and should enjoy the privileges of the church of God, without submitting to these.

As to the first of these subjects, justification not by works, but by faith, as it is a fundamental point, and essential in religion at all times, the apostle is full and clear upon it in both epistles. As to the other subject, the liberty of the gentiles from the mosaic yoke, he insists on it especially in the epistle to the Galatians; whom he exhorts to stand fast in this liberty, and warns them, in very strong terms, of the danger of doing otherwise. In this epistle to the Romans, he does, greatly to the comfort of the gentiles, establish the doctrine of one way of justification by faith, common to Jews and gentiles. But the liberty of the gentiles from the mosaic yoke does not appear to be the special and immediate subject in this epistle to the Romans. The churches of Galatia appear to have been greatly disturbed and divided by disputes, and by the arts and importunities of false teachers, concerning this subject. I do not see any thing in the epistle to the Romans, that gives cause to think they had much question concerning it. Therefore though the apostle still manages his subject, particularly that of justification, in a way very comfortably favourable to the interest of the gentiles; yet I do not see, that the freedom of the gentiles from the mosaic law is his proper and direct subject.

There are yet two things fit to be considered respecting the case of the gentiles during the mosaic and Old-Testament times.

1. The gentile converts to the faith of the church of Israel, would certainly, in these times, have great advantage, in being outwardly admitted by circumcision to be actual members of the jewish church. Without this they would not have the comfort of partaking of the paschal lamb, or of other ordinances, by which the Lord represented and conveyed the blessings of his grace more abundantly, according to the measure of those times, to his people. Yet,

2. This disadvantage did not amount to so much, but that persons of the gentiles, enlightened with the faith of the church and word of God, and fearing God, were in these times truly accepted of him, without being circumcised, or coming under the mosaic yoke. Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple, 1 Kings viii. 41—43, gave reason to think so long ago. But the matter is clear in the case of Cornelius, Acts x. when the Lord said to Peter in the vision, ver. 15. *What God hath cleansed call not thou unclean*; that is, though he be not purified, or cleansed by the blood of circumcision. The apostle thus instructed says, ver. 34, 35. *Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.* To say or infer from this, that persons who know not the true God, or the way of salvation he hath revealed, may, walking honestly according to the light of their own religion and conscience, be saved, hath no foundation in the words of the apostle Peter. He is by no means

speaking in that latitude of meaning. He is speaking of what God had cleansed ; of Cornelius, and such as he, of whatever nation, who were enlightened with the true faith, as the same was revealed, and professed, in the church of God, and who by the influence and direction of that light feared God, and wrought righteousness, though they were not Jews, nor initiated by circumcision into the jewish church. But though the sentiment just now mentioned, hath no foundation in the apostle Peter's words, yet it may be justly inferred from what he says, that whatever might be the advantage of being members externally of the jewish church, yet believing and pious gentiles might, without that, and without coming under the yoke of the mosaic institutions, be accepted of God, and be saved, even during the Old-Testament times.

This being so, the jewish christians had the more reason to be reconciled to the exemption of the gentile converts from the mosaic yoke ; and it appears that some were so, Acts xi. 18, who had no thought at that time that the mosaic law was abrogated. The mosaic law had been given to Israel. Though proselytes of the gentiles were admitted by circumcision to the privileges of the church of Israel, yet their being so does not appear to have been strictly required ; and it is certain, that when the council of Jerusalem declared the liberty of the gentiles from the mosaic yoke, this did not import, nor imply, the abrogation of the mosaic law, with respect to the Jews ; nor was it so understood by the apostles or believing Jews, who had agreed to the exemption of the gentiles from that law.

Having premised these things, in order to clear

our way, let us now come more close to the subject and question, concerning the abolition of the mosaic law, as alleged to be meant by the apostle in this seventh to the Romans. That that is not meant or asserted by him in it, is very evident from his reasoning in it concerning the law. He does, ver. 4, consider men's being *dead to the law*, or *delivered from it*, as necessary in order to their having part in Christ, or, as he expresses it, *being married to him*; as necessary to their *bringing forth fruit unto God, not in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the spirit*. Yea, he intimates, chap. vi. 14, that being under the law, gave advantage to sin to have dominion over them. Now, if all this is to be understood of the mosaic law of ordinances, rites, and ceremonies, surely the apostles would not have preached the gospel at all to the Jews, without intimating to them clearly and loudly, that the abolition of the mosaic law, their being free from it, and renouncing it, was absolutely necessary for their salvation. Yet if we observe the preaching of the apostles to the Jews, and their discourses to them on divers occasions, as set down in the book of the Acts, we shall not find any thing to that purpose in them all. Instead of that, the thousands in Jerusalem and Judea, who believed, continued zealous of the law: and it does not appear, that the apostles or elders who dwelt among them, or resorted to them, did at all disturb them with declaring the abolition of the law. So far from it, that the apostle Peter was influenced by the brethren, who came down from Jerusalem to Antioch, to behave in a manner that tended to betray the liberty of the gentiles, with regard to the mosaic law, which had been

first intimated by revelation to himself. So far were the apostles from touching the law, as to its obligatory force with respect to the Jews. Could this have been their conduct, if the freedom of the Jews from that law had indeed been necessary for purposes so essential to salvation, as are mentioned, chap. vii. by the apostle Paul, in his discourse concerning the law ?

But there is something very clearly decisive on this subject in that story, Acts xxi. here before mentioned. Let us now consider it. Some time after writing this epistle to the Romans, Paul having arrived at Jerusalem, James and all the elders being present, they said unto him, ver. 20—24. *Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe ; and they are all zealous of the law : and they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. What is it therefore ? &c. What ! zealous of the law under the law, and married to the law, and yet believing, and so married to Christ ? Could the fidelity of the apostles allow them to connive at such pernicious inconsistent pretensions ? Would it not be expected, that, on this occasion, they would have asked the assistance of the apostle Paul, who had been so successful among the gentiles ; and have endeavoured to awaken all his zeal, to exert himself to the utmost to recover his countrymen who believed from this sad mistake ? Instead of that they gave Paul, and Paul observed, an advice of very contrary tendency.*

Let us now consider the advice that is unanimously given by James, and all the elders present.

It is, that he should confute these reports, and that he should give the most effectual proof, by avowed public practice, that these things, of which they were informed concerning him, were nothing had no foundation in truth, and that he walked orderly, and kept the law : and the apostle Paul, we see, did punctually observe this advice.

We may on this occasion observe the apostle Peter's conduct at Antioch, related by Paul, Gal. ii. and how Paul then behaved and argued ; and what a Jewish christian, who had seen his epistle to the Romans, (if it is to be understood according to the interpretation of the learned men lately mentioned,) might very reasonably have said to him, when he celebrated the expiration and fulfilment of his Nazarite vow. What is this, might he say, that I have seen thee doing ? thou hast been openly teaching, in thine epistle to the Roman christians, that these mosaic laws are no longer of force, even to Jews ; and hast suggested considerations of the utmost consequence, for which every Jew ought to assert his liberty from the obligation of these ordinances and observances : yet now I have seen thee showing serious regard to these institutions in thy own practice ; and thereby proving openly, that there was no truth in what was reported of thy urging the Jews to forsake Moses and his law. Surely this is not upright. You cannot have forgot how you treated the apostle Peter at Antioch, when for such fear of the jewish believers as you now show, he withdrew from the society of the gentile christians. You withstood him ; you said, he was to be blamed, that he dissembled himself, so that the christians of Antioch, and even Barnabas himself, were carried away with

his dissimulation. So you said when you reported that story. You said, that he walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel. You did obliquely charge him with building up the things he had destroyed; as he had so great a part in declaring the immunity of the gentiles from the mosaic law. Thus did you treat that eminent apostle, who was in Christ before you, and was so eminent among Jews and gentiles in the service of the gospel, when you were persecuting it. You excused yourself in this, by the necessity of doing so, for maintaining the truth of the gospel. But alas! how shall we now understand your conduct? after teaching that the Jews should no longer observe the mosaic law, you have gone to the temple, and to the priests; you have brought your offering, (according to the law, Numb. vi. 13, 14.) one he-lamb for a burnt offering, one ewe-lamb for a sin offering, one ram for a peace offering, with the proper meat offering, and drink offering. Is this the very man who told the Jews at Rome so very lately, that the mosaic law was no longer of force, and that they should assert their liberty from it, as they wished that sin should not have dominion over them, that they should be married to Christ, and bring forth fruit unto God? Surely this is not walking uprightly, or according to the truth of the gospel. This is building up very openly the things you have been destroying with such great labour and zeal.

To what hath been said, we may add what the apostle offered on different occasions, for vindicating himself to the Jews, or to others, against the accusations of the Jews. We are told, Acts xxv. 7. that *the Jews laid before Festus many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they*

could not prove ; and ver. 8. He answered for himself, Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple—have I offended any thing at all. It could not be accounted for, that any man of common honesty, who had, in so public manner as in an epistle to the church of Rome, asserted that the law of the Jews was abrogated, and consequently that the service of the temple ought to be no longer celebrated, would now before the seat of judgment assert, that he had not offended against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple. Nor do I see how, in the supposed case, his ingenuousness could be vindicated, when he said some time after this at Rome to the chief Jews of that place, when it is not unlikely that some of the christians might have been present, to whom he had some time before addressed this epistle, *I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers*, Acts xxviii. 17. What ! committed nothing against the customs of their fathers, if, in the epistle he had written some time ago to the christians of that place, he had asserted the abolition of all these customs !

— For my part, after all the closest attention I was capable of, to all that is said of the law, or of any particular matter respecting it, in this epistle to the Romans, I am well satisfied, that there is nothing in it of the abrogation of the mosaic law, with regard to the Jews, or their exemption from its obligation ; that it is no where therein asserted, that it is not a principle from which the apostle argues, nor a conclusion he infers from any principles.

I see nothing in this epistle to the Romans, that can be urged with any appearance of force, as importing the abolition of the mosaic law, if it is

not what we have in the 14th chapter. There appears in it a considerable difference in the practice of christians about meats and holy days. This matter was the occasion of judging and condemning upon one side, and of contempt and uncharitable neglect upon the other; and the peace of the church was much endangered by the difference. This we may learn from these words, ver. 19. *Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace.*

It has been thought by some, that these weak persons, spoken of in chap. xiv. were jewish believers, who did not yet understand, or receive, their liberty from the mosaic yoke. If indeed they were Jews, the apostle's calling them weak, for their adherence to the rules of that law, would imply, that the authority and obligation of that law had ceased. But it does not appear, that the Jews generally had sufficient cause to think, that their law was abrogated. The consequence of this is, that they generally had good reason to think it their duty to observe that law, and that they cannot be the persons charged on that account with weakness. Besides, in the disputes with the Jews, the question commonly turned on the necessity of men's being circumcised, and so brought under the obligation of the whole mosaic law. But when the question turned on the subject of meats and holy-days, I incline to think they were others than jewish converts, whose scrupulosity is there represented. The many thousands of the Jews who believed in Judea were zealous for the law. The apostles themselves at Jerusalem joined with them in the temple worship and service. The apostle Paul, a Jew, came under

the Nazarite vow, and celebrated the expiration of his vow, according to the rules of the law; as we have seen. These things being so, there can be no reason to think, that their brethren of the gentiles, who probably held pious jewish converts in much veneration, and who might be well content with enjoying their own liberty, would despise the believers of the Jews for their judaical observances, or that any differences would arise among them upon these accounts, that would endanger the peace of the church. The peace of the church was indeed much disturbed by the endeavours of some Jews to impose the mosaic law upon believers of the gentiles. But that the gentiles would disturb or despise believers who were of the Jews, for observing their own law, is by no means likely.

There is nothing in this 14th chapter, but may be well accounted for, by understanding these weak persons to have been believers of the gentiles, nor is it at all unreasonable to think, that there were of them such weak persons. It is to be considered, that a great many of the gentiles, who had been converted by the gospel, had been proselytes to judaism, and perhaps had been the children of such, brought up from childhood in that way, as Timothy had been. Although these might agree to the declaration of the liberty of the gentiles, as to the main of things; yet we may easily suppose, that something might stick with them. They had received Divine revelation, the word of God, and the faith by which they expected to be saved, from the Jews. It is no wonder, if for this they did retain a great veneration for that people, and for their institutions.

Besides, they might think that the distinction of meats, clean and unclean, had a more early authority, and more extensive obligation, as the distinction of beasts clean and unclean had been mentioned by God in his directions to Noah. Nor need we wonder, if they retained a regard for the jewish holy days. We know how tenacious christians have been, to this day, of ancient festivals, which derive their origin, some of them from judaism, some of them from heathenism itself. This may be the more easily conceived of some gentile converts at Rome, if we consider that the Galatians, gentiles as they were for most part, were so prone to desert wholly their valuable liberty, and to submit to the whole law of Moses, as appears in the epistle addressed to them.

The apostle doth indeed say in this chapter, *I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself*, Rom. xiv. 14. This may import, that there is not in any sort of thing, otherwise fit for food, any intrinsic uncleanness, such that the eating thereof would bring moral defilement on a man, for any thing in its own nature. This was clearly implied in the liberty granted to the gentiles from these regulations concerning beasts clean or unclean. So that such gentile converts as scrupled the use of them did therein show weakness. But there is nothing in this decisive against jewish converts, or to prove them to be weak, for observing the regulations of a law which they did not know to be abrogated, with respect to them, even while they might acknowledge that there was no natural or intrinsic uncleanness in the prohibited meats.

But now, upon the whole, to give freely my own

opinion concerning the abolition of the mosaic law and institutions, and the ceasing of their obligation, I believe there was good reason for it from the death of Christ. So it was said, *In the midst of the week* (so is expressed the time of his suffering) *he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease*, Dan. ix. 27. his death was the cause of the ceasing of these services. When the substance and body was exhibited, the reason ceased for entertaining the church with these shadows; and a more spiritual way of worship did better become the more spiritual dispensation of the gospel. This became good reasoning, when it became the reasoning of the Holy Ghost. Otherwise this, or any other human reasoning, could not make a sufficient warrant for men to withdraw from subjection to a law and ordinances, so expressly and solemnly instituted and promulgated by God himself. Nothing could be sufficient for this purpose to the Jews, but a public, clear, express, and well-vouched Divine revelation.

When the gospel was first preached, we do not find in the book of Acts, that the apostles mentioned, on any occasion, that the gospel was to supersede the obligation of the mosaic law, as to the Jews. Therefore such Jews as received the gospel, observed the mosaic law, and were zealous for it: and we find that the apostles were so far from giving disturbance or offence on that account, that they ordinarily joined with them in that way of worship. Grotius on Rom. vii. observes, that for a while after the synod of Jerusalem, Paul contented himself with intimating wherever he came their decree concerning the liberty of the gentiles. As to declaring the liberty of the Jews

from the law of Moses, he says, it was not yet the proper season : and I say that this was the case when the epistle to the Romans was written, and for some time after. Although there is no reason to doubt that the apostles themselves did, by this time, know (at least Paul probably did know) that the judaical ordinances were to be abolished : they did not, however, think it yet the fit season for giving out the revelation they had of this to the jewish converts ; nor were they directed yet to publish it ; and that for such good reason as their blessed Lord had mentioned to themselves, John xvi. 12. *I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.* They might give instruction concerning this matter to more advanced christians ; and it might be a part of that wisdom which Paul spoke among them that were perfect (grown up from childhood to be men in Christ) : but being under the direction of Divine wisdom, they did not think fit to give out openly, that it was the will of God to abolish wholly the mosaic system of ordinances, ceremonial service, and observances, with respect to the Jews themselves, until the gospel faith should be well established, and take deep root with the jewish christians.

We find in the second chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians, and in the second of the epistle to the Colossians, which were churches of the gentiles, something concerning the abolition of the jewish ordinances. These epistles were written some while after writing this to the Romans, (three years after, according to Dr. Whitby's chronology,) and after Paul's conduct at Jerusalem, related Acts xxi. which we have been considering : Paul

himself being then a prisoner at Rome. It was some time after, (about two years,) that the Divine revelation concerning this matter was clearly and fully given forth, in the epistle to the Hebrews. A great event was to happen, that would tend much to cause the jewish christians more readily to receive the declaration of the abrogation of the Mosaic law. That was the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, according to the prediction of our blessed Lord; by which it became impossible to celebrate the chief ordinances of that law. Accordingly, about five years before that event the epistle to the Hebrews was written. It might take that much time for that epistle to be sufficiently spread among the Hebrew christians in the east, and for it to operate somewhat in their minds. Then, in the seventieth year of our Lord, the revelation and doctrine of the epistle to the Hebrews was confirmed by the dreadful event of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, and the awful vengeance that was executed on the jewish nation.

In that epistle to the Hebrews, who of all the Jews had the warmest zeal for the mosaic institutions, revelation speaks clearly and fully of the abolition of these. There the inspired writer shows the mosaic sacrifices to be ineffectual for the purpose of expiating sin. There he proves, from the scriptures of the Old Testament, that God intended to set up a priesthood different from the Aaronic, and to constitute Christ a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. From this he argues in a manner clear and just, chap. vii. 12. *The priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.* So with the abolition of

the levitical priesthood, the whole system of the levitical and mosaic institutions fell down, and were no longer of force.

What hath been said may satisfy us, that when the apostle says here, chap. vii. 4. *Ye are become dead to the law*; and ver. 6. *We are delivered from the law*; he doth not mean it of the Jews being made free from the obligation of the mosaic ceremonial law, or of its precepts and institutions. None consider the judicial law of the commonwealth of Israel as being meant on this occasion; nor can we understand him as meaning to derogate, in any degree, from the authority or obligation of the commandments of the moral law. What the apostle means by being *dead to the law*, and being *delivered from it*, will be the subject of inquiry in the following pages; where explaining the marriage with the law that he speaks of, and the dissolution of that marriage, will make it clear in what sense he means being delivered from the law.

This might be a fit place for representing the general scope and contents of this seventh chapter. It seems to be acknowledged by learned interpreters, that the apostle designs in it to explain what he had said, chap. vi. 14. He there insinuated, that they who are under the law are under the dominion of sin. It is obvious, that his explanations in the first part of the chapter, ver. 1—13, do respect that point. Whether the latter context, ver. 14—25, doth represent the condition and circumstances of those who are under grace, with regard to sin, is to be inquired into in the proper place. For any thing more particular, it is fit to refer to the explications here following.

EXPLICATION AND PARAPHRASE

OF

ROMANS VII.

1. *Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?*

EXPLICATION. As to the purpose the apostle now enters upon, it appears to be this. He had said, chap. vi. 14. *Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.* This insinuates, that whilst persons are under the law, they are under the dominion of sin. There was great need to explain this. The law is the rule of holiness, and strictly requires it. Sin is the transgression of the law, and is prohibited by every precept of it, under a heavy sanction. Whereas, on the other hand, grace aboundeth in the pardoning of sin. Now, to say that sin hath dominion over men by occasion of being under the law, which thus prohibits it, and denounces wrath and judgment for it, and that men become free from the dominion of sin, by being under grace that pardons it, hath, at first sight, a great appearance of paradox, or mystery. It is indeed the mystery of the gospel in what concerns sanctification, which the apostle saw it of great consequence to explain, as he doth in the following context. In the first thirteen verses, he

carefully vindicates the law from being in any way blamable for the sinfulness, or actual sins, of men. He at the same time shows, that all the light and authority of the law is so far from subduing sin in men, that it doth, as being thereby awakened and irritated, the more exert itself, and show its extreme wickedness.

In the beginning of this chapter, he sets out with illustrating his doctrine by the similitude of *marriage*; and in this first verse, he lays down the general principle contained in it. It appears by the next following verses, that the relation between the law, and those who are under it, he compares to that between husband and wife.

2. For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.

3. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

Any thing here which it were of consequence to explain, will be more fitly considered in explaining the following verses; wherein the matter here designed for a similitude, and the principles concerning it, are applied to the apostle's particular purpose. Any explication fit to be suggested here, may be comprehended and expressed briefly in the following

PARAPHRASE. 1. I have said, (chap. vi. 14.) that *sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace.* I come now

to explain the important subject to you : and I begin to lead you in to the understanding of my meaning and doctrine somewhat in the allegorical way, and by a similitude taken from a matter, of which you cannot be ignorant. For I presume that all of you, my dear brethren and fellow-christians, know the law, and this principle concerning it, that the law hath dominion over a man, such as a husband hath over his wife, for so long time as liveth either the law, or the person who hath been under the law, and no longer ; for the death of either party dissolves the marriage covenant and relation, and the obligations arising therefrom.

2. For (to exemplify this upon one side) the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law of marriage, and by the marriage covenant, to her husband as long as he liveth ; but when the husband is dead, she is loosed from the marriage law and covenant, by which she was bound to her husband.

3. The consequence then is, If the woman during her husband's life shall be married to another man, that she shall be called (shall be indeed) an adulteress : but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law, according to which she might be charged with crime and reproach ; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. In like manner, if you have been married to the law, and have had it, by a sacred covenant, for your husband, this bond could not be dissolved by mere will or fancy. It hath been a covenant and relation for life : so it is death that dissolves it.

4. *Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.*

EXPLICATION. For the right understanding of this verse, it is needful to explain, 1. What is meant by the *law*. 2. What by being *dead* to the law. 3. How we are to understand being *married* to the law, and afterwards to Christ. 4. How the marriage with the law is *dissolved*, and by what means. 5. The *consequence* of that marriage being dissolved, and of our being married to Christ. The explaining of these important points, will contribute much to our conceiving justly the scope of this whole context, as well as the sense of this verse.

1. What is meant by the *law*.

It has been proved already that the law here is not to be understood of the mosaic ceremonial law. Certainly we can understand no other here by the law than the moral law, that universal rule of duty which hath been given to mankind, fenced with the sanction of death for transgression, which may be reasonably supposed to imply a promise of life for obedience, and which contained the matter of the first covenant. This law was generally known by men, though with different degrees of light. The heathens did by nature's direction the things contained in the law, (chap. ii. 14, 15.) and showed the work of the law written in their hearts, (not the work of sanctifying; for that is not the work of the law, as is here proved, but) the marking out to men their duty, and giving the

knowledge of sin and of judgment for it; their consciences bearing witness, and their thoughts accusing or excusing, according to the degree of light they had. In what they thought their duty, they could have satisfaction, and an agreeable self-approbation. By doing ill, the peace of their mind was disturbed; their consciences accused them, and they were self-condemned. As sin abounded with them, there was a secret misgiving and fear. They made a shift to make life as agreeable as they could by the amusement of speculation, or by exercise and employment, or by temporary earthly enjoyments; in which commonly they went to a length, in various sorts of self-indulgence, according to their abilities and opportunities, that was extremely criminal. By such means they often smothered and overcame apprehensions, against which they knew not the true comfort, or proper remedy. But it appears, that in the heathens this habitual latent fear, that ever attends a state of condemnation, was easily awakened, so as to rise to a high degree, and to be the cause of much superstition, and of some horrible methods for appeasing the wrath of Heaven, and averting judgments.

The church of God anciently had a much more clear and extensive knowledge of the law, and of judgment for transgression, and that by the solemn promulgation of it at Sinai; and afterwards by the scripture, which contained the explication and enforcement of it, from time to time, by the prophets. Though the apostle doth not mean here to restrict his doctrine and argument to any law that was peculiar to the Jews; yet in speaking of the law, he seems to have in his eye that clearer light of

the law by revelation, which the Jews enjoyed ; as we have cause to think from his mentioning a commandment expressly set forth in the decalogue, in which the sum of the law was given them, *Thou shalt not covet.*

2. What is meant by being *dead* to the law.

The consequences of death are various, with respect to various subjects. Here the death mentioned hath respect to marriage, and evidently means the dissolution of that marriage which had been between persons and the law. As death dissolves marriage, so the dissolution of this marriage is expressed by being *dead to the law*. The believer is no longer married to the law ; he is made *free* from that yoke, and from all obligation arising from that connexion and relation.

He had also mentioned, ver. 1, the law's having dominion over a man. In so far as that dominion coincides with the right and claim of the law as a husband, being *dead* to it imports being made free from that dominion of the law.

But it is the explication of the remaining points, that are proposed to be the subject of inquiry on this verse, that will fully explain the meaning of being *dead to the law* ; and that will, at the same time, show a special reason why the apostle expresses, being made free from the law, and from its dominion as a husband, by being *dead* to it. Without anticipating things out of their more proper place, let us now be satisfied with the general view of the matter that hath been given, and proceed to the next point.

3. How is to be understood being *married* to the law, and being *married* to Christ.

In order to reach the apostle's meaning, it is fit

to consider the special things that do naturally arise from the marriage covenant and relation between a woman and her husband.

In the first place, the woman is entitled, by the marriage covenant and relation, to support and protection from her husband, and that he provide for her welfare and happiness; and she hath cause to depend on and confide in him for this, so far as she shall show herself dutiful to him. It is said to the woman, Gen. iii. 16. *Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.* There is no question but the expression, *thy desire shall be to thy husband*, implies her dependence; as it does when it is used concerning Abel, chap. iv. 7. But then it implies not only dependence of inferiority and subjection, but likewise dependence of trust and confidence. So that applying this to the apostle's subject and design in this place, it comes to this: that persons married to the law have had dependence on that husband for support and protection, and his providing for their welfare; and this as connected with subjection to the rule of that husband, and obedience to his commands.

To establish the meaning I have given of that expression, it is fit to observe the meaning and use of it in some other places: and I expect that fixing the meaning of the expression will give considerable light concerning the meaning of these texts I am to mention.

One of them is, Isa. xxvi. 8. *Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee*; that is, trusted in thee. It looks strange to profess trust and confidence in God, when he is dealing in way of wrath and judgment with

men. But the church accounts for this trust and confidence, and shows the reason and sure ground on which it is founded, by adding, *The desire of our soul* (a Hebraism, the same as, *our desire*: see on chap. vi. 12.) *is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee*; rather, to thy memorial, as the word is rendered in the text to be presently cited. The sense of this is to be taken from Exod. iii. 15. *I am JEHOVAH, the God of Abraham—this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial to all generations.* *The God of Abraham* is the summary of the covenant of grace, as exhibited to Abraham, and to the faithful, as his spiritual seed. So when the church expresses her trust and confidence in God, Isa. xxvi. 8, even when he was dealing with her in way of anger and judgment; she gives a good reason for it, when she says, *Our desire is to thy name, and to thy memorial*; our dependence is on what thou hast given to our fathers for thy everlasting *name and memorial*; and so we are confident, that angry as thou justly art, yet thy covenant, O unchangeable, almighty JEHOVAH, shall stand firm, and take full effect in our behalf.

Thus also, 1 Sam. ix. 20. *On whom is all the DESIRE of Israel? is it not on thee, and on all thy father's house?* This is not said historically; for few of Israel at that time knew Saul; but prophetically: as if he had said, Thou art to be king, the anointed of the Lord; on whom all Israel shall have their dependence, that under thy shadow (Lam. iv. 20.) they shall live among the heathen.

So likewise, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5, after mentioning God's covenant, everlasting, well ordered, and sure, David adds, *For this is all my salvation*

and all my DESIRE. Of which last expression this is likely to be the meaning: this covenant of God's grace is that on which I have my dependence, and found my confidence for all my hope and my salvation.

It seems reasonable to understand in the same sense that expression, Hag. ii. 7. *The* DESIRE *of all nations shall come*; which is to be taken as said, not historically, (as was observed concerning the words of Samuel to Saul,) but prophetically: He who shall be the desire of all nations; on whom God's people of all nations shall have their dependence, and found their confidence; as all nations are to be blessed in him.

The sense of the expression is now pretty clear; and, as the Lord said to our first mother, *Thy desire shall be to thy husband*; so, according to the apostle's similitude and style, if sinners are married to the law, the consequence is, their desire is to that husband; they confide in and depend on that husband, the law, for protecting them, for securing their standing before God, for providing and insuring happiness to them, in consequence of their obedience to the commandments of that husband. But, alas! this wife hath broken her covenant with her husband; she hath gone astray from him, and preferred the interest and gratification of others to his commands, honour, and pleasure; she hath disregarded his commands, and dealt most undutifully with him. Whatever imaginary hopes she may still entertain of good from him, being insensible of her own ill behaviour, she hath indeed nothing to expect from him but just rigour and wrath. This, namely, that the sinner cannot attain justification, or any of its

comfortable consequences, by the law, hath been the apostle's subject in the first four or five chapters of this epistle.

But though the explaining the apostle's similitude of marriage led us to say so much of that matter; and that, by the way, we found occasion to offer light concerning some texts of scripture; yet if we consider somewhat closely, we may be soon satisfied, that that is not the particular matter in his view in the present context, chap. vii. 1—13, and that it is another consequence of the marriage covenant and relation that he hath in his eye.

In the next place, then, the wife expects to be fruitful by means of her husband. That this is the particular point now in the apostle's view is evident. During the former marriage with the law, the fruit was, as ver. 5, to *bring forth* FRUIT *unto death*. But, as in this 4th verse, the consequence of the dissolution of the marriage with the law, and of being married to Christ, is, to *bring forth* FRUIT *unto God*: and being delivered from the law, the christian is enabled to serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. This evidently suits what is generally observed and acknowledged to be the scope and design of this context; to wit, to explain what the apostle had said, chap. vi. 14, where, in enforcing the exhortation to holiness, he suggests this encouragement, *Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace*: which clearly implies, that whilst under the law, and married to it, sin having dominion over them, they could not bring forth fruit unto God.

These things have no special respect to the

peculiar institutions of the mosaic law. The case plainly is, that men in all times are concerned with the law of God, particularly the moral law; which includes under its authority, and in the comprehensive meaning of its precept, all positive divine institutions, whether before the fall or after it, whether under the Old or the New Testament dispensation. The marriage with the law is dissolved but in one way here mentioned. Every one is married with the law, and is under the dismal consequence of being so, as matters stand with sinners, until they be delivered from the law in the way here suggested.

To take a general view of the matter, we may say, that this marriage with the law hath its foundation in the original constitution of things, and in the covenant God made at first with man. When God made man, and gave him his law, with the threatening of death denounced against transgression, and the promise, therein implied, of life for obedience, it was by obedience to the law that man was to live; and by the influence of its light and authority he was to be fruitful in all holiness and righteousness. Although there hath happened by sin a sad alteration in man's condition, yet still the right of the law, that first husband, hath subsisted. It continues to be the right of the law, that none shall attain justification and life but by its means, and by perfect obedience to it. It continues to be the right of the law, that men should by the influence of its light and authority bring forth fruit unto God. Though man, by the guiltiness and corruption he hath incurred, hath become incapable of justification or sanctification by the law; (which tends to make his condition quite

deplorable;) yet such doth the right of the law, the first husband, continue to be, until the marriage with the law is dissolved in the way pointed out here by the apostle.

Upon the other hand, if we consider the matter on man's part, we shall find, however obnoxious man is to the law by transgression and guilt, and however opposite to the holiness of the law in his nature and practice, that there is still naturally in men a strong attachment to this first marriage, and inclination to look for protection or justification, for fruitfulness, sanctification, and final happiness, by the first husband, the law. The light, principles, and sentiments, which are naturally in the minds of men, mark out to them no other way to life, but by the law, and obedience thereto. Nor doth nature show any other way to holiness and fruitfulness, but by the concurrence of their own powers, and earnest endeavours, with the light and authority of the law.

Besides the sentiments that are naturally in the minds of men, there are naturally principles in the hearts of men that favour this first marriage, and that contribute to its subsisting, even when it can yield no comfort or real benefit. The way of life and fruitfulness, (however now impossible,) between this first husband and the natural human powers, hath something in it that greatly suits the pride, that self-exalting principle, which is naturally in the hearts of men; which, while it honours the law in appearance, doth indeed give to men themselves the honour of all their good works, and of their hope of eternal life.

Thus by the original right of the law, by the sentiments of men's own minds, and by the

principles that naturally prevail in their hearts, this marriage with the law subsists, until it is dissolved by the death of one or other party, or of both, according to the apostle's figurative way of representing the matter.

From what hath been said, it is the more easy to understand what it imports to be *married* to Christ. The less needs be said on it in this place. Briefly and in the general, the believer's being united to Christ by faith, and by the Spirit of Christ; being called of God to the fellowship of his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ; and he and they being in the sight of God, and according to the law of grace, held as one; they have the fellowship of his righteousness for their justification, and of his grace otherwise for sanctification and fruitfulness, and for their complete salvation and happiness.

4. How the marriage with the law is *dissolved*; and by what means.

The apostle, in setting forth the similitude, by which he illustrates his subject, had observed, that marriage is dissolved by death; and now here, ver. 4, he tells the believers, that they are *DEAD to the law*. The question then comes to this; How is this death to the law, that dissolves the marriage with it, brought about?

The law itself contributes its part to this event. So the apostle says, Gal. ii. 19, *I through the law am dead to the law*. The law, the first husband, is indeed dead itself, as to the power of effecting the design of marriage. Never was any more dead than the law is, as to the power of giving justification, or fruitfulness in holiness, to sinners. Yet it lives in the fearful sanction of death and the curse to sinners; and they must

all have died by its hands, in rigorous and just revenge of their undutifulness and disobedience, if a way had not been found for their relief. A sinner, whose ear hath been opened to the law, and his conscience and heart awakened by it, finds its demands, as to a justifying righteousness, wholly beyond his reach ; and that there can be nothing to him from it, but wrath and destruction, as he is a transgressor. If it requires fruitfulness in holiness, it is as a hard task-master, and doth not afford the means and assistance necessary for the work. The sinner receiving a just view of this, with deep impression, can no longer have his desire to that husband, or have his dependence on him, for any good to himself. Despairing of himself, and of the law, he must look another way for relief.

God himself, of his manifold wisdom, uncontrollable sovereignty, and rich grace, hath provided a way of relief. Matters having failed between mankind and this first husband he had assigned them, he hath provided a second husband for them, even Christ. So in our text, ver. 4. *Ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ ;* that is, by Christ crucified. By this most properly and effectually are persons made dead to the law. The law itself hath its subserviency, as we have seen, in separating sinners from that their first husband. But by the body of Christ crucified is the happy event truly brought about. If the first husband had a claim of justice against them for their undutiful behaviour, the crucifixion of the body of Christ, whereby sin hath been expiated, and which is the consummation of that righteousness by which he hath fulfilled the law, hath answered the claim of

the law. So the resentment of that first husband cannot reach them. They are, as by death, delivered from it, as a bond servant is by death delivered from a hard master, or a wife from the yoke of a rigorous husband. By his death Christ hath acquired his people, or church, to be his own spouse. Thus the first marriage is dissolved ; the law cannot claim, as a husband, that persons should have dependence on it, as they are provided for in a better way.

Here likewise we may observe a reason why the true believer's deliverance from the law is very properly expressed by being *dead* to it. It is by being *dead with Christ*, (chap. vi. 8.) by their fellowship with Christ in his death, and by their interest in his death, and in the fruits thereof, that they are thus delivered from the law, and that an end is put to their relation to the law as their husband : as they are also said to have been *raised together* with Christ. If they are said to be *dead to the law*, (which they are by their fellowship with Christ in his death,) and yet after this their death to be *married to another*, there is no incongruity in it. If they are dead in one respect, in another respect they live, being risen together with Christ to a new being and life, as his spouse or wife : as he having died to acquire them to himself for his spouse, hath, by rising from the dead, proved himself capable to cause them to live, and to do the part of a husband to them, in protecting, caring for them, and securing effectually their eternal welfare. Hence the desire of true christians is to this their new husband, and they have their dependence on him for all things ; until at length he bring home his church to himself, when she

shall have the full fruition of him, in everlasting glory and blessedness.

Now as to all this blessed fruit of Christ's death and resurrection; we are not to think that it did not at all take place until he was actually crucified, died and rose again; or until the subsequent more full display of gospel light. These things are indeed now set forth by the gospel in a much more clear light, and are better understood than under the former more dark dispensation. The grounds of our confidence and our liberty are now fully exhibited to us; and since Christ ascended up on high, and hath received gifts for men, the fruits of his death and resurrection are much more abundant and plentiful to the church. But we are not to connect the disadvantages of being *under the law*, here mentioned, with the legal pedagogy of the Old Testament; or to suppose that the advantages by Christ, here set forth under the figure of being *married* with him, do solely belong to the gospel times and dispensation, and are connected with the abrogation of the mosaic law. It is certain, that as Christ is called *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*, his expiatory sufferings and death have had effect from the beginning of the world, for remission of sins to all true believers. In like manner, his death hath had effect for the sanctifying of his people by his Spirit, from the beginning. As it was the Spirit of Christ who spoke by all the ancient prophets, 1 Pet. i. 11; so did his Spirit operate then powerfully in the hearts of his people, to make them fruitful in holiness. We may then confidently conclude, that the apostle doth here, by being married to the law, by the dissolution of

that marriage, and by being married to Christ, set forth, as to the substance of things, and as to what is most essential, the different conditions of men, in the state of nature, and in the state of grace, both under the legal pedagogy of the Old, and under the gospel dispensation of the New Testament.

5. The *consequence* of the dissolution of the marriage with the law, and of being married to Christ.

It is, first, that the law hath no longer a right to execute its vengeance for disobedience on those who believe in Christ; and next, that they bring forth fruit unto God; that is, the fruit of holiness and righteousness, by which God is served in a conformity to his will, and holy commandment. God delighteth in having fruit by his only begotten Son; and that he hath by his marriage with the spouse which he hath given him: and she, however formerly unfruitful, is made fruitful by the power and grace of her glorious Husband; to bring forth fruit by which his Father is *glorified*, (John xv. 8.) and by which she is (Eph. i. 6.) *to the praise of the glory of his grace*. How this fruitfulness is the consequence, is a point to be hereafter explained; and it is needless to say more on it here, as the explication of the verse under consideration doth not require it.

PARAPHRASE. 4. So accordingly it hath happened to you, my brethren, as to your condition and state. You were indeed married to the law by the first covenant; according to which that husband, in consequence of your dutiful obedience to his will, was to protect you, and to secure your standing before God, and to make you fruitful in

all holiness, and happy for ever. At the same time, from the sentiments that were naturally in your minds, and the principles that naturally prevailed in your hearts, your desire was to that husband, and your dependence was on him for justification, and protection, and for fruitfulness ; and this when, for your undutifulness and disobedience to him, you had the most fearful things to expect from him, when through the weakness you had incurred, you were become incapable of fruitfulness by his instructions or authority. But now there is a happy change in your condition. You are made free from that marriage covenant, and from your relation to the law as a husband. The law itself (Gal. ii. 19.) hath had its subservience in bringing this about on your part, by convincing you of the sad things you had to expect from it, and that as a husband it could not help your wretched state ; so that you were determined to betake you to the better hope which the gospel set before you, even Christ crucified : and by the crucifixion of the body of Christ it is, that the demands of the law being satisfied, he hath acquired you to himself. So that by your fellowship with him in his death, having died with him, you became dead to the law, so far as concerns marriage therewith, and its consequences : and you having risen together with Christ, are married to him, and through faith your desire is towards him, your dependence is on him, as your most loving Husband, who by his resurrection from the dead, and its glorious consequences, is capable, as to secure your favourable standing before God, so to dispose and enable you to bring forth fruit unto holiness and righteousness, in the service of God, and to his glory ; and to

make you eternally happy with himself. These ends and purposes, when once you became sinners, could not be attained by your marriage with the law.

5. *For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.*

EXPLICATION. We shall now have occasion to observe and explain the effects of the law, and of sin by the law, in those who are under the law, and married to it, in so far as concerns the fruit they bring forth; and shall have occasion, at the same time, to observe and explain what are the consequences of being married to Christ, so far as is mentioned in this context.

It will tend much to clear our way as to these matters, that we, in the first place, explain what is meant by *flesh*, *fleshly* or *carnal*, and being *in the flesh*, mentioned in this ver. 5.

The use of these words is somewhat various in scripture. When they appear to have a moral signification, they have commonly one or other of these meanings.

1. The epithet and character of *carnal*, or *fleshly*, is given to the mosaic ordinances or institutions. The epistle to the Hebrews calls the ceremonial law, *the law of a carnal commandment*, Heb. vii. 16; and by *purifying of the flesh*, or a fleshly purifying, appears to mean an external ceremonial purification, Heb. ix. 13. In these ordinances there was much external labour, and a great variety of external observances: and the levitical institutions and worship had in them great external ceremony, stateliness, and pomp, which

suits the disposition of the flesh, and hath been ever, and continues to be, most agreeable to men that are carnal, whose hearts are not sufficiently well disposed for spiritual worship. Hence it hath happened, that a prevailing carnal disposition, which increased as men's relish of spiritual worship decreased, hath introduced into the christian church and worship much external ceremony, pageantry, and pomp. Many in latter times have complained, that the reformed churches have made Divine worship too naked, simple, and unadorned. The great men of the world seem to think, as if there ought to be that stateliness in the house of God that becomes their own courts and attendance ; and carnal men are commonly of the same disposition and way of thinking. But as we think it most right and safe that the Lord should not have occasion to say of any thing in our worship, *It is what I commanded not, neither came it into my mind*, Jer. vii. 31 ; so we reckon that external plainness and simplicity is, in its own nature, most suited to the worship of God, who is a Spirit, and desires to be worshipped in spirit and in truth, and most suited to the more spiritual gospel dispensation.

It is agreeable to the notion which scripture gives us, to call the Old-Testament state of the church, its state of childhood, or nonage ; and the Lord condescended to the weakness of his church in that its childhood, in appointing ordinances suited to it. As in the case of the Corinthians, the apostle doth, to the notion of their being *babes*, join that of being *carnal* ; so to the childhood of the church, the Lord accommodated carnal ordinances. But then there is a great

difference between being, in some sort and degree *carnal*, and being in the *flesh*; which is the expression here, ver. 5. The former is said of the Corinthians, who were in Christ and saints, 1 Cor. iii. 1, 3, and who could not be said to be in the flesh. They indeed are said to be *carnal*, for the carnal lusts, passions, and divisions that prevailed among them. But though the Old-Testament ordinances are called *carnal*, I do not see that even *carnal* or *fleshly* is given as the character of the Old-Testament church, or of men as members of it. But to be *in the flesh* can by no means be understood as their character; as will appear by explaining that expression hereafter.

2. The *flesh* is sometimes mentioned with respect to men's false confidences before God, and the grounds thereof. So of the true circumcision it is said, Phil. iii. 3, that they *have no confidence in the flesh*.

How far *fleshly* or *carnal confidence* is concerned in the subject of our context, we may see hereafter. But certainly it is not in view in this fifth verse, where being *in the flesh* is mentioned in view to the *motions of sin*, and *bringing forth fruit unto death*.

3. Most commonly the *flesh* (used in a moral sense) signifies the corruption of nature, the evil principle of sin in men; or human nature as corrupted by sin. The word *flesh* may have been transferred to this use and meaning, from a view to the body, and the excitement it gives to various evil affections and lusts, which are accomplished and gratified by the body. It was in this part that the moral depravation of nature was most obvious, striking, and sensible; which might have

occasioned the corruption of nature in general to be called *the flesh*. But it would make odd work in language and interpretation, to confine the meanings of words to what they would import by their derivation, and original meaning. The sense of words is to be determined by the use of speech; and the meaning of scripture words is to be determined by the scripture use especially.

If we observe the scripture use, we shall find the *flesh*, and the *lust of the flesh*, in a more restricted sense. So 1 John ii. 16, the *lust of the flesh* means that sort of lust, in particular, which receives its excitement from the body, is accomplished by, and brings special defilement and dishonour on the body. But the ill moral meaning of the *flesh* is not to be restricted to this. In 2 Cor. vii. 1, if there are *filthinesses of the flesh*, there are also *filthinesses of the spirit*; and the Lord doth, John viii. 44, mention to the Jews the *lusts of their father the devil*. But there is in scripture mention of the *flesh* in so large a sense, as to comprehend filthinesses of the flesh and of the spirit; yea, all sinful lusts and corrupt unholy affections whatsoever. In this large sense of the word is *flesh* mentioned, Gal. v. 19—21, where we have a numerous list of these called *works of the flesh*, some of which, it is plain, have place in creatures that have no body, no connexion with flesh in their personal constitution.

But what is it to be *in the flesh*? We have several similar expressions in our own language. A man is said to be *in* good humour, when good humour is prevalent in him; to be *in* wrath, or in anger, when wrath or anger is prevalent in him; to be *in* drink, when the influence and effect of

drink is prevalent. This would lead us to think, that to be *in the flesh* signifies to be under the prevalent influence and power of that corrupt principle or depravation, which, we have seen, the scripture means by the *flesh*.

The apostle Paul directs us, in a very clear manner, to understand the expression thus. He mentions, chap. viii. 5, being *after the flesh*; which is certainly the same as to be *in the flesh*, ver. 8, where he says, *They who are in the flesh cannot please God*. Will any say, that Israelites of old, for being under the carnal ordinances of the mosaic law, were in the flesh, and so could not please God? As none will say this, it is plain, that the apostle cannot here mean the mosaic law, or the state of men under it. He helps us to understand fully what he means by being *in the flesh*, by what he states in opposition to it, ver. 9. *Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*.

Here it is evident, that being *in the Spirit* doth not signify merely having a temper and disposition conformed to Christ, and suitable to the spirituality of the gospel. It imports to have the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwelling in a man, as ver. 10; even that same Spirit by whom (as in that same ver. 10.) God shall quicken the mortal bodies at the resurrection: which doth not dwell in any that are under the curse of the law; or in any but those he hath brought into union with Christ, who are born of the Spirit, and so are renewed in the habitual and prevailing temper and disposition of

their hearts. It is clear, in the apostle's words, that it is by that Spirit, and by his operation and influence in men, that they come out of their carnal state, and from being in the flesh. Being *in the Spirit*, and *having the Spirit of Christ*, upon the one hand, and being *in the flesh*, destitute of the *Spirit*, on the other, are the characters and states of men that are contradistinguished. As the Spirit cometh not by the law, they that are under the law, being without the Spirit, must be in the flesh; and they who, having the Spirit, are led by him, (Gal. v. 18.) are not under the law; as is there said. By being *in the flesh*, is certainly meant a character and state commensurate to being *under the law*. This evidently suits the apostle's scope, and his view of explaining these words, chap. vi. 14. *Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law*. But what concerns the mosaic ritual and ceremonial law hath in this, none of the learned, who suppose it to be here meant, have been able to explain, to the satisfaction of any who are not disposed to take things from them implicitly.

Some men write, as if being under the *pedagogy* of the law, and being *under the law* in the sense of our context, (in that sense in which they who are under the law are under the dominion of sin, chap. vi. 14.) were the same thing; which is very wrong. The true church of God, the heir, (Gal. iv. 1, 3.) whilst a child, was under that dispensation and pedagogy. But we must not say, they were *in the flesh*, in the sense the apostle here evidently means, and wholly destitute of the *Spirit*; or that there were so many holy men in these times, without the sanctifying grace of the

Spirit. Some men do not allow the Spirit his proper work, in sanctifying men under the Old-Testament dispensation. It would sometimes seem as if they thought, that under the Old Testament, men pleased God, and became good men, without the Spirit altogether. This needs be the less wondered at, that they suppose that heathens may please God with their virtue, without any revelation of the law or gospel, or of the promise of the Spirit. But the scripture gives another view of things. If under the gospel dispensation men are destitute of the Spirit, as very many appear to be, they are in the flesh: and men under the mosaic pedagogy, who proved by their disposition and practice that they had the Spirit of God dwelling in them, were not in the flesh, nor under the law, as *law* is meant in this context; but, as to the real state of their souls, under grace, and in favour with God. Though still, as hath been said formerly, allowance is to be made of greater abundance of the Spirit, and of spiritual blessings, in the period that hath succeeded the actual propitiation by the blood of the cross, and the actual resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ.

By what hath been said, it is evident, that to be *in the flesh*, and destitute of the *Spirit*, is not to be connected with being under the mosaic legal pedagogy; but with being *under the law*, in that sense in which all men are naturally so, until they become dead to the law by virtue of the cross of Christ, and by being united to him by true faith.

The expression that falls next to be considered is, *the motions of sins which are by the law*. The Greek word *παθηματα*, signifies more precisely

passions, or *affections*, as the English margin gives it ; and the *affections of sins*, a Hebraism, is the same as sinful affections, or lustings. These are naturally in men ; but they are considered here as put in motion, or excited ; and this by occasion of the law.

The precept, prohibition, and fearful threatening of the law, do, instead of subduing sinful affections in an unrenewed heart, but irritate them, and occasion their excitement and more violent motion. Nor is this any imputation on the law of God, which is not the proper cause of these motions. These are to be ascribed to the corruption of men's hearts ; which the apostle insinuates, when he ascribes these sinful motions by the law to men in the flesh. The true state of the case between the flesh, or the evil principle of sin, and the law, is, that the flesh or sin worketh death in a man by that which is good ; as is represented here, ver. 13. The matter has been often illustrated by the similitude of the sun, by whose light and heat roses and flowers display their fine colours, and emit their fragrant smell, whereas by its heat, the dung-hill emits its unsavoury steams and ill smell. These various and opposite effects are from the different objects and their different natures. So the law, which to a sanctified heart is a mean of holy practice, doth, in those who are in the flesh, occasion the more vehement motions of sinful affections and lustings ; not from any proper causality of the law, but from the energy of the sinful principles that are in men's hearts and nature. There was great wrath and sinful passion in Jeroboam, by the reproof of the prophet, 1 Kings xiii. 4. This was not to be imputed to

the prophet, but to Jeroboam, a man in the flesh. In David, a man of very different character, Nathan's very sharp reproof had no such effect. If the apostle meant here, ver. 5, only motions of sins *under* the law; this would give him no occasion to vindicate the law, as he does, ver. 7. *Is the law sin? God forbid.*

PARAPHRASE. 5. So far were we, whilst under the law, from bringing forth fruit unto God, that being then in the flesh, in our corrupt and unregenerate state, under the dominion of sin, our sinful affections or lusts, awakened by the prohibition and threatening of the law, did work in all our faculties and powers such unholy fruit as tendeth to death, and if grace prevented not, would certainly terminate in death: the law, with all its strict prohibitions, and fearful denunciations, being weak, through the prevailing power of the flesh, and not able to subdue these sinful affections and lustings in us.

6. *But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.*

EXPLICATION. The expression, ver. 4, was, *dead to the law*; here it is, *delivered from the law*. The sense in general is the same. But there is some question about the right reading of the next clause; *That*, or, *it* (namely, the law) *being dead wherein we were held*. If we take it not thus, there will be this seeming inconvenience or impropriety; that, though in setting forth the similitude he had mentioned marriage to be dissolved by the death of the husband, without any mention of the

death of the wife; yet there is nothing of the death of the husband (the law) in the application of the similitude to his subject. This seeming impropriety is avoided by our reading; which is supported, as some of the learned relate, by one ancient copy, (that of Vienna,) and by the authority of Chrysostom: and thus later writers do commonly take it. There is besides a suitableness in the expression to that of ver. 2, which tends to favour our reading. There, setting forth the similitude, he says, *If the husband be dead, she is loosed* (κατηργηται) *from the law of her husband*. So here, ver. 6, where, according to our reading, there is mention of the death of the law, the expression is, (κατηργηθημεν,) *we are loosed or delivered from the law*.

The other reading the English gives on the margin; *we being dead to that wherein, or whereby, we were held*: and so the matter is expressed, ver. 4. *Ye also are become dead to the law*. This is the reading of the ancient MSS. generally, according to which several ancient translations render; and so the text is cited generally by the ancient writers of the church. It is not easy to find arguments sufficient against a reading so well supported; though at the same time, after saying so much about it, it makes no difference as to the main subject and argument.

The last part of the verse comes now to be considered, *That we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter*. It is plain the apostle hath in his view the difference in practice between those who are under the law, and married to it, and those who were disengaged from that first marriage, and married to Christ.

He had represented, ver. 4, the consequence of being dead to the law to be, *to bring forth fruit unto God*. Here he so varies the expression, as to give the hint of the particular sort and manner of fruitfulness; it is to *serve God in newness of spirit*. But as to these who were married to the law, shall we say they had no religion at all, no design to bring forth fruit unto God, or to serve him? This is not to be thought; yea, it were scarce consistent with being married to the law. But they *served in the oldness of the letter*. When was it, then, that men *served in the oldness of the letter*? In the general, according to the opposition here stated, it was when they were *not delivered from the law*; when they were *under the law*, and *in the flesh*; as we have seen these things conjoined. As the flesh hath its impurity and wickedness, it hath its religion too. But this is not to be connected with the Old-Testament dispensation, as peculiar to it. If many were carnal in religion under that dispensation, many are likewise now carnally religious under the New-Testament dispensation.

It will make matters the more clear respecting this sort of religion, called here, *serving in the oldness of the letter*, that first we understand what it is to *serve in newness of spirit*. It is, in general, to serve God sincerely from such principles, dispositions, and views as the Spirit of God gives to hearts renewed by him, and under his influence. More particularly, it is to serve God with faith and love, with thankfulness, with entire submission and resignation, with supreme purpose to honour and please God; submitting every desire and interest to the chief end of the advancement of his

glory ; with a sincere purpose and course of uniform, universal, and cheerful obedience, joined with a true hatred and fear of sin. This new way of serving God hath in it spirituality of desire and affection, raised above the earth and earthly views, purity of aim and intention, a most self-abasing humility, and self-denial, that suppresses the carnality of self-confidence, with respect to our righteousness or strength, and founds a solid confidence on Christ only for both righteousness and strength ; which is the sort of confidence the Holy Spirit directs to, and which he inspires into all that are taught by him and under his influence.

As this new way of serving hath for its principle in the heart the prevailing love of God ; so there is joined with that love, and flowing from it, the true love of man ; by which, besides that special brotherly kindness, which christians owe to one another, the heart is turned to a sincere, universal, and fruitful benevolence towards all men : this love prevailing over these malignant passions and lusts, that are contrary to it, such as selfishness, pride, malice, wrath, envy, revenge, cruelty ; which are to be ascribed to the flesh. Such is serving in newness of spirit, by the Spirit of God renewing and influencing the hearts of men.

Opposite to this is, *serving in the oldness of the letter*. Let us now consider what this is. Some have said, that this is serving according to the literal expression of the law, in outward work and service only. But this doth not define the subject justly. The literal expression of the law reaches further than to outward work and service. The law says in plain and literal expression, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and thy neighbour*

as thyself; and the sincerity of neither is in serving according to the oldness of the letter.

For further understanding this subject, it is fit we have recourse to that place, *Who hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, &c.* 2 Cor. iii. 6, 7.

Here it strikes at first sight, that when the apostle is speaking of the *letter*, the law he hath in view is not the ceremonial law. It is plain, that by *letter* he means the moral law; as it was it, and it only, that was written and engraven in stones.

The word *γραμμα* signifies *letter*, as we render it, but is often put for *writing*; and seems to be so meant here, where the discourse is of the law *written—in stones*. *He hath made us able ministers not of the writing*; that is, not of the law written in stones. According to this, the apostle's words to the Corinthians, ver. 6, may be thus understood; God hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the law, which conveys nothing to the hearts of men, to give it effect, but of the gospel, which is the ministration of the Spirit.

Let it be next observed, that *serving in the oldness of the writing*, or of the law, that is, in the old manner, as when under the law, is to be so understood, as to include nothing in it that proceeds from the special grace and influence of the Holy Spirit. For *serving God in newness of spirit*, and *serving in the oldness of the letter*, are the things that are here (Rom. vii. 6.) stated in opposition.

The consequence is, as the Spirit cometh not by the law, that serving God in the letter is, such service as the law, by its authority, light, and terror, can procure from one under the law, and in the flesh, not having the Spirit, or his sanctifying grace and influence. It imports such service as the law in the conscience, and the carnal unregenerate heart, by natural strength, with the exertion thereof in earnest endeavour, can work out between them. The authority of the law in the conscience may procure from one in the flesh, and unregenerate, not having the Spirit, a considerable outward conformity; without any principle within better than a selfish, slavish, mercenary, carnal disposition, influenced by the terrors of the law, and the pride of self-righteousness. But the law, and the greatest efforts of one under the law, in the flesh, cannot set the heart right, with regard to the love of God, overcome worldly lusts, or give truth and sincerity in the inward parts.

If there is in any such persons the semblance of good affection and devotion towards God, with a serious design to do well; yet to such we cannot ascribe any thing that cometh not but by the special sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit. Such indeed may sometimes bear an amiable appearance and character in the world, and be useful in it. Such, doubtless, was that rich virtuous young man in the gospel history, of whom it is related, that Jesus loved him, yet being put to trial, his insincerity soon appeared. Though Paul asserts of himself before the Jewish council, *I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day*; yet, whilst he was under the law, he or his righteousness was not pleasing to God, nor pleasing to himself

when he came to be better instructed. The unbelieving Jews had a zeal of God, and followed after the law of righteousness; yet their religion was wholly carnal, there was no true holiness in it. Men may have their minds well furnished with sublime sentiments concerning the amiableness of virtue; and with this abound in external works of righteousness, and be in condition to recommend the virtuous course, from the peace and self-approbation men may have in that way; and yet all the time their righteousness be essentially defective, not rising above the oldness of the letter, nor having at the root of it in the heart the necessary and essential principles of true holiness. In the meanest soul, united and truly married to him that rose from the dead, there is (often with great disadvantage otherwise) a sincerity of holiness, as to inward principles, and uniform practice, that makes his righteousness to exceed the righteousness of the scribes.

PARAPHRASE. 6. But we believers in Christ Jesus are now delivered from the law, by which we were held fast, to be dealt with as to life and death absolutely according to the conformity or nonconformity of our behaviour to its will and command; though it could not enable us to bring forth good fruit, or do acceptable service: and we are so delivered by its being dead to us (or, our being made free, as by our own death, from our relation to it, and from its consequences); and this in order that we, being married to Christ, might serve God in a new manner, agreeable to the principles and disposition of souls renewed by his Holy Spirit, and under his influence; not according to the old manner of a carnal religion, produced by a fleshly heart, under the mere influence

of the light, authority, and terror of the law, which can produce or procure no true holiness or acceptable service.

7. *What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.*

EXPLICATION. The expression here in the first clause, is such as the apostle uses on several occasions, when he introduces an objection against his doctrine or explications, as hath been observed on chap. vi. 1. The objection here seems to be levelled against what he had said, ver. 5. *The motions of sins which were by the law*—The objection means, as if what he had said implied that the law favoured sin, and was the cause of it; the absurdity of which were very evident. He rejects that inference and conclusion with abhorrence; and brings an argument to prove, that the law does not favour sin, nor is the cause of it. He shows that the law forbids sin; and not only prohibits it in the outward practice, but pursues it in the innermost recesses of the soul, and directs its strict prohibition, and awful sanction, against the first motions of it there. It not only forbids the outward act of unrighteousness and rapine, but speaks with all its force and authority to the heart, saying, *Thou shalt not covet*. It discovers by its light the secret motions of sin inwardly, reproofs and judges them. Therefore the cause of sinning must be looked for elsewhere than in the law; and indeed he had given the hint of the proper source and cause of every sinful motion by saying, ver. 5, *when we were in the flesh*—It was the *flesh* (the

corruption of nature thereby meant) that was the true cause of sinful motions by occasion of the law.

These words, *Thou shalt not covet*, are the general expression of the tenth commandment ; and the apostle may mean, that this last of the commandments served him for a key to all the commandments, to lay open to him the spirituality of them. Yea, we may suppose the apostle to be speaking on a more extensive view, than to design merely the tenth commandment. *I had not*, saith he, *known* EPITHYMIAN, *except the law had said*, ΟΥΚ ΕΠΙΘΥΜΗΣΕΙΣ ; and ver. 8. *Sin wrought in me* ΠΑΣΑΝ ΕΠΙΘΥΜΙΑΝ. The English reader seeing the words in our common characters, has access to observe, that what we render by three different words, *lust*, *covet*, *concupiscence*, ought strictly to be rendered by one of them, thus : *I had not known lust*, *except the law had said*, *Thou shalt not lust* ; and, *Sin wrought in me all manner of lust*. Now as the carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, there is in it lusting in opposition to every command in particular ; and every commandment is so to be understood, as prohibiting the particular lusting or concupiscence, that hath the least tendency to the prohibited act. This appears by our Lord's interpretation of the sixth and seventh commandment in Matt. v. ; and the expression in our context, ver. 8, seems to favour this interpretation. The comprehensive expression, *all manner of concupiscence*, includes each particular sort of concupiscence, as directed against each commandment ; not merely the concupiscence that is a transgression of the tenth commandment : though the expression of that

commandment, respecting the heart only, might be the mean of leading him to the view of all the commandments I have been representing.

The apostle doth here give an instance of something, which, by the teachers and other Jews of his time, was generally thought not to be sin. They thought there was no transgression or sin, but in external omission or commission. Though some jewish writers since that time appear to have thought more justly on this point, yet it was in former times as hath been said. It is needless to produce quotations from jewish writers to this purpose, though some are produced by the learned. When our Lord, after mentioning (Matt. v.) the sixth and seventh commandment, adds concerning them severally, *But I say unto you, Whosoever is angry—without a cause—Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her*, ver. 22, 28, it is plain it had been needless for him to have expressed himself in this manner, as in opposition to others, if there were not those who held, that the outward work only was sin, not the inward affection or lusting.

But then it is likely that the apostle meant something more than to say, that it was the prohibition of the law that showed him this to be sin in its own nature. If he meant no more than that, he might as well have given the instance of some outward work, as, *Thou shalt not steal*; as the sinfulness of any work, outward or inward, consists in its contrariety to the law. But he seems to design not only to say, that by the law he knew what was sin in itself; but that it was the law that showed him sin in *himself*, that he had not been sensible of. He had been a Pharisee,

and with great zeal and earnest effort serving in the oldness of the letter, as he understood it. His mind being biassed by corrupt teaching and sentiment, he thought himself chargeable with no sin ; until the law struck at his heart within him, as subject to its authority and direction no less than the outward man. Then (as if he had said) alas ! how much sin had continued in power, and at rest within me, unreprieved, unresisted, under the cover of external righteousness, and screened with the most full self-approbation ; until the law entered, and darted its light into my heart, with awful authority, and found there what proved me a wretched sinner ; as it says in the sense of every commandment, *Thou shalt not lust* ? Until then he thought all his works were good. Now he sees all his works, taking into the account the evil principles, and the concupiscence, which in various forms was at the root of all his works, to be evil. Instead of keeping all the commandments from his youth up, he then saw he had truly fulfilled none of them.

PARAPHRASE. 7. What shall we think then of this account of our former state, as we stood in relation to the law ; and of my mentioning motions of sins which were by the law ? Some will say, that this great absurdity may be justly inferred, that the righteous law of God doth indeed favour sin, and is a cause of it. But by no means. I can relate from my experience, that it was by the law that I received the knowledge and conviction of sin, in every instance. The law forbids it ; and that not only in the outward work, but in the first appearance of it in the heart, in the secret workings of irregular desire, and the very first

motions of irregular affections. It is by its prohibition that I came to know lust inwardly, more or less consented to and entertained, to be sin; as the tenth commandment says, *Thou shalt not covet*; and as every commandment implies the prohibition of every inward lusting in opposition to the duty commanded, or that hath the remotest tendency to the outward sinful work forbidden: and it was by the law, discovering sinful lustings and affections within me, and directing its sharp reproof and awful threatening against them, that I, who had been very righteous in my own eyes, saw first my great sinfulness, and very dangerous condition. It being then the truth of the matter, that the law is so adverse to sin, surely the cause of sin, and of sinful passions and lustings in the heart, is to be looked for elsewhere than in the law.

8. *But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead.*

EXPLICATION. In the fifth verse there is mention of *the motions of sins which were by the law*. Here it is, *Sin taking occasion by the commandment*. The one place explains the other. If there are, as ver. 5, *motions of sin by the law*, that is not that the law is the cause of sin; but, as here, that *sin taketh occasion by the commandment*.

What doth it mean, that sin takes occasion by the commandment, to work in a man all manner of concupiscence? The very words, as they are expressed, show that the law is in no wise the cause of this ill effect; but sin taking occasion by it; even sin reigning in those who are under the

law. Sin, that evil principle which spreads its influence over all the faculties of the soul, finding the law entering with great force into the conscience, and as it were making great efforts there against it, doth thereupon awaken all its powers; and instead of submitting to the prohibition or reproof of the law, or fleeing before the threatening, it puts every sinful affection in motion against the commandment. Pareus illustrates the matter by this similitude. A physician forbids his patient the use of wine, or other strong drink. The patient, who perhaps was not thinking of strong drink, does now eagerly long for it, and calls for it with great impatience. The proper cause of this is not the advice of the physician, which is good and right, but the man's own heart under a sickly disposition.

As to the last clause, *without the law sin was dead*, I take the true meaning to be as follows. The first part of the verse represents sin as not subdued by the law; but on occasion of the law entering with force into the conscience, exerting itself vehemently, against the authority of the law, in all manner of concupiscence. This, doubtless, gave the sinner great disturbance of mind, between the authority of the law pressing hard upon one side, and the opposite vehement motions of sin on the other. The apostle seems to mean by the last clause a very different and opposite case. Whilst the law did not enter into the man's conscience with its light, authority, and force, sin was asleep, or even as dead, and gave no more trouble or uneasiness than a dead ravenous beast, that he carried, would do. If it had its motions inwardly, as it certainly had, they were not violent,

or much observed. That they were little observed, was, in part, from the love of sin; in part from ignorance of the law; and lastly, from the absence of the law, with regard to the authority and force of its precept and threatening in the conscience; so that sin was not ruffled nor disturbed by it. In this condition sin was as a strong man keeping his palace, and having his goods in peace. Yea, what increases this deadness of sin is, that it is often coloured, or covered, and as it were screened, under the cover of some sort of self-righteousness, that keeps it quite out of view, yea, perhaps, under the cover of some fine-spun sublime speculation and theory concerning virtue: as there are many who seem to have little of the force of the law in their conscience, who have a great deal of virtue in their head. The opposition that appears in this text, between sin, by occasion of the law, working in a man all manner of concupiscence, on the one hand; and, on the other, sin dead without the law, gives good reason for understanding the last clause according to this interpretation.

PARAPHRASE. 8. Certainly the law, which prohibits all sinful motions and affections, is not a proper cause of these in the hearts of men. -I hinted to you the true cause, when I said, ver. 5, that the vehement prevailing motions of sins, which are by the law, do happen in persons who are in the flesh. Take some explication briefly thus. Sin, or the flesh, that evil principle in corrupt nature, which is enmity against God, and his authority, and not subject to the law of God; but being roused and awakened by the strict prohibition and fearful threatening of the law; and not

finding, in its commands or terrors, what would subdue it, and withdraw the heart from its dominion ; did but take occasion, from the law, to exert itself in all manner of concupiscence, in a rebellious and vehement opposition to its authority, and to every precept thereof in particular ; as the same came to be borne home, and to press hard upon the conscience : for without the law thus entering with authority and force, sin was as asleep, without such vehement and sensible motion, and, as it were, dead comparatively, under the cover perhaps of a shining self-righteousness, or of refined speculation concerning virtue, with little reality of it.

9. *For I was alive without the law once : but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.*

EXPLICATION. As to the first expression here, *I was alive*, some render it, *I lived once*, or *sometime* ; I lived without the law ; as if he meant no more than to say, that sometime, for a part of the time of his life, he had been without the law ; supposing there is no particular emphasis, or more special meaning of being *alive*. But as the expression in the end of the sentence, *I died*, certainly means something else than the death that puts an end to natural life ; so the antithesis, or opposition that is evidently intended, requires that, by saying, *I was alive*, we understand something else than natural life, or a part of its duration. It is, in short, that being without the law, and so not knowing his great guiltiness, and the prevailing sin in him, he was alive, with respect to confidence and conceit of his own good state ;

confident of the favour of God, and of eternal life : which confidence was destroyed by the coming of the commandment.

But when the commandment came, sin revived. It did so in two respects. 1. By the conviction he received of his own manifold guiltiness. He had become guilty in many respects, especially by the inward prevailing of sin, which, through his ignorance of the law, he had no sense of. Besides, the conviction and impression of sin, that he had sometime been conscious of, came by time to disappear and be defaced. But when the law entered into his conscience with light and force, armed with a terrible denunciation of wrath, it showed him sin that he had not been sensible was sin ; and what sin he had, in some sort, been conscious of, it brought to remembrance, with a fearful sting.

2. Sin revived in these sinful affections that are by the law (as ver. 5.) ; and the more the law, with its authority, light, and terror, reached the heart, and sin in it, sin exerted itself the more vehemently, in all manner of concupiscence, (as ver. 8.) in opposition to the law. The consideration of the context seems to lead us to think, that it is the reviving of sin in this second respect, not excluding the former, that the apostle hath chiefly in his eye. The sinner, convinced of his guiltiness and danger by transgressing the law, doth yet incline to hope well of himself, if he shall do well in all future behaviour. So, being sensible by the coming of the commandment, that it is necessary that the heart be right, he labours upon it. But the more he doth so, the more he perceives the wickedness of his heart. Hence awakened sinners so commonly complain, that they find their

hearts become daily worse, instead of becoming better. They find in them a perverse aversion to God, and to his holiness; that the carnal mind is enmity against God, and is not subject to his law: and if, through manifold guiltiness by past practice, they find themselves under the fearful sentence of the righteous law, sin also reviving in the unholy workings of an evil heart, and in those motions of sin which are by the law, this especially destroys every false confidence.

Thus the consequence of the coming of the commandment, with its light, authority, and terror, and of the reviving of sin on that occasion, is, as the apostle expresses it, *I died*: I found myself a dead man, and nothing on my part to encourage me to entertain any confidence or hope.

Before I leave this verse, there is one thing yet which it is needful to consider. It may, perhaps, be objected, that, in the history of Paul, we cannot find any period or time when he could observe in himself that revival of sin, on the coming of the commandment, or could have that experience of the workings of sin, on occasion of the law, in persons in the flesh, that are represented in this context; and if so, then he must necessarily be supposed to be personating others, not setting forth his own experience. The argument may be conceived thus. He was, on his journey to Damascus, a Pharisee, possessed with the delusions of that sect, and in full confidence of his own good state; when the Lord having manifested himself to him, he did, at the same time, manifest to him the consolations of grace; yea, said, *I have appeared to thee for this purpose, to make thee*

a minister, &c. Acts xxvi. 16, adding words of the utmost encouragement and comfort. Here there was no interval or time, to observe the motions of sin that are by the law. This was prevented by the speedy manifestation of grace, by which being brought under grace, he could not have in himself the experience of a man in the flesh, and under the law, that is represented in this context. This deserves to be considered.

I begin with observing what the learned and judicious Dr. Guyse suggests (note on Acts xxvi. 16.) to this purpose : That it is not necessary to think, that all the comfortable things related there, ver. 16, 17, were spoken by the Lord to Paul on the road to Damascus, at his first appearing to him. The historian Luke, or Paul himself, may have joined together what the Lord spoke to him at different times. Paul himself reports, chap. xxii. 14, 15, that Ananias spoke to him of the future revelations and ministerial commission that the Lord was to vouchsafe to him ; and the Lord himself might have said more fully to him, to the purpose expressed, chap. xxvi. 16, 17, on that other occasion, mentioned chap. xxii. 17, and afterwards. If, in his first appearance to him, on the road to Damascus, the Lord said any thing to him of ministerial office, and of protection and support in it, it might be in general and dark hints, (not so well understood or attended to by Paul, in the condition he was then in,) to be more fully explained afterwards. Indeed in the account given, Acts ix. 6, when Paul, upon hearing the Lord's reproof and expostulation, *trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to*

do? the answer is, *Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.* This, I think, makes it probable, that any special comfort to him was referred to the time when Ananias in Damascus was sent to him.

If any shall happen not to be satisfied with this, yet the matter may still be accounted for by what we find in this history. Let it then be allowed, that on his first appearing to him, the Lord said very comfortable things; as it is not uncommon for him to suggest some comfortable matters for the present support of distressed souls, when they are not yet capable of receiving full consolation through faith. So, whatever matter of comfort was suggested, Paul was not yet susceptible of the comfort. The sense of his guiltiness by the wicked course he had been in, and the apprehension of judgment for it, even the terror of the Lord, (2 Cor. v. 11.) was uppermost, and possessed his whole soul. As he trembled and was all astonished when he heard the Lord's reproof and expostulation, so, being blind, he did not eat or drink for three days and nights. This represents a condition of great distress; nor do we find with him any symptoms of comfort till Ananias came to him, acquainted him of the ministry to be committed to him, and called on him to receive baptism, the seal of Divine grace; and, using it with faith to wash away his sins, calling on the name of the Lord, Acts xxii. 14—16.

In those primitive times, the law and the gospel had very powerful and speedy effect on the souls of men; as we may observe in divers instances. If we suppose a man blind, and diverted by no external objects, having his heart filled with the

sense of his sinfulness, and of the great aggravations and fearful consequences thereof, with his mind turned to the most serious thought about his most important interests, with the most intense application—if with this we consider the velocity with which things pass in the human mind, especially in such a condition; we may be assured, that in these three days and three nights Paul acquired great experience of his own heart; of the flesh, that corrupt principle in him, and the law now come clear and strong into his conscience; these, the flesh and the law, striking powerfully the one against the other. Paul, deeply sensible of his own wretchedness, did doubtless labour much on this occasion to reform his heart unto a conformity with the holiness and spirituality of the law, which he now understood better than ever before. He might at that time have all the experience he represents in this context, of sin's reviving, and exerting itself vehemently, and of the prevailing power of the flesh, with all its sinful affections and lustings, in opposition to the authority and holiness of the law. Thus we find a period in his history, wherein he was likely to have personally all the experience here set forth; which makes a sufficient answer to the difficulty or objection suggested.

Some have explained and accounted for the advantage that sin hath by the law, by this, That the law did not promise, to those who were under it, spiritual blessings and eternal life; which is necessary for purifying the heart, and subduing sin. This is of importance to be more largely considered; and I subjoin an Essay concerning that subject, after representing the sense of this

ninth verse, according to the interpretation I have given of it, in the following

PARAPHRASE. 9. Sin being thus dead, as in the absence of the law, a self-flattering deluded heart entertains great confidence of a man's good state, until the coming of the commandment discovers to him the delusion he hath been in. Of this I have had sad experience. For, being sometime without the law, I was alive, in great confidence of my good state, of my interest in the Divine favour, and eternal life. But when the commandment came, and entered into my conscience in its extent and spirituality, and with its proper authority, light, and force; as this awakened me to a more serious consideration of my spiritual state, sin awakened also. Not only did the conviction of bypast guiltiness revive in me; but sin, not subdued, but awakened and ruffled by the reproof and threatening of the law, did exert itself in all manner of concupiscence; and gave me such proof of the pravity of my nature and heart, as did especially contribute to overturn all my false confidence, and to make me sensible that I was a dead man, by virtue of the judgment of the righteous law, my guiltiness, and the extreme wickedness of my heart: by which my case became quite deplorable.

AN ESSAY

CONCERNING THE PROMISE AND HOPE OF SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS,
AND OF ETERNAL LIFE, UNDER THE OLD TESTAMENT.

I AM now come to consider another account, that of Grotius, of sin's having advantage by the law, and by men's being under it. He says upon Rom. vi. 14, that as the law promised nothing beyond what is earthly, it gave not strength enough for purifying the soul. But the gospel, by the promise of things heavenly, gives great strength to those who will use it. The gospel indeed gives great strength in this way; and otherwise too than by proposing the best of motives, and that in a way very effectual; though not quite agreeable to this writer's notions. On chap. vii. 5, he says, "Most men in these times were carnal, and had no hope, or but small hope, of another life; and so were addicted to the present life, and to the pleasures of it."

That "most men in these times were carnal," is, I apprehend, the case now, even under the light and encouragement of gospel revelation. If it was so with the ancient Israel, the cause of it was not, that God did not encourage them, or that piety was not encouraged, with the hope of eternal life. Grotius says, in the words immediately preceding those last cited, that the few who in that state were spiritual, were not so merely by virtue of the law. In this I agree with him; and I believe the law, strictly so called, will not in any time make men

spiritual, as of old the promise, that he should be heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law. But that is nothing to the present purpose. For, if the ancient Israel, together with the law, had the promise of future life and happiness, to encourage their pursuit of holiness, and of spiritual and heavenly things; then their being under the legal pedagogy could not be a cause of men's being under the dominion of sin, or in the flesh. When this eminent writer doth, on Rom. vi. 14, contradistinguish the gospel, as having the promise of heavenly things, to the law, as having no such promise; he must by the *law* be understood to mean the whole system of the ancient jewish faith and religion. So that when he says, on Rom. vii. 5, that men had then generally small hope or none at all, of future life, it was evidently his mind, that God gave them not sufficient ground for such hope, by his dealing with them, or by the revelation he gave them; however some of them might console themselves with some weak hope of that sort. This is a matter of such importance as deserves to be seriously considered and carefully explained.

In the first place, I say, in general, that an Israelite might, from God's dealing with their nation, and with particular persons in it who feared him, conclude, with the utmost certainty of rational deduction, that he had provided a future happiness for pious persons. He exalted them to be his peculiar people, and gave them very sensible proofs of his favour and regard, beyond what he had ever given to any nation. Could any rational person allow himself to think, that the Lord had in view no other than an earthly transitory happiness for such a people? that they who honoured him most

with their faith, confidence, and obedience, were, if they prospered in this world, but as fed for the slaughter, when death should feed on them, without any hope beyond it? Surely it might be rationally concluded, that God would account it dishonourable to himself, to assert any special friendly relation to them, if he made no special provision for them beyond this life. If, serving and fearing God, they had earthly felicity; nations had so, in a greater degree than they had, whom God accounted and declared his enemies. Israel, in all times, had occasion to see pious persons in worldly and external misery, and dying without any change to advantage in their condition outwardly. It was not only so on occasion of the distresses of the Babylonish captivity, and the following times of their church and nation, when Grotius allows, that hints were given, and more hope conceived, of eternal life; but in ancient times pious men often underwent great misery of outward condition. They were for a considerable time in great misery and distress in Egypt. Shall we say, that the many pious Israelites, who died in that time, had no ground or warrant given them for the hope of better things after death?

In the times of the Judges, yea in all the times preceding the reign of king David, they had great vicissitudes, and recurring times of great and long-continued distress. Many thousands, who were pious, are likely to have died in these calamitous times of their nation, in circumstances of much external misery, without seeing what the renewed mercy of God did for their people. Had all these no hope for themselves in their death? or might they, after all the privileges God had dignified them

with ; after all their faith in him, and their upright walking with him, amidst the backslidings of their nation, that brought judgments on them ; might they say, that they had nothing by it, but to be of all men the most miserable ? If the Ephesians, in their state of heathenism, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, were without hope ; it certainly were very unreasonable to say, that those of the commonwealth of Israel were so too. Upon the general view of these things, it is certainly just to say, that from God's dealing with that people, in such instances and cases as are before mentioned, an Israelite, thoughtful about futurity, might infer the hope of future happiness to pious persons, with as great certainty, and acquiescence of judgment and understanding, as he could infer any conclusions from any principles.

It will perhaps be said, that indeed pious persons did, from such views of things as I have been representing, form the hope of future happiness ; and that not altogether without reason ; but that it is still true, that God did not give them ground for that hope by any revelation or promise he gave them. As to this, it hath been shown, by what is above written, that God did give them ground for that hope. As to what his revelation or promise imported to that purpose, let us now direct our inquiry to that point, and see what God gave to Israel by his word and promise, to found the hope of eternal life.

The Lord called himself *their God*, and denominated himself *the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, Exod. iii. 6, 15. This expressed the covenant ; the sum of which was in these few words, *I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*

Let us consider what this imported. It is not merely, that as he was the God they acknowledged and worshipped ; so they were the people he would acknowledge as his, and whose services he would accept. The expressions import a great deal more ; even a most special mutual interest, which God and his people should have in one another, by virtue of the covenant. When the true Israel agreed sincerely to be his people, it imported a resignation of themselves to him, to be wholly his ; to be disposed of for his glory, and separated to his service. Hence, as God hath an original right to them of property and dominion, as his creatures, so he had a special acquired right to them by the covenant, and by their own choice and self-dedication.

In like manner, on the other hand, when God condescended in the covenant to be their God, it imported, that, of infinite grace, he engaged himself to be theirs ; that, as the Lord's portion is his people, so the Lord should, by the covenant, be their portion—*The portion of Jacob*, Jer. x. 16. *I am my beloved's*, saith the church, *and my beloved is mine*, Cant. vi. 3. That promise, including all the grace of the covenant, imports no less than—(for all that is signified in being God,) I am thine, so far as is requisite for thy support, protection, and endless happiness. I am thine, to be thy shield and exceeding great reward, Gen. xv. 1. There was sufficient and very evident ground for every pious soul, laying hold of God's covenant, to entertain the hope of eternal life. Sadducees of old might overlook ; modern critics, or philosophers, may overlook or dispute it, when the scheme of doctrine they have adopted requires their

doing so. But certainly a thinking, rational soul, believing God's word, would, at departing this life, find, in this expression and promise of the covenant, a very sufficient foundation to rest on comfortably, for the hope of future life and happiness. If a pious Israelite comforted himself by the Lord's saying, *I am thy God*, in going through all the stages and vicissitudes of this life; often foregoing the comforts of this life for keeping a good conscience towards God; shall we say, that the Lord's being his God imported nothing at all to him in his last gloomy and solemn hour? but that all the consolation, arising from the Lord's being his God, was to expire with his last breath? If one's hope in man should thus terminate, yet God is not man. If enemies were despatching a pious person from this life, with bloody hands, how would it especially be as a sword in his bones, if he had not in the promise, *I will be thy God*; what would fortify his heart against the reproach and insult, *Where is now thy God*? Such a pious person, when death was on his lips, when the failure of natural spirit and strength prognosticates the speedy dissolution of his frame, yet from this, *I am thy God*, he had cause to say, *When heart and strength fail, thou art the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.*

We have the best confirmation possible of the justness of this reasoning from our Lord's using it to the same purpose against the Sadducees, in Matt. xxii. 23, and Luke xx. 37, 38. *Now that the dead are raised, Moses showed at the bush, when he calls the Lord, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.* As it was fit to argue out of the writings of Moses

against the Sadducees, who are said to have acknowledged no other scripture, it is certain that nothing is to be found in all the scripture more to the purpose of proving the resurrection, than God's covenant expressed in these words. The Lord's argument from them, as expressed Luke xx. 38, comes to this. He is not the God of the dead, of those who at death shall perish: for it were highly dishonourable to him to be reckoned to be, by special relation of grace and covenant, their God. He is not the God of any, but of those who, by virtue of his being so, are the heirs of eternal life, and who shall be introduced to it by a happy resurrection. Shall now any, who shall consider the matter itself, or who regards the authority and judgment of the greatest Master of reason that ever appeared in our nature, say, that an ancient Israelite, who had at heart to lay hold of and improve the grace of the covenant, had not in these words, *I am the Lord thy God*, a most sure ground to rest on for the hope of a happy futurity, and the most sure warrant for the hope of eternal life? The inspired writer to the Hebrews thought so, when he said, *Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city*, Heb. xi. 16.

I shall now show by another scripture, that God's covenant, as it was proposed to his people anciently, did found the hope of eternal life; and that the promise thereof was so meant. In Isa. lv. 3, mention is made of *the sure mercies of David*. Indeed the mention of *sure mercies* might, at first sight, convince any, that other sort of mercies are intended than such as are earthly, temporary, and transient. We need be at no loss

to understand who this David is. David king of Israel had been dead some centuries before. This David was to come when Isaiah wrote ; as appears by the following words, *Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people. Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall come unto thee.* It is plain it is the Lord Jesus Christ, mentioned on other occasions by the prophets under the name of *David*, who is here intended ; and the expression of “*mercies being sure to him,*” imports that God would raise him from the dead to eternal life. We may be the more confident of this interpretation, when we observe the blessed apostle going before us in it, Acts xiii. 34; where, proving to his hearers from the scriptures of the Old Testament, that God was to raise Christ from the dead, his scripture quotation and argument he gives thus : *As concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give unto you the sure mercies of David.* We see what the *sure mercies* promised to Jesus Christ do mean. To bring this to the purpose of our present argument, I next observe, that these *sure mercies*, importing resurrection to eternal life, are by Isaiah extended to all the faithful, as the *mercies of the covenant*. It is implied, agreeably to the common doctrine of the scriptures, that the covenant is in the first place made with Jesus Christ the second Adam ; and hence God is called *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*. Therefore the promises and blessings of the covenant descend through Christ, and in his right, to those who believe in

him. Accordingly these are the prophet's words, *Hear, and your souls shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David*, Isa. lv. 3. Here it is evident, that as the resurrection to eternal life was promised to Christ, so it is set forth as the promise of the covenant to his people, that they should partake in the same sure mercies, in the like resurrection and eternal life. If the Jews, who were Paul's hearers, did not and could not contradict Paul, and say, that sure mercies did not import to Christ the raising him from the dead to eternal life; as little can any say, that the promise, as it is extended by the prophet, does not mean resurrection and eternal life to believers of these, and of all times.

As to the law itself, it is very true, that considered separately from grace, it gave no promise of eternal, nor even of temporal life to sinners. Yet at the same time it is to be observed, that when God gave his law to Israel from mount Sinai, he introduced it thus—*I am the Lord thy God*.—The reason was this: he then gave out his law with circumstances of the utmost terror to sinners. Yet, according to the hint given in the preface prefixed to it, he designed it in subserviency to his grace. It appears to have been his declared and special view, to give his law on this occasion to those whom he took for his peculiar people, to whom he was their God, and who from his being so were to expect to have, for the end of their conformity thereto in holiness, eternal life; and to have their obedience to it rewarded, according to the grace of the covenant, with an eternal inheritance. So it cannot be said, that, even as the

law was given by Moses, and terribly promulgated at Sinai, Israel were not encouraged to obedience, by the promise of eternal life; though this was not included in the law itself, but proceeded from the grace of the covenant, by which the Lord became their God. For such he could not be to sinners by virtue of the law, but of grace, and by virtue of the covenant of grace.

In the time of Moses, Balaam says, *Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his*, Numb. xxiii. 10. Grotius gives from the Jewish Gemara, an interpretation of this, as if it was only a wish that he might not die an immature or violent death, as the Lord promised to those who obeyed him. He did well to add, that these expressions do, however, hide a more deep mystical sense. Yet this that he calls a mystical sense, appears more open and obvious than the other given by the Gemara. It is plain, that the words mean the hope that is in death possessed by righteous persons, even if their death should be immature or violent, (as that afterwards of Eli and Josiah, and long before Balaam's time, that of righteous Abel,) or with whatever external circumstances it should be attended.

Solomon saith, Prov. xiv. 32, that *the righteous hath hope in his death*. But it is not easy to see, what should furnish hope to a man leaving this life with all its satisfactions and enjoyments at death, if there was not the hope of future life and happiness.

The view that Solomon gives of the course of things in the world, makes clearly and strongly to the present purpose, when he says, *No man knoweth love or hatred by all that is before them*.

All things come alike to all ; there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked, Eccl. ix. 1, 2. What the words intimate is, that there happens not, in the course of providence respecting men in this life, any thing that proves God's special favour and love to one sort beyond others. So the wise man observed even in these times of the Old Testament. Yet it could not be thought, that God's special favour and love to his people does not produce suitable effects and fruits to their advantage. Therefore the Holy Ghost declaring, that none such are to be looked for in this life, it amounts to an assurance, and could not but be so understood in these times, that the special fruits of Divine favour are certainly awaiting them in a future happy state.

Let us likewise consider these words, *Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him ; for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked ! it shall be ill with him : for the reward of his hands shall be given him, Isa. iii. 10, 11.* The former text showed, that there is nothing distinguishing in God's providential dealings with the righteous and wicked in this world. Yet this text asserts, that it shall be well with the righteous, that he shall enjoy the fruit of his works ; and that it shall be ill with the wicked, that he shall receive a reward suited to his works. Now if, according to Solomon's observation, the one or the other happens not in this world, it is certain, and might have appeared so in Isaiah's time, from these scriptural declarations, that it must be after this life.

God gives warrant and commission here, in the words of Isaiah, to say to the righteous, without

excepting any condition or time of life, that *it shall be well with him*. It is at death especially, when a man is finishing his course of righteousness, that he may be determined to be righteous, and it is then especially that a man needs the consolations of God's word. Let us suppose such a one in the convulsions and throes of death, and that a pious friend says, Fear not, God hath said, it shall be well with the righteous ; you are now to eat the fruit of your doings. Let us suppose such a one to answer, (as persons in darkness of condition are often very ready to argue against themselves,) How can it be well with me, and what can my hope be ? Alas, my course is at an end ; I shall enjoy no more time nor any good in this world. Surely it would in this case be replying justly, to say, God's promise to such as you is absolute, and without limitation to time, or the things of time. The power of God can cause you to live. Imitate the faith of Abraham concerning his son Isaac, through whom the promises were to have their accomplishment : *He accounted* (Heb. xi. 19.) *that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead*. Death itself is not strong enough to disappoint the promise, or make it of none effect. You need not apprehend, that the power or faithfulness of God shall fail in any thing that is comprehended in the extent of his word and promise. It shall therefore be well with you when you depart hence ; you shall enjoy the fruit of your doings.

This text indeed doth not say, eternal life ; and the demand of some is, to find in the scriptures of the Old Testament a promise or declaration, mentioning explicitly and expressly, eternal life ;

not merely inferring it by reasoning from dark texts, as they call them. This, however, is very unreasonable, and not better than if the Sadducees had replied to our blessed Lord, You do but argue from a dark text, in which there is no express mention of resurrection, or of eternal life. But the force of the argument did so strike them as to disable them from making such answer to it. It doth not become us to contend captiously with God about words and expressions. Certainly no words of any promise could more clearly and strongly insure future life and happiness to a righteous man when dying, than the promise of Isaiah doth. As to the expression, *eternal*, or *everlasting life*, we shall even find it in the promise presently.

We see Daniel writing expressly of the resurrection of the dead, chap. xii. 2, 3. *And many of them who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.* If Daniel had, in the preceding context, been prophesying of the distresses of the Jews by the oppressions of Antiochus, he doth here promise not merely outward deliverance from these, but sets forth what makes the chief consolation of the church against all temporal distresses and afflictions. It is common with the prophets, Isaiah in particular, to comfort the church of Israel, against the tribulations they foretell, by lofty representations of the glories of Christ's kingdom to the end of the world, and after it for ever. Thus doth Daniel here comfort the church against the

extreme distresses he had foretold, by representing the resurrection of the dead, and the glory that shall follow. The word here rendered *many*, it hath been observed, sometimes signifies the same as *all*. So Rom. v. 19. *By one man's disobedience many were made sinners*. It is plain that nothing less than the resurrection of the dead comes up to the propriety and obvious meaning of Daniel's words; and the promise to himself can mean no less than his having his part comfortably in that resurrection, ver. 13. *But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days*.

Let us now look into the New Testament, and to some of the accounts which we find therein of the faith of the Old-Testament church, respecting heaven and eternal life, and the hopes which believers of those times entertained of it. For christians may be well assured, that the Holy Ghost would not in the New Testament represent these to have been otherwise than as indeed they were.

The apostle Paul put the cause between him and his persecutors on this, Acts xxiii. 6, that it was concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead that he was called in question. And he says before Agrippa, *I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?* Acts xxvi. 6—8. In like manner, ver. 22, 23, he asserts that he said *none other things than Moses and the prophets did say should come,*

that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead. Indeed this promise, of rising from the dead, to Christ and his people, is clearly enough expressed, Isa. lv. 3, as hath been shown formerly. It may have the appearance and pretence of advancing the honour and value of the gospel, and of the christian revelation, to assert that it was by it first, and never before, that the promise was given, and a foundation laid for the hope of the resurrection, and of eternal life. But I do not understand that it can consist with the credit of the christian revelation to suppose, that Christ and his apostles pretended to find in Moses and the prophets what was not truly in them.

We find, Heb. xi. 9, 10, that Abraham, while he received believingly and thankfully the promise of Canaan to his posterity, as a pledge of something better to himself, and to his spiritual seed, yet for his own personal and chief interest, he by faith sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, very contentedly, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. So he and these other patriarchs showed by their conduct, that they *looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*

Thus too the same inspired writer gives an account of the faith and hope of these fathers, ver. 13—16. He says, *these all died in the faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth.* He then says, they hereby *declared plainly, that they did seek*

a country ; not that from whence they came out ; they showed that they desired a better, that is, a heavenly country. Whatever besides was in these promises, it is evidently the apostle's view, that there was that in them, which determined these fathers to account themselves, yea, to choose to be, strangers and pilgrims on earth, and to desire a heavenly country.

Afterwards, ver. 24—26, he represents how Moses did forego the prospect of high worldly advancement, and took a share in the afflictions of the people of God, and in the reproach of Christ. *For*, saith the inspired writer, *he had respect unto the recompence of reward*. This was not a reward on earth, or to share in the rest and happiness of Israel in Canaan, which he did not attain ; but a recompence and reward, the hope of which did not disappoint him. After, ver. 35, he mentions some, who were *tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection*. After all this, I cannot but wonder, that some learned men should not be able to find in the religion of the Old Testament, or in the covenants of promise, which were the grounds and principles of that religion a clear and sufficient warrant for the hope of future happiness, and of eternal life. Our blessed Lord himself, John v. 39, bids the Jews to *search the scriptures ; for in them*, saith he, *ye think ye have eternal life*. He gave them no hint on this occasion, that their opinion of finding eternal life in these Old-Testament scriptures was ill founded. Yea, if it were, it had been deluding them to direct them to look for it there.

It were easy to add here divers instances of

holy persons in those times, whose profession of their faith and hope of future life appears in the scriptures of the Old Testament, and who profess this hope in such a manner as did sufficiently warrant the same hope to others, in their own and after times. It is unnecessary to enlarge in that way, but these few instances (besides what hath come in our way before) may be observed, Gen. xlix. 18. 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. Psal. xvii. 15. xlix. 14, 15. lxxiii. 24—26.

If we consider attentively how matters were ordered under the Old Testament as to Israel, we may see cause to conceive of them thus. When the Lord chose and separated the seed of Jacob to be his church, and brought them into covenant with himself, he dealt with them as he never did before, or since, with any people. A particular article of his covenant and promise to them was, to give them a good land, Canaan, for an inheritance. He promised them the enjoyment of that land, and prosperity in it, on condition of maintaining his truth and worship, and the purity of his institutions, with which he had dignified them beyond any other people, and of universal obedience to all his commandments: intimating to them, that, from a contrary behaviour, they should expect his judgments to come on themselves and their land; to make them unhappy in it, or to expel them from it. At the same time he assured them of his mercy, by which he would, upon their repentance, renew the prosperity of their nation, and restore them to the possession of their earthly inheritance, if they had been dispossessed of it.

Upon this view of things, we need not wonder

that, in giving them his law by Moses, the Lord should encourage their nation to a due regard to his laws and ordinances, by the promise of national and temporal prosperity, in the land he gave them for an inheritance ; and should deter them from disobedience, by denouncing temporal judgments and strokes to come on them, and on their land, in consequence of it. In like manner, when their prophets did deal with that people about the unhappy circumstances in which they often were, as they did acquaint them that their sins were the cause, so they commonly encouraged them to repentance and reformation by the promise of temporal prosperity to their nation, and abundance of the good things of the earth. Indeed when the weal and prosperity, the misery and distresses of nations are the subject, these views will suit the case of all nations at all times. God doth not give heaven to whole nations, but doth commonly connect national good behaviour and obedience with temporal national prosperity. It is likewise true, that under the Old Testament, as heavenly and eternal things were more sparingly revealed, temporal prosperity and success was more commonly bestowed, to encourage the integrity of single persons, than under the gospel, when the cross is recommended to christians, after the example of Christ himself, as the way to glory. These things may account for a great deal of what is to be found with Moses and the prophets, of which an improper use hath been made, with regard to the spiritual state and hope of the Lord's people in ancient times.

What is expressed in the Old-Testament scriptures, on such views as I have been observing, is

by no means to the purpose of the doctrine of justification ; nor doth it derogate from the hope of eternal life in the times of the Old Testament : if Moses or the prophets are signifying to Israel, by what means their nation may attain or recover the Divine favour, and their national prosperity, we are not to conceive it, as if the Holy Ghost were showing how a sinner is justified before God, with spiritual and eternal consequences. I believe a nation may, according to the common rule and method of Divine conduct, attain the favour of Providence by their own works, and good behaviour : and the favour of Providence may sometimes, by Divine sovereignty, be bestowed, as the reward of the integrity and well-doing of single persons ; as more commonly happened in the times of the Old Testament. But it doth not by any means follow, that a sinner is justified before God by his own works or righteousness ; or that it is by these that a sinner is introduced into a state of grace and favour with God. At the same time, if the Lord encouraged Israel to obedience, repentance, and reformation, by the promises of peace, earthly prosperity, and national happiness, they greatly mistake, who think that he invited men to piety by no higher views, and by no better promises.

The case, in short, hath stood thus. *Godliness hath always had the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.* Under the gospel, the promise of the life that is to come is more clearly exhibited, and more inculcated. During the Old Testament, the promise of the life that now is, did, in a greater degree, include temporal prosperity, and was more inculcated than since. Those who were carnal followed after righteousness

with that view ; and generally they did not miss of their reward. But those whose hearts were formed to spiritual things, as their views entered farther into true holiness, pursued that course with a higher aim of spiritual good things, and of eternal blessings ; and found sufficient ground for such aim and hope in the promises of the covenant.

It doth not become us to prescribe rules to Divine wisdom, concerning the measure of light that ought to be afforded in the different periods of time. It is said 2 Tim. i. 10, that *Christ hath—brought life and immortality to light through the gospel*. Much use hath been made of this against what hath been here advanced. But no more can be justly made of these words, than that life and immortality is brought out of the obscurity of the Old Testament ; and is, together with the special grounds of the hope, set forth in a clear and full light by the gospel. But this doth by no means import that, in the preceding state and period, there was no revelation or promise of life and immortality.

That the expression used in writing to Timothy doth not import so, will appear by considering expressions fully as strong, used concerning other subjects. For instance, Eph. iii. the apostle says, *That the gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ, by the gospel*, ver. 6, *was a mystery made known*, ver. 3, *to himself by revelation*. *A mystery*, ver. 5, *which in former ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit*. We must not for this say, that the mystery of the

calling, and incorporating of the gentiles into the church, was not at all revealed in the Old-Testament scriptures. For we find these scriptures, on divers occasions, quoted to that purpose; and particularly, Rom. xv. 9—12, we see the apostle observing the prediction of that event in divers places of the Old Testament; and we shall easily find it foretold in several places not less, rather more clearly than in those mentioned by the apostle. As if he intended to assist those he wrote to, to observe the prediction in these places, where there were but dark and brief hints of it; leaving to themselves to observe these places where the matter was more obvious, and presented in a more clear and full light. But as he says to the Ephesians of the calling of the gentiles, that it was not formerly made known, as it is now revealed by the Spirit to the holy apostles and prophets; so we may justly paraphrase the words to Timothy thus: Life and immortality were not formerly made known as they are now revealed by the Spirit to the holy apostles and prophets, and by them to the church through the gospel. Life and immortality are now brought to light, compared with the former obscurity.

In like manner, the apostle Peter says of Christ to those he writes to, that *he was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world; but* (so he adds) *was manifested in these latter times for you.* The word, *manifest*, here, and, in 2 Tim. i. 10, *brought to light*, do very precisely render the words of the Greek; and to *bring to light*, and to *make manifest*, are expressions evidently of the same meaning. But if Christ is said to be made manifest in the latter times, those of the gospel, would

any infer, that there was no revelation, no promise of him under the Old Testament? To make the like inference concerning life and immortality from 2 Tim. i. 10, were no less absurd.

It cannot be understood how religion could be at all maintained in ancient times, or at any time sincerely, in the church, without the promise and hope of spiritual blessings, and of eternal life; or how, without the pursuit and hope of these, there could be true purity of heart, or true holiness. When the apostle Paul proceeds, in the latter part of his epistle to the Colossians, as it is usual with him in all his epistles, to exhort the Colossians to holiness, he begins, chap. iii. 1, with exhorting them to *seek the things that are above; to set their affections on things above, not on things on the earth; and to mortify their members, (their corrupt lusts and affections,) that are upon the earth.* If we observe the view the scripture gives us of the matter, we shall see there is nothing more contrary to holiness and purity of heart, than to have the heart set on the earth, and addicted to earthly satisfactions and enjoyments, and to the pursuit of them. Though Grotius is wrong, when he writes so unfavourably of the hope of eternal life during the Old Testament; yet his view is so far right in general, that, supposing the Lord not to give the hope of any good beyond what is earthly, there would not be the strength (nor, I say, the disposition) needful for purifying the heart. To say the truth, how could men be found fault with for pursuing, and resting in, the happiness of earthly wealth and pleasure, if nothing better was set before them? And however, on occasion of remarkable Divine displeasure, fast-

ing and prayer might, at any rate, be proper, even for the recovery or continuance of earthly enjoyments; yet, in the common course of things, might it not be reckoned just and prudent to say, *Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die?* For why should not men set their hearts on that good, which is the greatest object of hope, that they find even revelation setting before them?

The Lord might, indeed, by the regulations prescribed to civil and ecclesiastic rulers; by the severity of his judgments on Israel for their sins; and by the extraordinary interpositions of his providence, at other times, in their behalf; by the ministry of his prophets, and the authority he conciliated to them by extraordinary gifts and miraculous powers: he might, I say, by all these means procure considerable regard to his laws, as to outward obedience; and deter men from the outward practice of wickedness; and so maintain some order in society. But all these means could not procure true holiness and sincerity of obedience, or the purifying of the heart, if the word of God proposed, for the object of hope, nothing above what is earthly.

It will not be enough to say, that many, in these times, from the direction of their reason or understanding, from the inclination of their own hearts, or from some secret instinct of grace, did indeed desire and hope for spiritual blessings and eternal life, though God did not by any revelation or promise give them any direction or ground to warrant such desire and hope. But if the revelation God hath given did not warrant and found the hope of spiritual blessings, and of eternal life, we must either say, that the desire and hope of these is not

necessary in religion, or that Divine revelation in the times of the Old Testament was essentially defective ; which were so dishonourable to God, and to revelation, that I scarcely think it will be admitted by any persons of christian profession.

I apprehend that, of the two things I have mentioned, those I have in my eye will choose the first ; namely, to say, that though the desire and hope of spiritual and eternal blessings are of great advantage in religion, yet they are not absolutely necessary. Accordingly I observe, that those who hold that ancient Israel had little hope of eternal life, and no ground for such hope by God's word or promise, do generally incline to think favourably of those they call virtuous heathens ; and that their wanting this hope, and good grounds for it, and the want of its influence in their heart and practice, was not such an essential defect in the religion of the heathens, but that without it they might attain to the pleasing of God, and to future happiness. Whatever arguments are used to guard against the consequence of these sentiments ; yet their tendency is, and their consequence will commonly be, with those who receive them, though they themselves have presented to them the revelation and promise of eternal life, that they will be led by such notions to think, (what the carnality of men's hearts is otherwise prone to,) that the way to the kingdom of heaven is more easy than it is indeed ; and that with fatal effect to the souls of men.

10. *And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.*

EXPLICATION. The unfavourable consequence of the commandment here, seems not to be merely condemning the transgressor, and adjudging death to him ; which, according to the notion of some late writers, it never did, but in one instance, until the mosaic promulgation, which, they say, first added to the commandment the sanction of death for transgression. But if we consider the context from ver. 5, we may see cause to think, that the apostle hath especially in his view the effect produced by the unregenerate heart and the law, between them ; namely, the revival of sin, in its more vehement lustings and unholy affections.

As to the law's being *ordained to life*, it did originally promise life to those who should perfectly obey it. It was designed, and in itself calculated to lead them in the way that would terminate in life. It represents an amiable scheme of holiness, a perfect system of duty, by which it might recommend itself to every rational mind, as tending in its own nature to make man happy. By its light it marked out to men the way to life ; the Divine authority in it did powerfully enforce it ; as did the promise of life, and threatening of death annexed to it. To the rational and undepraved mind and heart it gave the most powerful excitement to holiness. Thus *the commandment was ordained to life*.

But, alas ! human nature hath undergone a sad change, a powerful depravation. Now sin, or

the flesh, that evil principle dominant in the unregenerate soul, being urged, reprov'd, and condemn'd by the law, it doth awaken with all its force, and exert itself in sinful affections, in all manner of concupiscence, terminating in death. As the evident scope of the preceding context tends to give this view of the present text; so we see the expression and sense of the next following, ver. 11, suits the same view.

I do not, however, think that the *death* here meant is to be understood merely of the death denounced by the law; to which the activity of sin deservedly exposes a man. It seems likely that by death he especially means here the prevalence of sin itself in his soul. He mentions, chap. vi. 6, *the body of sin*, and ver. 24, of this chapter, he cries out, *Who shall deliver me from this body of death?* We have no cause to think, that the object of his earnest wish in this latter text is, to be freed from the body. It is rather what he had in the former text called *the body of sin*, that he calls here *the body of death*. The inherent plague of sin showing, by occasion of the law, its great power and prevalence, was to him as death; and why might he not justly call it death, that disabled him from all vital activity, from activity in holiness, without which he would not reckon that he had life.

PARAPHRASE. 10. And thus the commandment, which was originally designed to give life to all who would perfectly obey it, and which to undepraved and innocent man gave the best direction, and the most powerful excitement to the holiness and obedience that is the way to life, did, as by

accident, through the sad corruption of my nature, which did not yield to its authority, nor was subdued by its power, but exerted itself the more vehemently in all sinful affections and lustings, work a real death *in* me, as it denounced eternal death *to* me; and so (ver. 9.) destroyed that confidence by which I was sometime vainly alive in my own conceit.

11. *For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.*

EXPLICATION. This verse may be illustrated by this similitude. If a man, who bears an inveterate hatred to another, whom he reckons his enemy, ever desiring and endeavouring to destroy him, should see this other man before him and near him; this would readily awaken his passion to an extreme degree against him, and put him upon showing his hatred and opposition to him in a vehement manner. So sin, finding the commandment come home upon the conscience with much force, seeking its destruction; this awakens the malignity of sin, and it exerts itself, and all its members, its various lusts and passions, in the most keen opposition to the law.

He had said before, that *sin taking occasion by the commandment*, WROUGHT *in* him *all manner of concupiscence*. Here he says, *Sin taking occasion by the commandment*, DECEIVED him. So there is deception in the case. There is such great evil in sin, and the consequences, as set forth by the righteous law, are so terrible, that it were not likely the heart of man would fall in with it, without being in some way deceived. So the Greek here is, ἐξηπατητε, it *deceived*, as the Seventy hath

in Eve's answer, Gen. iii. 13, *the serpent, πατήσε, beguiled me.* We know that men's lusts and passions have great influence on their mind and imagination. Thus sin, and the various lusts thereof, awakened and irritated by the contrary commandment, set the imagination to work according to their own turn and disposition, to represent in the most alluring colours the pleasure to be attained by their gratification and enjoyment. This further inflames the sinful passion and lusting. These sinful passions and desires upon the one hand, and on the other the false colours in which the imagination represents the object, do mutually co-operate to give advantage to sin, and its deceit.

Dr. Doddridge, in his paraphrase, mentions another way of deception, (to which, however, the deceiving is by no means to be restricted,) thus : "*Sin—taking occasion by the terrors and curse of the violated commandment, and representing the great Lawgiver as now become my irreconcilable enemy, deceived me into a persuasion that I could be no worse than I was.*" The truth is, a persuasion that a man cannot be in a worse state, or, in other words, a despair of mercy, doth, in persons under the power of their lust, very commonly operate in this way, even for a man to run the more vehemently in an evil course, with an affected thoughtlessness about futurity.

At the same time, there is another sort of deception no less common, arising from the suggestion of impunity: thus, Deut. xxix. 18, 19. *Lest there should be among you a root bearing gall and wormwood, and it come to pass when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless*

himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart. A self-flattering heart, (*deceitful above all things*, Jer. xvii. 9.) can readily enough suggest, in flat contradiction to the law, as the tempter did of old, *Ye shall not surely die*, Gen. iii. 4. This is perhaps supported by some delusion, which the heart is very ready to entertain, concerning the goodness of God, and by extenuating thoughts of sin, and perhaps by the notion of some works, or some particular virtue, on which a man values himself, and which he vainly thinks makes compensation for his sin. Thus, for instance, some worthless men of our times, who have sold themselves to their lusts in the practice of lewdness, do abound in almsgiving, from a senseless and false notion of the meaning of that text, *Charity shall cover a multitude of sins*, 1 Pet. iv. 8. Thus sin makes out its purpose by one way or other of deceiving.

The sense of this verse may be given thus :

PARAPHRASE. 11. For sin in me, that evil principle so deeply rooted in my depraved nature, being impatient of restraint by the law, took a perverse occasion from the strictness of the commandments contained in it, to rise up in rebellion against it, as if it was too unreasonable and severe an imposition to be laid upon human nature ; and by this and various other means of deception, beguiling me as the serpent did Eve, (Gen. iii. 13.) it insnared me, and drew me to the commission of many evils, which God had forbid ; and by this means brought me more and more under the heaviest sentence of condemnation and death ; and when afterwards it came home, in its spirituality

and power, to my conscience, it slew the high towering thoughts and confidences which I before had entertained about my own sufficiency to keep it, and my own righteousness to recommend me to God.

12. *Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.*

I have no occasion to enlarge on the epithets and characters here given to the law and commandment; the sense of which is obvious. The purpose and sense of what this verse contains may be conceived, and expressed briefly according to this paraphrase.

PARAPHRASE. 12. I have shown the true cause of all sinful motions, of every sinful concupiscence. Wherefore, although the evil principle in the hearts of men doth produce such concupiscence, and sinful motions more vehemently by occasion of the commandment; yet the law in itself is holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good; and so not at all favourable to sin, which it pursues into the heart, discovers, and reproves in the very inward motions thereof.

13. *Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.*

EXPLICATION. The apostle's design here is easily learned from the preceding context. He had mentioned, ver. 5, *the motions of sins which were by the law*. He had said, ver. 8, that *sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in*

him *all manner of concupiscence*: and ver. 10, that *the commandment which was ordained to life, he found to be unto death*: and ver. 11, that *sin taking occasion by the commandment, deceived him*. By this it is evident, that what is here meant is a vindication of the law from the charge of being truly the cause of sin in a man's heart and practice, or of these motions of sins, and of that concupiscence and deception, which is by occasion of the law. As we distinguish, with regard to offences, between offence given and offence taken, which last may be when indeed there is no offence or cause of offence given; so here, as to occasion, the law did not give occasion, but sin did perversely and wickedly take occasion, such as the context represents. The vindicating of the law with regard to this, and showing that it is not by any means the cause of sin, is the evident and special scope of this place.

The true cause then of these motions of sins, ver. 5, of that unholy concupiscence, ver. 8, of that deception, ver. 11, is *sin*. So the apostle says here: *Sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good*. Here two things are to be considered and inquired into. 1. What is here meant by *death*? I have said before, that the holy apostle would certainly reckon as a very death in his soul the prevailing of sin in its motions and activity in his heart. Yet this not to exclude sin's working death in and to him by virtue of the sanction of the law. Not as if this was the effect by a peculiarity, or peculiar sanction, of the mosaic law; but by virtue of the sanction that was ever in the law, and connected with the commandment: the consequence of which was, that every

new motion or act of sin, or concupiscence, subjected him to new condemnation to death, by virtue of the threatening of the law.

The other thing to be here inquired into, is, what is meant by *sin*, in this clause; *Sin, that it might appear sin*. Divers commentators have observed, that sin is in this context, by a figure, represented as a person; and some seem to mean no more by this figurative person, than a general notion, comprehending or including all particular sorts of sin. But we see in this context sin distinguished from sinful actings; as we have, ver. 8, *sin* working in a man *all manner of concupiscence*. This last imports inward *acts* of sin; previous to which is *sin* working this concupiscence, and the efficient cause of it. So that sin thus working is not to be considered as a thing merely ideal, an abstract idea, or notion, which cannot be truly the cause of any thing. Sin here is something real, a cause, which by its powerful influence works concupiscence, every particular lusting or unholy affection. It is the cause or principle of sinning, deeply rooted in men's nature, in this state of depravation; what the learned have called *peccatum peccans*, the sinning sin; sin the cause of all actual sins in the inward and outward practice. The remainder of which evil principle in the regenerate he had called, chap. vi. 6, *the old man*. It is otherwise called the *flesh*. Which is itself previous to these unholy actings, inward or outward, called *works of the flesh*, Gal. v. 19, &c. How on any other view can be understood *sin working concupiscence*? This activity in the way of concupiscence, or of deceiving, doth certainly presuppose a previous acting cause. The sum,

then, of the apostle's argument is, as hath been several times said, that the law or commandment is but the innocent occasion, and by no means the cause of such sinful motions as are said, ver. 5, to be *by the law* ; but that sin, that evil principle in human nature, is the true, proper cause of all sinful motions and actions.

Now as to the last clause, *That sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful*. It has been observed before, that sometimes things are said to be, when the meaning is, that they appear, or are proved to be. To the instances of this sort adduced on chap. vi. 1, may be added, chap. iii. 19. *That—all the world may become guilty before God*. It is not by the declaration or testimony of God's word that men properly and indeed become guilty ; but thereby it appears that they are guilty. So here ; as in the preceding clause it is said, *Sin that it might appear sin* ; to the same purpose, with some variation of the expression, it is in the last clause, *That sin by the commandment might become* (that is, might appear, or be proved to be) *exceeding sinful*.

PARAPHRASE. 13. But after all that hath been offered to vindicate the law from the charge of being the true and proper cause of sin ; yet having, ver. 5, mentioned the motions of sins which are by the law, and ver. 8, all manner of concupiscence arising by occasion of the law ; and ver. 10, that you found the commandment to be unto death to you ; and ver. 11, that sin, by occasion of the commandment, deceived and slew you ; may it not be justly concluded, that the law which you have commended for its goodness, is indeed made death to you, not merely by

adjudging death to you for transgressing and rebelling against the commands and authority of the Almighty, (which all the world must acknowledge to be agreeable, as to the holiness and justice, so also to the goodness of the law,) but that it is also made death to you, by increasing the activity of sin in you, or in me ; which is so contrary to, so inconsistent with the activity of a better and true life in our souls ; and thus it is a true cause of death in us of sin, as well as of death to us of punishment ? That the law should in this way be made death to me, or to any, I cannot easily conceive to be consistent with that holiness or goodness which you ascribe to the law.

But far be it from us to think so concerning the Divine law and holy commandment. The effect mentioned is, as I hinted, ver. 5, only in those who are in the flesh, under the dominion of sin, (chap. vi. 14.) and I still say, that it is sin, or the flesh, that evil principle and plague inherent in my depraved nature, which wrought death in me and to me ; thereby appearing in its own colours, and to be what it truly is, the vilest thing in the world, even to be sin, (than which nothing worse can be said of it,) the fruitful and abounding source of all transgression inward and outward, meriting death ; and proving at once its wickedness and power, in working death in me by that which is good ; that so (not only by its ordinary motions, but especially by its more lively and powerful activity, on occasion of the commandment's coming home to my conscience, then exerting itself, as in defiance and despite of its light and authority, and of the Divine authority in it) sin in me might appear, by the light of the commandment thus outrageously de-

spised and counteracted, to be a most aggravated evil; evil beyond all conception; an abounding and overflowing source of transgression, impurity, and iniquity; the powerful cause of increased condemnation and death; yea, in a word, to be (as Jer. xvii. 9.) desperately wicked.

We have seen the case of persons *under the law in the flesh*; and so *under the dominion of sin*. Whether the latter part of this chapter, which now follows, doth represent the case, with respect to sin, of persons *under grace*, whilst they continue in this life, is to be the next subject of inquiry.

A DISSERTATION

CONCERNING THE GENERAL SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THE LATTER PART OF CHAP. VII. 14—25, IN ORDER TO DETERMINE WHETHER IT REPRESENTS THE CASE OF A REGENERATE OR UNREGENERATE PERSON; THE CASE OF A PERSON UNDER THE LAW, OR OF ONE UNDER GRACE: WHEREIN THE PARTICULAR EXPRESSIONS OF THAT CONTEXT ARE EXPLAINED.

SECT. I.

Containing general considerations tending to explain the scope and purpose of this context.

1. THE first consideration arises from the great difference in the style and expression between the former and this latter context. He had been speaking of himself in the past tense, showing how matters had been with him formerly, when under the law; and, in his own case, representing how it is with persons under the law, who, as long as

they are so, are in the flesh, and under the dominion of sin. He now, from ver. 14, speaks of himself in the present tense. It naturally occurs to one's mind from this change of the tense, that, as formerly he had been showing his own case whilst under the law; so now he shows how things go with him at present, in a state of grace, as he was when he wrote. They would need to bring very cogent reasons, who would have us to understand him in a sense so very different from what his expression naturally leads us to. He could easily set forth in plain speech the case of persons unregenerate, as he had done before in this and the preceding chapters, without darkening matters, and making his discourse quite ambiguous, by altering his style. He had in a very plain manner represented, from his own past experience, the case of persons under the law: what good reason can possibly be given for his becoming obscure now, by speaking, in the present tense, as of himself, a person regenerate and under grace, what must be understood of persons unregenerate and under the law, without giving any hint that he so means?

It hath been said, that the apostle doth on divers occasions speak in his own name, when he doth indeed personate others. Several instances are adduced, some of which cannot be justly so interpreted. But if it be allowed, that, on some occasions, he doth in very few words express the arguments, objections, and reproaches used by others against himself, his doctrine, or conduct; yet in every such case the thing evidently appears by the obvious import of the expressions, and by the answers immediately subjoined; so that there

is not room left for mistaking. But it is quite unlikely that he would continue to speak, as of himself, through so long a passage, and yet mean it of others all the time ; without intimating, by any expression or hint, that to be his design.

Let us now go a little farther in observing the variation of the apostle's style, and compare his expression here, ver. 14—25, with what he hath in this, and the preceding and following chapters, concerning the unregenerate. These, (chap. vi. 16, 17—19, 20.) *yielded* (that is, presented) *themselves servants to sin* ; they *yielded their members as servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity* ; which implies the full and habitual consent of the will. But here, ver. 23, there is a *law in a man's members warring, and bringing into captivity* to that which is against the habitual bent and inclination of the man's will.

As to the unregenerate, who are *after the flesh*, and *in the flesh*, they are, chap. viii. 7, *enmity against God, and not subject to his law*. But the man in our context, from ver. 14, *consents to the law, that it is good ; delights in the law of God after the inner man ; and with his mind he himself serves the law of God*.

As to the man in our context, what is holy and good is what he willeth ; sin is what he willeth not. But in the context preceding ver. 14, where the case of the unregenerate man, under the law, is certainly set forth, sin doth by occasion of the law work in him all manner of concupiscence, deceives him, slays him, and reviving in him, destroys all his confidences : but it is not said of him that he hates it, that it is the thing he would

not; nor doth he cry out of wretchedness by it, as in the latter context.

Those who interpret this latter context, of a man in the flesh, and under the law, do ascribe all the good mentioned in it to the man's understanding, reason, and natural conscience. But though these are in the unregenerate, who are certainly meant in the context preceding ver. 14, yet in no part of that context are they said to love, to hate, to delight, to will, to serve, as in this; nor in the former context is there any mention of the inner man, of the mind, or of the law of the mind.

The several expressions in the latter context come again in our way, to be more particularly explained. I here only observe the variation of the apostle's style and expression: upon a general view, the great difference and variation of the style and expression gives good cause to think, that from ver. 14, there is represented a person and state very different from being *under the law, in the flesh*, as we have here a style and expression never used concerning such.

2. Here we see that the apostle speaks with a special view to the spirituality of the law of God; as it gives rule to a man's heart and spirit within, and to all inward thoughts and motions in the soul. It seems indeed to be clear, that it is with this view he speaks all along, even in the preceding context. The motions of sin's working in a man's members, ver. 5, are inward: the particular instance specified in ver. 7. *Thou shalt not covet*, is inward. So it is, ver. 8, when sin works in a man all manner of concupiscence; and when, ver. 9, sin revives. If it were the practice of sin in outward works and behaviour that were meant

in that context, certainly what he says would not universally suit the case of persons in the flesh, and under the law. Many such have been outwardly, as to the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. So the apostle himself was when in that state, and in appearance very religious, yea, having much at heart to be so. It had been a too partial, restricted, and incomplete view of the general character of persons in the flesh, and under the law, if he had considered and represented only the outward practice; nor would it give a just account of the character in general of persons in the flesh; whereas upon the view we are taking of the apostle's discourse, it answers to that character and state universally. Those in the flesh, as the apostle represents, do mean in their way to serve God; if not in the newness of spirit, yet according to the oldness of the letter. It is so that the distinction is stated, ver. 6; not that the one sort serve God, and the other sort do not intend to serve him at all. If those in the flesh have their unholiness, and unholy lustings and affections, (which in many of them break forth outwardly in much impurity and iniquity,) yet they have also their carnal religion, and their carnal confidence founded upon it. If the impurities and iniquity of the flesh have fearfully prevailed in the world, a carnal religion, in one form or other, hath no less overspread the world.

But when the apostle doth, ver. 14, where he begins to speak of himself in the present tense, mention expressly that *the law is spiritual*, it serves as a key to the following context, with which that expression and assertion is more

precisely connected. Now it is not only that his nature and heart had been, as to its inward workings, in the utmost rebellious and unholy opposition to the law, in his unregenerate state ; but, as if he had said, When I consider the law in this point of view, as it is spiritual, alas, I am (yet I am still) carnal, even in my present more comfortable state ; alas, what of impurity and iniquity remains inwardly with me ! If he had considered the law as a rule only to the outward actions and behaviour, he might at any rate say, that it is holy, just, and good ; but might easily, at the same time, think himself likewise holy, just, and good. But when he views the law as spiritual, he finds great opposition and disconformity to its holiness to observe with sorrow, even now in his better state under grace. When he considers that the law requires not only the external acts of worship, but also requires the worshipping of God in spirit and in truth ; that it not only requires the external acts of obedience, but also demands to love God sincerely, yea, intensely, to the utmost of our faculties and powers, *with all our might and strength* ; that it not only prohibits outward acts of impurity and iniquity, but also prohibits all deviation of the heart from God, and from holiness, by evil lusting inwardly ; that it not only requires all outward duty to our neighbour, (including our enemies,) but also that our heart inwardly be sincerely well affected to him ; that not only killing a man, but also being angry at him without a cause, is a transgression of the sixth commandment ; that not only the outward act of adultery, but also to look on a woman to lust after her, is a transgression of the seventh : it is, I say, consider-

ing the law as thus spiritual; thus giving rule to his heart and spirit within him, and prohibiting the inward motions and activity of sin, and comparing himself, and the inward motions and inclinations of his heart, with the strict holiness and spirituality of it, that he represents his present feelings and observation concerning himself as he doth.

It hath been argued by some, that whatever may pass inwardly in the heart even of a true christian, yet the expressions of this context convey more than what is merely inward; even the doing of evil in the ordinary outward course and practice of life; which is certainly inconsistent with a state of grace. It has been said, that the three words here rendered *to do*, or *to perform*, namely, *ποιω, πρασσο, κατεργαζομαι*, can be understood of no less than external work, action, and course. But this is not so clear or evident. Not to enlarge more than is needful on this point, it is enough to observe in general, that in all languages commonly the actions and operations of the mind are very often expressed by words, which do primarily signify bodily action or operation in general, or bodily sensation. So although the words mentioned should be allowed to be used most commonly concerning outward doing or work; it doth not follow, that the operations of the mind may not be, yea are not often, meant by them, in the use of speech. The only word of the three that would be most likely to import more is, *κατεργαζομαι*. But I observe in ver. 20. *If I do (ποιω) that I would not, it is no more I that do it, (κατεργαζομαι αυτο,) that this latter verb is interchanged with the other; and as it is certain that the former hath not always that force and*

meaning, to signify full doing, or performing in the outward work, there is reason to think that neither hath the latter, as used here. It is likewise to be observed, that, in this same chapter, ver. 8, the apostle says, *Sin—wrought in me* (κατεργασατο) *all manner of concupiscence*; where it is plain, that the word respects the motions and lustings of sin inwardly. So there is nothing here to disprove the account given of the apostle's view, with regard to the spirituality of the law. Men's overlooking the apostle's view and respect to the law as spiritual, and to the disconformity of his heart to what the law requires in this respect, and considering all the accounts here given by him as respecting the outward ordinary practice, has, I apprehend, been a main cause of their falling in with the notion, that though he speaks of himself in the present tense, yet he must be understood as personating unregenerate persons.

3. The third general consideration I suggest is this. The more holy a person is, and the more his heart is truly sanctified, it is reasonable to suppose he will have the more quick sense, and painful feeling of what sin may remain in him, and that he will utter his complaint of it in the more strong expressions, and with the greater bitterness of heart.

A dirty person, who hath been commonly employed in the dunghill, can be filthy all over without any uneasiness; whereas it gives a person of more delicate breeding and manners much shame and uneasiness to observe a small spot of filth upon himself. An unregenerate person, who is in a course of impurity and iniquity, like a sow wallowing in the mire, (that

is the scripture similitude,) his sins give him little or no uneasiness; not even the unholiness of his outward practice: much less the unholiness of his heart. There is a notable difference between the sense of things the two sorts of persons entertain, and often express. Such an unregenerate person as I have mentioned, however freely he takes his course in ill practice, will often give favourable accounts of himself for an honest heart, for certain praise-worthy qualities, and good deeds; will often represent himself as righteous, and say such things of himself as, according to their true import and meaning, can suit only righteous persons, and those truly regenerate: when persons truly holy, however pure and fruitful they are in outward behaviour, yet, from what they observe of the evil of their hearts, will be heard sometimes to speak of themselves in a style that may seem, at first sight, to suit only the worst of men.

Thus the matter stands on both sides. A person unholy, and impenitent, fixes his attention on any good thing he can observe with himself, whereby he can in any degree support a favourable opinion of his own state, and be somewhat easy in an evil course. On the other hand, a person truly sanctified is ready to overlook his own good attainments, to forget the things that are behind in this respect, and rather consider how far he is behind, and defective in holiness; and to fix his attention with much painful feeling, on his remaining sinfulness, for matter of godly sorrow, or serious regret to him. With a just view of the majesty and holiness of God, he is ready to say with Job, chap. xlii. 6. *I abhor myself.*

Most professed christians will acknowledge, that it is very consistent with a state of grace, to have much imperfection in holiness, and much remaining sinfulness. Upon this view it is most reasonable to suppose, according to what hath been said above, that the farther one is advanced in holiness, and the more his heart is truly sanctified, he will have the greater sensibility with regard to sin, and it must give him the more pain and bitterness. If we might suppose that an angel should find an unholy thought, or imagination, to spring up in his mind; surely the first view and feeling of it would give him great apprehension and distress, and could not fail to put such a holy being into agonies. Let us, but for once, make the supposition, that the blessed apostle Paul found some sin and unholy affections remaining, and stirring in his heart; as he was a person advanced to a very uncommon degree in holiness, it would be the natural consequence, that he should express himself concerning the matter in language uncommonly strong and bitter. Suppose a man to be so holy as to be in the very next degree to perfection; such a person will have a much more quick feeling, and bitter complaint of sin, than another good man who is yet less holy.

There is something here of important consideration and usefulness in dealing with souls serious and sincere. A christian says, I have tasted that the Lord is gracious; and methinks I have found my heart undergo a happy change, with a powerful determination towards God and holiness. I have thought that I had good evidence of true conversion, and of a heart truly regenerated by grace. But then I know, that the effect should

be, to grow in grace, to advance in holiness, and that sin remaining in my heart should become weaker and weaker. But I find otherwise ; I find grace rather become more weak ; and however my outward deportment is regulated by a good conscience in ways of purity and integrity, yet in my heart I feel sin very strong, and rather growing more and more so. Evil lusts, carnal affections, and disorderly passions are daily stirring, often with great vehemence, and defiling my heart and spirit. Alas ! after all I have experienced of Divine goodness, I have cause to apprehend, that I may be found to have been in a delusion, and that matters may have a fatal issue with me at last. The unholiness of my heart, in which grace feels so weak and sin so strong, gives me constant regret and sorrow ; and the dread of the final consequence sometimes strikes terror through my whole soul.

To consider the case with judgment ; as it is, in the first place, to be acknowledged that a christian hath great cause of serious regret, and to be greatly humbled for his remaining sinfulness ; yet it is one thing for sin to be growing more and more strong indeed ; it is another and very different thing for his sense of sin to be growing more and more so. If sin was indeed growing more strong in a christian's heart, he would feel it less ; as the increasing strength of sin is always attended with a proportionate hardness of heart and insensibility. When Hezekiah was humbled for the pride of his heart, it is likely that he observed the motions of that evil lust strong in him, and as if it had grown more and more so, compared with his former feeling and observation. Yet it was now that that lust was truly become weaker, and the real growth of grace

appeared in the quick and humbling sense he had of it. On a former occasion, when he was gratifying his vanity in entertaining the ambassadors of the king of Babylon, the pride of his heart had much influence, yet gave him no annoyance or uneasiness. It was then that the interest of sin was strong and prevailing, and that of grace and holiness weak. There are too many christians, whose sense of sin, and of its motions in them, is not so great as it ought to be ; and this, alas, comes too often to discover itself in outward instances of unholy conversation and practice. Christians may be assured, that a growing sensibility of conscience and heart with respect to sin, outwardly and inwardly, is among the chief evidences of the growth of grace, and of good advances in holiness, that they are likely to have on this side of heaven. For the more pure and holy the heart is, it will naturally have the more quick feeling of what sin remaineth in it : and it will be taking the just view of the context now before us, to consider it in this light.

4. The last general consideration I suggest is, that the expressions here are not used by another concerning a person historically ; but by himself in the way of bitter regret and complaint. A man may in this way, and in the bitterness of his heart, say very strong things concerning himself and his condition, which it were unjust and absurd for another to say of him, in giving his character historically. But this will come in our way again.

SECT. II.

That nothing represented in this context, ver. 14—25. is inconsistent with a state of grace.

THE arguments of those who will have the apostle to be here personating others, come under this general head, that there are divers things in this context which he could not say or mean of himself, and which are inconsistent with a state of grace. Let us consider the particular things that are observed and alleged to this purpose.

1. The first thing of this sort that is adduced is in ver. 14.—*I am carnal*. To be *carnal*, or to be *in the flesh*, (so it is argued,) is the character of a person unregenerate, and under the law; and not applicable to a person in a state of grace, as the apostle was.

Answ. To be *in the flesh*, can indeed be said of none who are in a state of grace, according to the scripture use of the expression. But to be *in the flesh*, and to be in some respect *carnal*, are not words convertible, or of the same meaning. They may be, and are said to be *carnal* in particular respects, and on a special view, who are in a state of grace. Here is a clear instance. The Corinthians the apostle addresses as saints, and considers as being in Christ; yet to them he writes thus, *I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.—For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?* 1 Cor. iii. 1—3.

I know not what can be replied here, if it is not this. The apostle severely blames the Corinthians for being carnal; so that we cannot suppose that he means of himself, when he says here, *I am carnal*.

Yet still his charging the Corinthians, whom he considers as saints, and truly in Christ, with being carnal, makes out this general point, that persons regenerate may be carnal in particular respects. To be *in the flesh*, denotes persons absolutely unregenerate, and destitute of the Spirit, as we see, Rom. viii. 9. But as to christians being charged with carnality, in particular respects, this admits of great variety. The blessed apostle was by no means carnal in the same respect or degree as the Corinthians. He charges them with being so, because they could be fed only with milk; had envyings, strifes, and divisions among them; in a word, that they were but babes in Christ; though grace was real and sincere in them, it was weak: so the flesh remained strong and little subdued in them. This was shameful to them, and very reprobable. But it was on comparing himself with a much higher standard than that of men adult and come to full stature in Christ, even with the strict holiness and spirituality of the law of God, that he here calls himself carnal. - This was matter of bitter regret to himself; but was far from that more blame-worthy kind and degree that he charges the Corinthians with.

As here, speaking to the Corinthians, he states the opposition between *spiritual* and *carnal*, even as to persons, each sort, in a state of grace; it is plain that he hath the same opposition of characters in view, as to persons in the same state

of grace, *If a brother be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such a one.* Gal. vi. i.—Where it is plain, he considers the person overtaken in a fault as carnal, though a brother. All this is enough to show, that his saying, *I am carnal*, though it imports something, in its own nature, contrary to holiness, yet doth not import the man's being *in the flesh*, unregenerate.

2. The next thing objected is in the same ver. 14.—*sold under sin.* And the argument from this expression is thus stated. Anciently when the regular cartels were not agreed on between powers at war, the prisoners or captives became the slaves of the victors; or, being sold by them, the slaves of such as bought them. Sometimes men became slaves by their having, of their own will, resigned their liberty, and sold themselves. So in general this expression, *sold under sin*, imports to be a slave of sin, (so it is argued,) and this cannot be said, in any sense or degree, of a person regenerate and under grace. On this occasion, some have introduced the expression used concerning Ahab, that surely can never be applicable to a regenerate person, *But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord*, 1 Kings xxi. 25.

To this I answer, that the instance of Ahab (to begin with that) is very improperly adduced to explain or illustrate the expression in our text. In the words quoted, Ahab is represented as singular among, yea above the most wicked. The inspired historian says, *There was none like unto Ahab*; and it is to explain this that he adds, *which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord*: that is, he wholly abandoned himself to

all manner of wickedness, in open defiance of the Almighty. Now, if the apostle shall be supposed to be representing, in our context, the general and common case of persons unregenerate, in the flesh, and under the law, can the case of Ahab answer that purpose? can such things be said of all who are unregenerate? It is plain, that the expression used concerning Ahab, and that of our text, *I am—sold under sin*, are not of the same import or meaning. If the latter should mean as the former, it would not express the common case and character of persons regenerate or unregenerate, under the law or under grace.

As to slavery, there was a great difference, according to the different way in which a man came into that state. If in the course of war a man happened to be taken captive, he was unwillingly a slave, regretted his own condition, and truly longed for deliverance; as he might expect it from the future successes of his proper lord. A man having such a disposition and prospect, though captivated for a season, might still justly reckon himself the subject and soldier of the lord, under whose banner he had fought, and solace himself with the prospect of his working his relief. But if a man peacefully and voluntarily sold himself, he had not the same reason to look for relief, and would be like to live without the hope of it, without being anxious about his condition.

It must accordingly be allowed, that there is a great difference between a person, who with full determination of heart and will peacefully yieldeth himself a slave to sin, to the outward and inward practice of it; and a person who, to pure and upright outward behaviour, adds the utmost solici-

tude about inward conformity to the strict holiness and spirituality of the law, with an ordinary conflict against every thing within him contrary thereto. The former proves himself to be in an unregenerate state. The latter, with all his bitter and tragical complaint, is not so; yea, this can suit none other than a person in a regenerate state.

As to the instance of Ahab; if instead of its being *historically* said of him, that he *sold himself*; we had overheard him, or any other such, striking his thigh like Ephraim, and bemoaning himself, saying, Ah, how carnal I am, and sold under sin! it would surely have made a vast difference; we should see cause to judge such a man, like Ephraim, to be a true penitent, under the full influence of regenerating grace.

In interpreting the language of sorrow and complaint, great allowance is to be made; so as not to take strong words rigidly, in their most full ordinary meaning. They would make absurd and foolish work of it, who would so interpret it in many instances that occur in holy writ. In this way, for instance, one might argue and say, Job was certainly an ill, yea, a vile man; for so he testifies of himself, *Behold, I am vile*, Job xl. 4. Job uttered this humble expression, on his having got a very affecting view of the Divine majesty and holiness. In like manner, with an eye to the authority and holiness of God revealed in his law, and of the inward purity it required, as being spiritual, the apostle cries out, *I am carnal, sold under sin*. If one overheard a serious, upright christian saying, on some occasion, with much deep regret, (as many such have done,) Ah, what a slave am I to carnal affections, to unruly

passions; how do they carry me away and captivate me! would he hastily say, that this complaint had no foundation at all in truth? or would he conclude, that if it had, this man was truly and absolutely a slave of sin, and a person unregenerate? If the apostle's exclamation, *sold under sin*, shall be considered in this view, as it certainly ought to be, it is so far from proving the person, who thus speaks, to be truly a slave of sin, that it evidently tends to prove the contrary.

3. To the expression we have been last considering, ver. 14, we may join that other, as near of kin to it in meaning, ver. 23. *I see another law — bringing me into captivity to the law of sin*. To be actually brought into captivity to sin, and to be sold under sin, signify much the same thing: so that what hath been said of the other expression, ver. 14, may be applied to this.

We have no cause to think, that the apostle was, even in his regenerate state, altogether a stranger to the sudden hurry and surprise of passion, such as cannot be without some degree of sin, however soon checked and overcome, yet not so soon but that he might observe as much of it as would greatly annoy his holy heart. If we consider things in view to the third general consideration above suggested, we ought, from a heart so sanctified as was that of the apostle Paul, to expect no less than the expression of bitter regret on such accounts.

4. A fourth thing that is said to be inconsistent with a state of grace, is, a will to do good that hath not effect in practice. Thus, ver. 15. *What I would, that I do not*; ver. 18. *To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good*

I find not ; and ver. 19. *The good that I would I do not.* This, say they, cannot be the case of a person in a state of grace ; for of such the apostle says, that *God worketh in them to will, and to do, or perform.*

This is to come in our way elsewhere hereafter. But as to the purpose of this place ; if the apostle says, *How to perform that which is good I find not*, we have not reason to think from this, that it was always or most commonly so with him ; nor do the words oblige us to understand him so.

Yea even from the representation here given, it is certain that the person whose case is meant, must be supposed to do and to perform a great deal that is good. He saith several times, that it is good that he willed to do, and that to will it was present with him. He saith not, that he willed that which was evil ; though it is true, that he could not do evil without his will being in it in some sort and degree. But as he never says, that he willed that which was evil, it implies that such will was not the habitual and prevailing will. But when he mentions oftener than once that he willed that which was good, and says, that to will so is present with him, he hereby shows, that the prevailing habitual inclination and determination of his will was towards good. Now if it was so, it is certain from the nature of things, and from the natural course of things in rational agents, that good must have prevailed in his conduct and practice outward and inward. But whatever good he attained, or whatever good he performed, yet, according to what hath been formerly said, overlooking his attainment in that way, his attention is fixed, with great concern and regret, on what he

hath not attained or performed. Alas, (as if he had said,) in how many instances doth it happen, that I do what I allow not; that I do not that which I would; that when to will is present with me, yet how to perform that which is good I find not! Surely this is very consistent with the prevailing of grace in the heart. The truth is, serious christians are so much often in this way, and thus expressing their complaint, that if one was to form a character of them according to what they say and represent in this style, it would often be more unfavourable than just.

Further, we are to remember that the apostle hath in his eye, all along, what, at first setting out in speaking of himself in the present tense, he had mentioned, ver. 14, even the spirituality of the law, as a rule not only to his outward behaviour, but also to his heart and spirit within him. If with this in view he should say, To will even the absolute perfection and purity which the law of God requireth, is present with me; but how to perform that which is good, according to the strict holiness and spirituality of the law, I find not; alas, I find not in any instance whatsoever: will any say that this is inconsistent with a state of grace? Let us consider what is likely to have been the aim, the will, and wish of so holy a person. He willed that the love of God should fill his heart, and prevail in it in the most intense degree; that his heart should be wholly spiritual and heavenly, in all its thoughts and affections; that when he came before God in exercises of worship, his whole soul should be animated and elevated with a heavenly flame of devotion; that vain thoughts, sin and sinful imperfections should

never hold him short of such perfect attainment in his duty. Will any say, it is unreasonable to suppose this to be what he willed? or can any good reason be given for supposing that Paul, whilst he was in the body, found nothing that made him fall short of so high an aim in holiness?

Let it be added here, when the apostle says, ver. 18. *How to perform that which is good I find not*, that the word rendered *perform*, is, *κατεργάζεσθαι*; which, though it may sometimes mean no more than simply *to do*, as hath been shown formerly; yet it more properly signifies, *to do thoroughly*, or *completely*. The apostle, having the strict holiness and spirituality of the law in his eye, willed to do what is good thoroughly and completely; as in the outward work, so in his heart and spirit within him. But after all that the christian attains, there is something as to doing thoroughly and completely that he doth not reach in this life. *There is not a just man that doth good, and sinneth not*. There is still imperfection, something of sin that cleaveth to men's best doings. So that, in view to the proper standard and rule, the best may say, (according to Isa. lxvi. 6.) that even *all their righteousnesses are as filthy rags*. The common case of christians is according to Gal. v. 17. *The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would*. These considerations account for the apostle's saying, *How to perform that which is good I find not*; and show that therein there is nothing inconsistent with being regenerate and under grace, and nothing to give cause to think that the apostle personates the unregenerate man.

5. Some have argued from that expression, ver. 20.—*Sin that dwelleth in me*, as if sin dwelling in a man signifies its ruling, or having dominion in him. But if a man dwells in this city, or in that country, and it is so said, doth indeed the expression import that he ruleth in that city or country? It is plain, that the word *dwell* doth not, of itself, import rule or dominion; and that there is good reason for the distinction between sin reigning in men, as it doth in the unregenerate, and sin merely dwelling in them, as it doth in them who are regenerate. If the apostle meant to represent here persons unregenerate, he had a fair occasion to make the matter clear by that one word, by saying, instead of *dwelling*, *Sin that ruleth*, or *hath dominion in me*; but he doth not so, but uses a word that hath no such meaning.

6. It is likewise argued, that there is something inconsistent with a regenerate state in the expression, ver. 24. *O wretched man that I am!* But though a man who is regenerate is happy on the whole; yet such a man may be wretched in several respects, and may complain bitterly of being so. If a good christian in the distressing paroxysm of a chronical disease, of gout or gravel, should cry out, *O wretched man that I am!* or if Job, in his great distress, had used these very words, (as he used very strong ones,) it were surely rash and foolish to conclude that he was unregenerate, and not under grace. A sanctified heart, conscious of the motions of sin in itself, hath certainly no less cause to cry out of wretchedness.

7. Some have argued from that expression in this same ver. 24. *Who shall deliver me?*—as if it implied despair; which is inconsistent with a

state of grace. As to this, it will be allowed, that final, absolute despair is so. But we must not judge so of the suggestions of despair; even when these are uttered in strong terms, from the force of temptation. There are not wanting instances of this sort in scripture, in the case of some of the saints. But the apostle's expression here doth not amount even to so much. It expresses the painful feeling he had of sin; the great difficulty he found in overcoming it; and that it required the hand of One more powerful than himself; together with his solicitude, his most vehement desire, and longing to be delivered. That there is no despair, appears in the words he utters, as with the same breath,—*I thank my God through Jesus Christ.*

Thus I have considered all that I have observed to be adduced, with any colour, from the apostle's words, as inconsistent with a state of grace: and I think it may by this time be reckoned very clear, that none of these things in particular, nor the whole together, are so.

SECT. III.

Showing that this context contains a great deal that is inconsistent with an unregenerate state.

I COME now to show, that in the case here represented there is much that is inconsistent with an unregenerate state; and such as none else than a true believer, under grace, and regenerated, is capable of. To this purpose the general appearance hath something at first sight very striking; I mean the bitter complaint there is all along of sin dwelling in the man, or in his flesh. *I am*

carnal, sold under sin. Taking this as the language of bitter and heavy complaint, as it evidently is, what unregenerate man hath such a sense of sin prevailing in him as would produce in sincerity such a complaint? or if the unregenerate man hath right sentiments in his head, what man in this state hath so sad an impression of the case in his heart? How sad the impression, and the exclamation, ver. 24. *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?*

As to this last expression, *this body of death*, some have understood it of the body properly so called. But however well the apostle knew it was better for him to depart, and be with Christ, yet amidst all his distresses in the body, we never find him wishing and crying out to be disunited from the body, or to be by such an event withdrawn from the service of Christ and of his church on earth. Much less is it congruous to suppose an unregenerate man, (who is said to be here personated,) crying out for death, in order to be without sin. No such man was ever so weary of sin, or had such a prospect respecting it, for futurity, as to wish and cry out for his dissolution on such account. But, as hath been formerly said, the *body of death* in this 24th verse is likely to mean the same thing as the *body of sin*, chap. vi. 6, and shows how bitter and sad the sense of sin is in the man who cries out as in this place.

I know that an unregenerate man may, in great terror of the penal consequence of sin, loudly complain of it. But it is not sin itself, but the penal consequence that is bitter to such. I know also, that a person who labours to establish his own righteousness, (which is in great opposition to God,

and to the sincerity of holiness,) may have much vexation, and much discouragement to that sort of hope, by sin. But that sin itself, for the evil it hath in its own nature, and its contrariety to God, to duty, to holiness, in view to the spirituality of the law, should be so bitter to a man, is quite remote from the disposition of such a self-righteous, unregenerate soul.

To be more particular: he says, ver. 15. *That which I do I allow not.* The Greek word rendered *allow*, is not the same that is so rendered, chap. xiv. 22. The word here is, *γινωσκω*, *what I know not.* But as this more common meaning of the word doth not suit this place, it is fit to take another meaning that is not uncommon in scripture use, by which the word signifies, *to love.* So, *The Lord knoweth* (that is, *loveth*) *the way of the righteous*, Psal. i. 6. *I never knew* (that is, *loved*, or had complacence in) *you; depart from me*, Matt. vii. 23. *Thou hast known* (*hast loved*, or testified thy love to) *my soul in adversity*, Psal. xxxi. 7. *I am the good Shepherd, and know* (that is, *love*) *my sheep, and am known* (that is, *loved*) *of mine*, John x. 14. This sense well suits our text, *That which I do I allow or know not*, that is, *love not*, Rom. vii. 15. For what in the last clause of the verse he opposes to this, is not mere disapprobation, but hatred; *what I hate, that I do.* So he expresses here, that sin he *loved not*; he *hated* it. This is emphatic. Nature did spontaneously and with strong inclination produce the motions of sins; the flesh, depraved nature, produced irregular, unholy passions and lusts, which he understood by the spirituality of the law to be sin: but by the fixed, deliberate, and prevailing

disposition of his sanctified heart, he *loved* it not ; he *hated* it.

What nature or the flesh produceth in the manner that hath been said, being what, by the prevailing disposition of his heart, he would not, he infers, ver. 16. *I consent unto the law that it is good*. Assent and consent do differ : as the former is of the understanding, respecting truth, which is its proper object ; the latter is of the heart and will, respecting good, which is the special object of the will. Now, the word is here used expressly with relation to *good*, that *the law is good*, which is the object of the will ; and it is from the inclination of his will, *If I do that which I would not*, that he makes the inference, *I consent unto the law that it is good*. This, however, doth not suit the disposition and prevailing principles of the unregenerate. Let such argue in rational theory ever so much for the goodness of the law, and assent to all that can be said to that purpose ; yet the heart and will do not consent unto the law that it is *good*, and commands what is *good* for *me* to do. When it comes from mere theory to doing, the heart and will give it against the holy and spiritual law ; and every unholy lust, inordinate affection, and irregular passion hath the consent of the will to the goodness of itself, and it hath its course inwardly, in opposition to the holiness of the law, even when there may be great restraint, from various causes and means, as to outward practice.

The apostle says, ver. 17. *Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me*. What here would strike every mind free of bias, is that this “ *I* ” on the side of holiness against sin, is the most prevailing, and what represents the

true character of the man ; and that *sin*, which he distinguishes from this “ *I*,” is not the prevailing reigning power in the man here represented, as it is, however, in every unregenerate man.

Further ; we see all along in this context, the man’s *will* is represented as on the side of duty and holiness, and against sin. It is true, that sin could not do or effect any thing, without having the will and affections in its interest in some degree. Yet he never saith here, that sin, or evil, is the thing that he willet ; but still what he willet not. Often as he mentions willing, and sin, and doing, yet he never mentions his willing as on the side of sin ; that is still what he would not. How shall we account for this, but by saying, that the will to duty and holiness is prevailing, and his will is habitually on that side ; which cannot be the case with a man in the flesh, under the dominion of sin ? He says, ver. 18. *To will is present with me* ; that is, to will what is good and holy ; and thus it is with him habitually. This can import no less, than that the will to holiness, and to the very perfection thereof, is habitually ready with him. He says indeed, ver. 21. *I find a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me*. So it was ; the flesh remaining in him, sin was its natural production ; it was spontaneous and ready on the side of sin ; ever ready to avoid and resist every holy thought, motion, or action. Yet sin was not what he willed. It was against the deliberate, fixed inclination and determination of his will ; and so was not the dominant principle in him, as it is in all who are in the flesh. * Sin could not be dominant in him, without having the prevailing inclination of the will favourable to it.

But here there is no hint given of this concerning the will.

If a natural man, destitute of the Holy Spirit, can sincerely will, love, delight, and hate, as is here said, I would wish to know, what is left for Divine grace to do in regeneration? What but external revelation, and moral suasion well inculcated, to give the proper excitement to the more languid will, inclination, and affection towards holiness, which a man in nature hath, from rational nature itself, that these may exert themselves with due activity and force? This is Divine grace, and the human will consenting to this suasion, and so exerting itself in practice, is, according to them, regeneration.

Moral suasion must indeed have its own place, in dealing with rational creatures. They are not dealt with as stocks or stones under the hand of the mechanic. Conversion to God through Jesus Christ, and to holiness, is the consequence of proper evidence, and of proper motives. Conversion is the effect of suasion; but not of that merely: suasion is not of itself a cause adequate to such an effect in sinful men. In using that suasion, and that the proper evidence and motives should have effect on the hearts of men, there is needful the immediate operation and influence of Divine power and grace on the hearts of men; not to work on them as the mechanic doth on a stock or a stone, (as some men foolishly speak, in arguing against the doctrine of grace,) but with a much greater efficacy of power; by which God quickeneth the dead, gives sight to the blind, or causes the lame to walk: which are similitudes the scripture affords respecting this subject.

The minds of men are spiritually so blind, as to be incapable of perceiving, in a just light, the evidence and excellency of spiritual things; and their hearts so possessed by sin, that they cannot be duly affected or excited by the best motives; until of Divine mercy they are saved from the prevailing influence and effect of sin, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. If it were not so, how could it happen, that on so great a part of mankind, yea of the wise and prudent, whose intellectual faculties have been highly improved, with respect to other subjects; yet the best evidence and motives set before them by the gospel, have no effect for their good and salvation; when these things are happily and effectually revealed to babes? The gospel hath effect beyond what the law ever hath, not merely by its better light and means of suasion; but especially as it is the ministration of the Spirit, and that thereby is conveyed into the souls of men the Holy Spirit, to give efficacy to its suasion, to enlighten, convert, and sanctify. To say, that without this men in their natural condition can have their will truly inclined to holiness, and can delight in the holy and spiritual law of God, is to depreciate grace, and to feed nature with delusion.

It is true, indeed, that a sincere christian may, occasionally, be so much under the influence of the flesh, as to be thereby unable to perform what he *habitually* willeth and wisheth; yea, so as to be much insnared in evil: and God, who worketh in christians to will and to do of his *good pleasure*, may leave him in some instances, thus to prove his weakness; for making him more humble, watchful, and dependent. But to say that a man

can sincerely and habitually have his will well affected to God and holiness, with a true hatred of sin ; and not habitually and commonly perform that which is good, is quite contrary to the nature of things. The sincere christian willing that which is good, doth also in practice perform it, in a manner that the unregenerate man is incapable of ; and, notwithstanding the imperfection of his doing, he is therein accepted through Jesus Christ.

There remain several things to be adduced to the same purpose from two verses, which it is fit to consider separately, and more largely.

22. *I delight in the law of God after the inward man.*

There hath been great labour and difference in interpreting this verse. Let us inquire, 1. What is meant by the *inward man*? 2. What is meant by *delighting in the law of God*?

1. What is meant by the *inward man*? We say, it means the same as the *new man*, or the soul so far as renewed by Divine grace. It has been said, that it cannot mean the new man ; which is not put on till we have put off the old man with his deeds. But when the christian hath put off the old man, it is not so perfectly done, but that there remains occasion for the exhortation, to *put off the old man*, and to *put on the new man*, as Eph. iv. 22, 24. And though the Colossians had put off the old man, still there remained in them members of the old man to be mortified, as the apostle exhorts them, chap. iii. 5, and he found in them what occasioned his saying to them, ver. 8. *Now also put off all these ; anger, wrath, malice, &c.* which pertained to the old

man. These expressions in ver. 22, convey the sorrowful complaint of one, who appears to have indeed put off the old man; who grieves much for what he still finds of the members of the old man remaining and stirring in him; and who hath at heart, according to the exhortation directed to the Ephesians and Colossians, to put off the old man, and to mortify his members, more and more, and longs to be delivered from the body of death.

Again, it has been asserted, that it only means the mind of man, and that the soul, using the body as its instrument, is called, ὁ ἐσω ἀνθρώπος, the *inward man*. There is no doubt that in the composition of the human person, the body is the outward, the soul the inward part of man, and the principle of life and action; which useth the other as its instrument: nor is there any absurdity, if men, in expressing their own mind in common speech, shall call the one the inward, the other the outward man. But we are now inquiring concerning the scripture use of the word, *inward man*, and that certainly is not, to signify the soul, in contradistinction from the body.

This is certain from the apostle's evident scope and argument in the place we are considering. From that it is clear, that he means by the *inward man*, that in him to which nothing contrary to delighting in the law of God could be ascribed. He had said, ver. 21. *I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For* (so he adds, ver. 22.) *I delight in the law of God after the inward man*. It were making the apostle talk in an inconsistent manner, to give *delighting in the law of God* as the peculiar and distinguishing character of his inward man, in

opposition to that law by which evil was present with him, if that law was likewise to be ascribed to his inward man, which were certainly the case if the inward man signified the soul in contradistinction to the body. The body, considered separately, is not the subject of moral good or evil. In the human person the soul is especially and most properly the seat of moral good and evil. If it uses the body as its instrument in doing good, it also uses it as its instrument in accomplishing and gratifying the corrupt lusts and passions that are inherent in the soul. It is plain, that the apostle means to ascribe delighting in the law of God to a good principle in him, which he contradistinguishes to another principle in his soul, by which, as in the preceding words, evil was present with him; and that good principle can be no other than that called in scripture the *new man*, and here, the *inward man*.

In proceeding to consider the only two other places in which the expression occurs, I begin with 2 Cor. iv. 16. *For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.*

It has been said, that the outward man which perisheth signifies only the body; the inward is only the soul and spirit that is in the man. One thing that occurs in the general view of that interpretation, is this, that it makes the apostle's words represent something that is not common or natural, and which christians ordinarily have not cause to expect. For when the body becomes weak and fades, most commonly and naturally weakness comes on the mind and spirit of a man too. But understanding the inward man of the

new man, the matter becomes intelligible and very clear. The christian, though the gifts, by which he perhaps shined, do as the flower of the grass fall away; yet he becomes more humble and poor in spirit, more sincere and upright, holds Christ more precious, hath his heart more weaned from the world, doth more earnestly desire the things that are above, and is more solaced by the hope of the eternal inheritance. In all this there is great improvement of the new man. While the christian fades and declines in his body, and likewise in his spirit, and the natural faculties thereof; yet, at the same time, as to what belongs to the new man, and what truly constitutes the character of the christian, or righteous person, he flourishes like a palm-tree, he bringeth forth fruit in old age, and is, under all his natural fading, fat and flourishing in the best sense. As this doth show that the Lord is upright; so, to the praise of his faithfulness, it is no uncommon case among those whom grace hath sanctified.

That in 2 Cor. iv. 16, *the inward man*, and the *renewing* thereof, means the new man, or principle of grace and holiness, and its improvement, is very evident by the account the apostle himself gives of that improvement, or renewing, in the very next words: *For our light affliction*, saith he, *which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.*—Thus then it is that the inward man is daily renewed and improved by tribulations, while these do more and more fit the christian for glory, dispose and determine him the more to look, not to the things

that are seen, but to the things that are not seen. This cannot be said of the soul simply, but of the principle of grace and holiness, or the new man, which alone is capable of such improvement; or of the soul, so far as it is renewed by Divine grace. Otherwise, how many souls are there, which, being unrenewed, receive no such improvement by tribulations and afflictions!

Another place, in which this expression, the *inward man*, occurs, is where the apostle prays for the Ephesians, chap. iii. 16, 17, thus: *That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye being rooted and grounded in love, &c.* It may be easy to understand the meaning of the *inner man*, for any who shall observe the scope and connexion of this passage, which are easy and obvious. He wishes Christ to dwell in their hearts by faith; which is not merely wishing them to have faith, for that he supposes these Ephesians to have already, but that they might be more steady and established in faith; that they might be more habituated to living practically by faith; that so Christ might be in them, not as by transient visits, but might dwell in them, for their most established consolation, and abounding fruitfulness. His wish is not merely that they may have love, but that they may be rooted and grounded in love. Now, it is in order to this, that he prays they may be *strengthened with might in the inner man*. Their being so, he considers, as having for its natural consequence, that *Christ shall dwell in their hearts by faith, &c.* He considers these things as naturally connected.

As the new man owes his being to the Holy Spirit ; so it is by the influence and power of the same Spirit that he on all occasions receives might and vigour. Then if the new man, the principle of spiritual life (or the inner man) is strengthened, the natural consequence will be what the apostle mentions ; that the christian will have great establishment in faith, unmoved by the shocks of tribulation, or by the temptations of the enemy ; so that Christ shall dwell in him, and he shall be rooted and grounded in love.

Thus we have seen how we are to understand the *inward man* in these two texts, 2 Cor. iv. 16, and Eph. iii. 16. And by what hath been observed, it appears, that we cannot justly conceive the apostle's argument, or enter into the views which he appears to have in these places, without understanding the inner man of the new man. As to the text especially under our consideration, Rom. vii. 22, it has been observed before, that the inward man there must be understood, not of the soul merely, but of that special principle in the soul, by which the man delighted in the law of God ; and that as distinguished from another principle also in the soul, by which evil was present with him. All these things make it appear, that by the *inward man* here we are to understand what the apostle calls elsewhere the *new man*. What is here ascribed to the inward man is very decisive to the same purpose. This brings us to the next thing proposed for explaining ver. 22.

2. What is meant by *delighting in the law of God*?

The Greek word properly and strongly signifies *delighting* ; and none need to be told what delighting is.

We find in scripture, that *delighting in the law of God* is given as a special evidence of a person regenerate, holy, righteous, and blessed. The psalmist in Psal. cxix. hath divers expressions to this purpose concerning himself; particularly ver. 47. *I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved.* Indeed the commandments cannot be the delight of any man further than they are loved by him: which shows the absurdity of understanding *delighting in the law of God*, in our text, of an unregenerate man, who is incapable of loving the law. The psalmist's words are very direct and clear to the present purpose, Psal. i. 2, where he gives it as the mark of a man who is truly blessed, that *his delight is in the law of the Lord*: as he likewise gives it for a mark of the righteous, Psal. xxxvii. 31, that *the law of God is in his heart.* Now, shall we say, there is any thing so weak or silly in the inspired writings, as to give for the mark of persons blessed, righteous, and regenerate, any thing they have in common with persons unregenerate and ungodly; or can it be good arguing that proceeds on such a supposition?

We have now seen that the *new man*, the principle of spiritual life and holiness, is the same that is meant by the *inward man*; according to the constant use of scripture. We have likewise seen, that to *delight in the law of God*, is, according to the scripture, a most special and distinguishing mark of a person righteous and blessed. So that in this one proposition, ver. 22. *I delight in the law of God according to the inward man*, we have two arguments of great clearness and force, proving that the case represented in our context is that of a person regenerate, and under grace.

SECT. IV.

*The same subject continued, and ver. 25.
explained.*

WE might be well satisfied with the evidence that has been already brought from this context, to determine the general scope and purpose of it ; but there remains a great deal more evidence in the concluding verse of this seventh chapter. The first clause is, *I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Here we have the expression of the apostle's thankfulness for the advantage he had already obtained against the flesh, and the freedom he had by Divine grace attained from the law in his members. By no means, say others. It is but his thankfulness for the prospect and comfortable expectation he had, through the grace of God in Jesus Christ, of being delivered from the body of death, for which he had expressed such an earnest wish and longing in the preceding verse. Be it so: as indeed both his past experience, and his good prospect for futurity, may be well taken together, as the matter of his thankfulness. But if we should restrict it to the matter last mentioned, his thankfulness in that same view implies his faith and confidence of being delivered from what he calls the body of death. It is easy using words, and many have used the preceding words, *O wretched man that I am !* who never had any true sense of wretchedness by the strength of sin in them. So it is easy for men to express thankfulness, and to profess the faith of total deliverance from sin, in such words as are here used, who have not the

faith they express in their hearts. But for a man who hath great bitterness of heart by the experience of sin in him, who finds the working out of deliverance from it exceed all his own powers and utmost efforts, and all created power besides; who cries out, with a complaint sincere and earnest, of his wretchedness by it; for such a man, I say, to express, as with the same breath, his joyful thankfulness for the prospect and hope of deliverance from the body of death, could not be without that faith supporting and solacing his heart, that is a certain fruit and evidence of regeneration. For it will be often found, that the children of God have no greater trial of faith, or greater difficulty in exercising it, than in what concerneth their comfort in reference to sin that dwelleth in them, and their hope of deliverance from it. But to suppose that an unregenerate man, having such a painful feeling of sin, of which he is the absolute and *willing* slave, to have at the same time such thankful confidence of deliverance from it, is to suppose what is quite inconsistent with that character and state.

In the remaining part of this ver. 25, we have the result and conclusion of all the representation the apostle had been making from ver. 14. And here surely we may expect something that will further help us to understand and fix the general scope and purpose of the preceding context. The words are, *So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.* In the first of these clauses we have occasion to consider these three expressions, and the sense of them. 1. *I myself.* 2. *The mind.* 3. *Serving the law of God.*

1. *Αυτος εγω, I myself*; so rendered precisely according to the Greek. So Luke xxiv. 39. *That, αυτος εγω ειμι, it is I myself.*—*For I could wish that, αυτος εγω, myself were accursed*, Rom. ix. 3. And, *αυτος εγω, I myself also am persuaded*, Rom. xv. 14. *Αυτος δε εγω Παυλος, Now I Paul myself beseech you*, 2 Cor. x. 1. *Except that, αυτος εγω, I myself was not burdensome to you*, chap. xii. 13. This is enough for vindicating our translation, and to show that any other rendering is not warranted by the use and common meaning of the words.

As this expression shows, that it is the case of the apostle himself, writing this epistle, which is here represented; there is this further in it, the expression clearly implies, that the character of the person here represented is to be taken, and himself to be denominated from this, as from the most prevailing principle in him, and in his course, that with his mind he served the law of God; *he himself* did so. Surely if this was the prevailing disposition and practice, it must be allowed to be a strong argument and proof of regeneration; and that the apostle is not here personating an unregenerate man, or a carnal Jew. Indeed this way of expressing the matter is quite suitable to what he had said, ver. 17. *Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.* And again, ver. 20. *If I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.* It is putting his conclusion in language very suitable to such premises and declarations, to say here, ver. 25. *So then, I MYSELF with my mind serve the law of God.*

However, his distinguishing thus pathetically,

and anxiously, between himself, ver. 17, 20, and sin dwelling in him, is not to be understood as if he designed to alleviate his sin, or to excuse himself. That were not like the disposition of a man, who was making such sorrowful confession and complaint of sin. For if he had whereby to excuse himself, or meant so, why should he cry out, *Wretched man that I am?*—But though he was far from designing to excuse himself, or sin in him; yet having such a sorrowful sense of his condition by sin, he much needed, as the true state of the case gave him ground, to encourage himself by observing, that the better principle prevailed in him, and that with his mind he *himself* served the law of God.

2. The word in this clause to be next considered is, the *mind*, for which the Greek word is, *νεϋς*. Now, shall we say, that an unregenerate man may justly demand, that his character be taken from his mind and conscience, and from the office which it performs within; so that it should be said, that this is he himself; and that the apostle is so to be understood in this place?

As to this, if human nature is to be considered in the most general view, and man is to be described as he is to be distinguished from the other animals on this globe; I allow that he is to be denominated from his soul or mind, and rational faculty and conscience, which is the better and the distinguishing part in his frame. So when we say, that man is a reasonable creature, endowed with a conscience; that is denominating him from his soul or mind, which alone is capable of rationality and conscience.

But all this is nothing to the present purpose.

The apostle's view doth not respect the general frame, or constitution of man, or of human nature. His discourse respects moral character, and the different case of a person regenerate, and under grace, and of a person unregenerate, under the law, with regard to moral character. Though I denominate man in general from the reason and conscience he is endowed with; shall I therefore give the moral character of an ill man, of one who has abandoned himself to work wickedness, like Ahab, from reason and conscience, and say the man is a person of reason and conscience?

Some writers express themselves as if they thought, that in every man all was right on the part of the *νους*, the mind or reasoning faculty; whatever pravity may have affected the will, affections, and body, through acquired ill habits, or otherwise. In interpreting this context, they do not advert, that in this fallen state the human mind hath come under great weakness, yea blindness, in spiritual matters, and in the things of God. Besides what there is of this common to all men in their natural condition, the scripture distinguishes some men as of corrupt minds in a special degree. The persons spoken of, Tit. i. 15, had *their mind* (ὁ *νους*) *and conscience defiled*. Those in Rom. i. 28, were given up *εἰς ἀδοκίμων νουν*, to a reprobate mind. Paul says, Eph. ii. 3, that in an unconverted state, *we all—were fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and, των διανοιων, of the mind*. Chap. iv. 17, he exhorts the christians *not to walk, as other gentiles do, in the vanity, τῆ νοος αυτων, of their mind*. He speaks of a man, Col. ii. 18, *vainly puffed up by τῆ νοος της σαρκος αυτε, his fleshly mind*. He mentions, 1 Tim. vi. 5,

perverse disputings of men, διεφθαρμενων τον νουν, of corrupt minds, and so likewise, 2 Tim. iii. 8. It appears then, that in unregenerate men, even the νους, the mind itself, is not so good a thing as some imagine, but is sadly tainted with sin; and is so in some to a high degree. Can such men justly say, With these our minds, fleshly minds, corrupt minds, reprobate minds as they are, we, even we ourselves, serve the law of God? Or, when such a one sins, can he say, It is not I; for I am to be denominated, and my character taken from my νους, mind, my λογικη διανοια, my rational understanding, vain, corrupt, and fleshly as that is?

Let us now consider the natural course of things in the human soul and practice. It is certain that a man doth not follow any sinful course farther than even his mind and understanding is on the side of sin. The mind or understanding is on the side of duty in many cases in theory. But when it comes to the actual practice of sin, it is certain that the mind doth first represent it as good, before it can proceed to practice. The mind may in this be biassed by affections, senses, lusts, and appetites. But from whatever source the bias comes, so it is, that the mind doth represent evil under the notion of good, before the will can possibly be determined to it. This is the fixed and unalterable order of things in rational agents. To suppose the will to determine itself to any sort of action or course without this, were to make it a brutal faculty; not the faculty of a rational agent. To say, that the human will may, by a sort of sovereign liberty, determine itself to any action or pursuit deliberately, without the mind representing it as good, is, in order to ascribe to man the

liberty of his will, to degrade him from the rank of a rational agent. It is certainly impossible in nature, that such an agent can will or choose any thing, good or evil as it may be in itself, but what the mind represents as good. Be it so then, that the mind, understanding, or conscience, hath a certain light and urgency on the side of holiness, or of duty, so far as they are enlightened in an unregenerate man; yet this light and urgency is faint and weak. On the other hand, the mind, influenced by a corrupt heart, represents the pleasures of sin as good; and this it performs in a strong light, and urges powerfully: which being agreeable to the corrupt disposition of the heart, prevails against the weak and ineffectual suggestion of mind and conscience, in favour of holiness and duty; and so takes effect in the practice. Thus even the *veritas*, the mind itself, comes to be on the side of sin, in men corrupt, unsanctified, and unregenerate.

This being the case, from which part is the unregenerate man to be denominated? Is it from the faint light in his mind, and the weak, ineffectual urgency of his conscience in favour of duty? or, is it from the more prevailing bias of his mind itself, of his will and affections on the side of sin, and from the free course it hath in his practice? How much soever he is, in the several faculties of his soul, determined on the side of sin, in opposition to true holiness; yet as any degree of light that remains in his mind and conscience is the better part in him, is he, from this, even when he goes on in sin, yea is under the dominion of it, entitled to denominate himself, as to moral or spiritual character, from this better part, and to

say, of all the evil that he practises, It is not I ? This is absurd.

But to come still closer to the subject, let us endeavour to explain what is here meant by the *mind*. We have here, ver. 25, *the mind* and *the flesh*, instead of the *law of his mind* and *the law in his members*, mentioned ver. 23. It is needless to seek a reason for this variation in the expression. If there had been a repetition in this ver. 25, of the word *law* four times, thus : I with the law of my mind serve the law of God ; but with the law in my members the law of sin ; there might be some disadvantage in sound and elegance. One word, striking the ear so often in one sentence, might be displeasing, which is avoided by substituting the words, the *mind*, and *the flesh*.

It is likely, however, that by his *mind* here he means the same thing as the *law of his mind*, ver. 23. Let us then inquire into the meaning of the *law of his mind*. We may be helped in this by considering what is meant by the *law in his members*, which he states in opposition to it. This last certainly is not any directing light, to be opposed in that respect to the *light* of his mind and conscience. In general, the law in his members is a powerful, energetic, operative principle. We must then, as the opposition is stated, understand the law of his mind, not merely of the light of his mind and conscience, suggesting to a man the law and rule of practice ; but of another powerful, energetic, operative principle. So that here we have one active principle disposing and determining the man's heart to holiness ; and it is plain that this is here represented as the more prevailing and ruling principle in him. There is another active principle, the law in his members,

the flesh, exerting itself in various lusts, carnal affections, unruly and unholy passions, and by these warring against that other and better principle of life and action, and so serving the law of sin.

It will tend to our better understanding this subject, and, at the same time, show a reason of the expression, *the law of my mind*, to observe that scripture, Heb. viii. 10. *This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts.* This is not merely what the apostle mentions, when he speaks of the natural conscience that is in the gentiles, Rom. ii. 15. This is something more than natural conscience can arrive to in any man: it is a writing by the Spirit of the living God in the fleshly tables of the hearts. It is, that God by his Spirit puts the holiness of the law, or puts the love of God, (which is the great commandment, and the sum of holiness,) in the minds and hearts of his people; implants in them a new and efficacious principle of spiritual life, effectually producing in them conformity to his law, and securing against the breaking of the covenant, as had happened with respect to the first covenant, before mentioned. So that this promise is so far parallel to that, Jer. xxxii. 40. *I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.*

From what hath been observed, we have good reason to think, that the law of the mind here is the principle of holiness in a mind and heart enlightened and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, which is a powerful, operative, and prevailing principle in every regenerate person.

3. The third expression in this second clause is, *Serving the law of God*. This can import no less than a true conformity to the holiness of the law of God, with submission and obedience to its authority, in the sincere and constant purpose of the heart, and in habitual endeavour; and this is incompatible with the character and state of an unregenerate person, under the dominion of sin.

In the second clause of this ver. 25, we have these three things. 1. The man here represented is to be denominated, and his character taken from the better, as it is the most *prevailing* principle. Reason and conscience are not the prevailing principles in an unregenerate, unholy person. But, as in the man here, the better principle prevails, it is he *himself*. 2. There is not only reason and conscience requiring him to serve the law of God, but he doth actually serve it: so the text expressly says. 3. This he doth by a new principle, his sanctified mind, the law of his mind, even the law of God put in his mind and heart by the grace of the new covenant; a law or principle opposing, in a prevailing manner, the law in his members. Thus in the conclusion, in this last verse, of the representation given in this context, we have three things very decisive concerning its general scope, that it is the case of a regenerate person, under grace, that is exhibited in it.

There remains the last clause of this text, *But with the flesh the law of sin*. The words, *I serve*, which are in the preceding, are to be understood to be in the sense of this clause, though not repeated in it, thus; *With the flesh I serve the law of sin*. For the apostle doth not mean to say, that what of sin came from the flesh was not his sin,

or done by him; having said, ver. 15. *What I hate, that I do*, and ver. 19. *The evil which I would not, that I do*. Yet it is evident, by the way this last clause is introduced and connected, that the flesh was not the dominant or reigning principle in him.

When the apostle says, *With my mind I serve the law of God*; surely there is good reason to conclude, that the man being made free from sin, (from its dominion,) was the servant of righteousness, the servant of God, (as chap. vi. 18, 22.) rather than to say he was under servitude to sin; even though the flesh in him prevailed in too many instances to serve the law of sin.

SECT. V.

Marking out some of the practical uses to be made of this context, according to the foregoing interpretation; together with the paraphrase of the several verses 14—25.

1. FROM the case and example here laid before us, we learn, how careful a christian ought to be about the inward purity of his heart; and what constant earnest opposition he should make to the very first motions of every unholy passion, and inordinate affection, or lusting in his heart. The heart is the proper and chief seat of holiness. Holiness in the heart is the chief part of our conformity to the holy and spiritual law of God: nor is any outward work considered as holy, if the heart within is not right before God, who sees and tries the heart; and to whom it cannot otherwise be acceptable.

Every unruly passion, and unholy lusting, is, in the nature of things, contrary to our own happiness. By the prevailing of these in the heart, the conscience is hurt and disquieted; and inordinate affections make the heart itself incapable of happiness. Holiness of heart is absolutely necessary to bring us into a capacity of happiness; which can be had, properly and perfectly, by no object but one, a holy God.

Yea, inward purity of heart, and conflict with the motions of sin therein, are absolutely necessary for maintaining external purity of practice, integrity, and faithfulness. What prevails in the heart will be likely to come forth. When sin in general, or a particular lust prevails in the heart, and is there entertained, it will be likely some time or other to force an eruption. The many snares of an evil world, the devices of invisible enemies, yea, the righteous judgment of God, will all concur in this, even to discover what is in a man's heart. *Keep thy heart with all diligence,*—Prov. iv. 23.

2. We have something here that may be exceedingly useful to support and encourage those who go heavily under the evil of their hearts. It were not right to suggest any thing that would tend to exclude the contrition for sin, that ought to be in the heart of every child of God. Yet from the light and sensibility that is in every sanctified heart with regard to sin, the consequence might be extremely hurtful to the comfort and stability of a christian, if the word of God had not provided something encouraging respecting the case; as there is in this context. So, if there are those who may abuse this passage, as they do also the other scriptures,

to their own destruction, serious christians find cause to bless God for having provided for their comfort, and for their direction in faith and duty, by this very valuable portion of holy writ.

I only add concerning this point the following words of Augustine : " The blessed apostle hath set before thee his own conflict, that thou mightest not fear thine. For if he had not thus spoke, when thou shouldst observe the moving of lust in thy members, to which, however, thou didst not yield thy consent; yet finding it to move, thou wouldst perhaps despair of thyself, and say, If I belonged to God, there would be no such motions in me. Observe the apostle in conflict, and do not thou despair."

3. I add an observation and inference respecting a doctrinal subject. We have here occasion to observe the sad corruption which human nature hath undergone ; how deep the root of sin hath gone in the hearts of men, and how great its force and activity is in the best of men.

We have seen in the context preceding ver. 14, the case of a person unregenerate with respect to this. He is under the law, and when the commandment cometh, as ver. 9, with its light, authority, and force, into the conscience, it may be supposed to awaken him to great carefulness about curbing, subduing, or restraining the motions of sin in his heart. It might be thought that the authority and light of the law in the conscience, with the impression of the terrible threatening, might give great excitement to this, and help a man much in it ; yet we have seen how little the law could do in this way. So far was it from subduing sin, and the motions of it in the heart, that

sin did but move the more vehemently, and show the more its great wickedness and force.

In this latter context from ver. 14, we have the case of a man under grace, who had, with great sense and experience of the love of God, his heart commonly full of consolation by the assured prospect of eternal happiness and glory, whose heart was greatly raised above things earthly and temporary, in full desire and pursuit of the things that are above, whose soul was animated with the warmest zeal for God, and for holiness, and who had made great advances in holiness, inferior to no mere man we know of. Yet what heavy and sore complaint doth he make of sin dwelling in him ! he did by its force what he allowed not, and what he seriously would he could not perform. Though he delighted in the law of God according to the inward man, yet he found a law in his members warring against the law of his mind, and working hard to bring him into captivity to the law of sin ; so that he cries out, *O wretched man that I am !*

Shall we now say, that the greatest advantage and strength which sin hath in the heart of any man, is only by deep-rooted habits, contracted merely by frequent acts, and the continued custom of sinning, proceeding only from the unhappy use that each man makes of his free-will, who hath come into the world with his nature in the same original purity, with which man was at first created ? or (if we rise not so high) with no more depravation than a man can get the better of by his own efforts, and exertion of his moral powers ? We have here before us what doth not allow us to think so. If man's nature itself were not depraved and corrupted to a high degree ; if human nature

retained its full liberty and moral powers, without any greater disadvantage than acquired habits could have brought upon them; what mere habits could be so strong, but they might be fully overcome by the most serious and earnest endeavours of a man under the sharp discipline of the law in his conscience? But if in this state and way a man could not do it, yet, might we not suppose, that a man made free from the dominion of sin, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, and brought under grace, which hath that in it that tendeth to engage a man most effectually to holiness, would be able by his more sincere and powerful endeavours, and earnest exertion of all his moral powers, with the assistance of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him, to overcome any small remaining degree of natural depravation, and every evil habit, in the most effectual and complete manner, so that there should not be the least remainder of any evil habit, or of sin at all in him?

But which of the saints is it, whose experience hath testified any such thing? There is none of them in whose experience we might more readily expect to find it than this eminent apostle, considering his attainment in grace, light, and holiness. Yet how far from this the case here represented! In the persons most eminent for holiness, of whom we have the history at any length in the scripture, this evil fountain hath discovered itself by the streams it hath sent forth. If this blessed apostle was preserved from remarkable lapses in outward practice, yet here, where he lays open his heart, he shows the source of sin yet remaining within him, by which he had matter of constant

exercise, of struggle, and of godly sorrow, and what, from his own experience, afforded good reason for giving the salutary advice to every other christian, *Thou standest by faith ; be not high minded, but fear.* The scripture acquaints us, that *there is not a just man that doth good, and sinneth not.* We have here what accounts for it, and shows it shall ever be so, whilst christians are in this life.

This is that original sin, which every one hath derived from a corrupt original, and which is, itself, the original and source of all a man's moral deficiencies, and actual transgressions in outward and inward practice, and whose root is so deep in human nature, as never to be wholly eradicated in this life. The power of Divine grace, and of the Holy Spirit, could doubtless soon do it perfectly, if Divine wisdom had not thought otherwise fit, and that christians should labour under imperfection, and have the remainder of sin dwelling in them, to struggle with : that with minds well enlightened, and hearts truly sanctified, they might, from what they constantly feel, perceive sensibly, and understand thoroughly, the wretched state from which Divine grace saves them ; that they might be kept from trusting in themselves, and might ever hold all their consolation and hope, of the rich and free grace of God in Jesus Christ, through faith.

It is matter of very serious consideration to observe, after what high attainments eminent saints have discovered much of sin remaining in them. Moses was at two different times forty days and forty nights in the mount with God, and God had often spoke to him face to face, as a

man doth to his friend. Yet it was after this that an unholy passion in him made its eruption, in a manner very provoking to God. David was under great influence of grace in his ordinary course and behaviour, and was often under Divine inspiration. Yet thereafter it appeared, in fearful instances, that the root of sin still remained in him; so as to give him occasion to look back to his original depravity, and to say, *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me*, Psal. li. 5. The sinful failures of prophets might be here mentioned. For one instance: Jonah had received frequent revelations from God; yet after this how great proof did he give of sinful mistrust and fear, of remaining rebelliousness against the government of the Almighty, (even after being delivered out of the whale's belly,) and of turbulent and violent passion! as is narrated in the short history that bears his name.

Paul, a New-Testament saint, made great advances in light and holiness; he laboured hard against sin within; he kept under his body; he had great helps to the mortifying of sin, even in the various outward trials and distresses that he was frequently exercised with. With all this he had abundance of revelations; and was even rapt up into the third heavens, some years before he wrote to the Romans. But after being in heaven, he needed the acutely painful thorn in the flesh, to keep the evil root that yet remained in him from springing, and *lest he should be exalted above measure; even lest* (so he emphatically repeats it) *he should be exalted above measure*. In our context, how sad the representation he

gives of sin dwelling in him ! Ah, how deep hath sin gone in human nature ! Christians have the use to make of the case here set before them that Paul himself made of it, who not only at his first conversion, but ever after, had it greatly at heart to be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is by the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. Christians will, whilst in this life, carry about with them what may give them a sensible proof, and deep impression of the obligation they are under to the free grace of God ; what great power of grace it requires to present them at last a church glorious and without spot ; and what is the exceeding riches of God's grace, in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus.

14. For we know that the law is spiritual : but I am carnal, sold under sin.

PARAPHRASE. 14. We know that the law of God is spiritual, that its authority and demands reach to a man's spirit and heart, to prescribe rule thereto, and to every inward motion of the soul ; and it is by its being thus spiritual, that I received the thorough conviction of my sinfulness. When, upon this extensive view of the law, I do now compare myself with it, and consider the perfect inward as well as outward purity it requires, how great a disconformity to its holiness doth still remain with me ! I do not only refer to the time, when I was in my natural condition, in the flesh, (ver. 5.) when that evil principle was absolutely dominant in me, being under the law, and its curse, destitute of the Spirit, when sin had its full course in me in one form or other ; but even at

this time, being under grace, thereby delivered from the law, and made free from the dominion of sin ; even yet, alas ! though now in such a comfortable state, how far from that holiness of heart which this spiritual law requireth ! I am carnal ; the flesh, that corrupt source and principle of evil, though deprived of its dominion, yet still remaineth in me, with much force and activity, and with its violent corrupt affections, and unholy passions, having the advantage of concurring temptation, doth often, yea too commonly, carry me away as a captive and slave, contrary to the habitual and habitually prevailing inclination of my heart and will.

15. For that which I do I allow not : for what I would, that do I not ; but what I hate, that do I.

15. I say, against the habitually prevailing inclination of my will. For what I do, through the unhappy influence of the flesh in the way I have mentioned, is what indeed I do not favour or love. For what my will inclines to by its habitual determination, that, obstructed by the flesh, and the weakness which remaining corruption brings upon me, I do not ; but what I truly and sincerely hate, that, through its influence, I too often do.

16. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.

16. If then what my heart worketh and doth within me, by means of the evil that springeth up from the flesh and corrupt nature, contrary to the holy and spiritual law, is indeed what is contrary to the fixed and habitual inclination of my will ;

then I do not only by my understanding or mind assent to it as a truth, that the law is good ; but this habitual inclination of my will shows that I heartily *consent* to the *goodness* of the law, that it is good in itself, as I said but just now, (ver. 12.) and that it prescribes that which is good for me, with respect to my duty and happiness.

17. *Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.*

17. Now then, though 'strictly speaking it is I who do all that is done by the activity of sin in my heart, and though I cannot justify myself before this holy and spiritual law, nor say, I am not chargeable with it, yet grace, under which I am, and which hath special and tender regard to the sincerity of the heart and will, allows me to take some comfort, with respect to the sad case, by distinguishing, and saying, It is not I myself who do the evil, which I sincerely hate, and is so contrary to the habitual inclination of my will, but my most hateful enemy, sin, which continueth its inhabitation, though not its dominion, in me.

18. *For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing : for to will is present with me ; but how to perform that which is good I find not.*

18. It is grace that alloweth me thus to distinguish ; yea, the real distinction that is in me is of grace, the honour of which is to be ascribed to its blessed Author ; for as to me otherwise, as I am by nature, and so far as my nature is yet unrenewed in me, that is, in my flesh, (which is what naturally, and abstracting from grace, I call my

own, and myself,) I know that no good thing dwelleth. For though, through grace, there is a readiness in me to will that which is good, yet, through the obstruction which the flesh giveth, I find not myself able to perform, in the constant, thorough, and perfect manner which I will, and which the holy law requires.

19. For the good that I would I do not ; but the evil which I would not, that I do.

19. For the whole good that my will is fully bent on, and inclined to, I do not ; but sin ever springing up in me, through remaining corruption, is what, on the part of the flesh, I do ; and that against the fixed determination of my will.

20. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

20. Now as a man's moral character is to be taken from the sincere habitual inclination of his heart and will, if, by the influence of the flesh, I do what is contrary to the spiritual and holy law, and what my will is averse to, it is not I, (let me again encourage myself somewhat with the thought,) it is not my very self that does it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

21. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

21. I find then a law, not such as hath a true light, and just authority, but a principle strong and effective, that when my will is well determined to that which is good, evil, even the unholy motions that are spontaneous in corrupt nature, takes the start of my better will, and prevents its effect ;

so that I cannot do what I would in the inward and outward practice of holiness.

22. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man.

22. As I have been saying, that now when I am under grace, my will by its habitual inclination is really on the side of holiness, the truth of the matter is, that I sincerely delight in the law of God, and in the holiness which it recommends and requires, according to my inward man, that new man in me, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

23. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

23. But though by this delight in the holiness of the law my heart hath got an habitual and prevailing determination to holiness, yet I find a law in my members, which hath in some degree taken possession of all my faculties, giving false light and prejudice to my mind and judgment, a corrupt bias often to my will, putting my affections and passions in irregular and impetuous motion, and so warring against the law of my mind, that good principle and law, which God, according to the promise of the new covenant, (Jer. xxxi. 33. Heb. viii. 10.) hath put in my mind, and written in my heart; so warring against my soul, (1 Pet. ii. 11.) and labouring hard, and with too much success in some particular instances, to captivate me to the law of sin which is in my members.

24. *O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?*

24. What a miserable condition this ! To be free of this I would count myself happy in all such various perils as I have gone through, such multiplied tribulations as I have undergone. Those have not made me miserable, but this worst of enemies within myself. By means of this, ah, what a wretched man am I ! who shall deliver me from this body of death, from which it hath hitherto exceeded all my powers of nature or grace to rescue me ?

25. *I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God ; but with the flesh the law of sin.*

25. I thank God, who hath provided comfort for me with respect to this my present wretchedness, through Jesus Christ our Lord, by virtue of whose cross the old man in me is crucified ; which gives me the sure and delightful prospect, that this body of sin and death shall, in due time, be absolutely destroyed, and I completely and for ever delivered from it.

So then, the conclusion of the whole is : with my mind, that good and most prevailing law, which Divine grace hath put in my mind and heart, I my very self do (if imperfectly, yet) truly and sincerely serve the law of God ; though, alas, with the flesh, the cause of my greatest sorrow, the law of sin.

CHAP. VIII.

1. *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

EXPLICATION. This proposition is introduced in way of inference, expressed by the word *therefore*. Without mentioning the different views that interpreters have had of this, I take it to be an inference from the apostle's whole discourse and doctrine in the preceding part of this epistle. He had treated largely of the justification of sinners by grace through faith in the first five chapters. A proper inference from that is this, *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus*. In the sixth and seventh chapters he had treated of what concerns satisfaction. He had represented persons under the law, as being in the flesh, under the dominion of sin, and its servants; but persons brought under grace by free justification, as being made free from that servitude, as being become the servants of God, and having their fruit unto holiness. From his doctrine in this part, which he insists on to the end of chap. vii. he had proper occasion to add, as the mark of persons in Christ, justified and free from condemnation, that they *walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*. It is not their so walking that frees them from condemnation; but being by gratuitous justification freed from condemnation, and brought under grace, and thereby made free from the dominion of sin, (chap. vi. 14.) they will,

in their ordinary course, walk as is here said ; and that so certainly, that if any do not so walk, but walk after the flesh, it may be justly concluded, that they are not truly in Christ, as to their real spiritual state. This is the view that the apostle's discourse directs us to take of the matter. After making this twofold inference, ver. 1, from his doctrine of justification and sanctification, the apostle doth, through this whole eighth chapter, discourse in the mixed way, with an eye to both subjects, and concerning the consolation, and the obligation to duty and holy living, arising from both, according to the inseparable connexion that is established between them in the economy of salvation. So that, if we look through this whole eighth chapter, it is a discourse that hath this first verse, in both parts of it, for its text.

If in all the seventeen or eighteen verses immediately preceding, he had been describing the case only of persons unregenerate, the slaves of sin, one might readily think, that the inference in our text comes in somewhat awkwardly, and not in its proper place. But if, from the fourteenth verse of the preceding chapter, the case of a person is represented who walked not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, which is the truth of the matter, then the comfortable inference and description in this text are very properly introduced.

Let us now look more closely to the particular expressions of the text. *Them which are in Christ Jesus.* We find this expression used in 1 Cor. i. 30. 2 Cor. v. 17. 1 Thess. iv. 16. and to these places of Paul we may add, 1 John v. 20. Rev. xiv. 13. John xv. 5. and the words of Paul, Phil. iii 9. In which places it is plain, that being *in*

Christ means not only being christians by profession and outward church-privilege ; but being sincere believers, in real union with Christ, and in consequence thereof, being holy in life, happy and blessed in death.

As to the second clause, *who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit* ; this way of walking, as to the ordinary course of life, is a certain consequence of being in Christ. For (2 Cor. v. 17.) *If any man be IN Christ, he is a new creature :* and (1 Cor. i. 30.) to them who are *IN Christ Jêsus*, he is *made wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification.*

Some interpret and object thus : mention is here made of walking after the flesh ; which, say they, is certainly expressive of the case represented in the context immediately preceding, in which the man speaks so strongly of the flesh in him, and the law in his members captivating him.

But if we consider the matter, we shall find that this is far from being the case in the apostle's view. There is indeed a man represented complaining bitterly of the flesh, and the law in his members, and of its force and too great prevalence. Yet I cannot but wonder that any should take such a sense of things, and such a complaint, as proof of a man's walking after the flesh. A man may come under such consequences of an ill life with respect to his person outwardly, or his affairs, that may set him a complaining bitterly of his prevailing lusts and ill practice, when it is not sin that is truly bitter to him, but these outward ill consequences of it ; but in the preceding context, we find a man feeling painfully and lamenting bitterly the motions, force, and prevalence of

sin within him, in opposition to the spiritual and holy law of God, without mentioning any ill consequence externally. Sin, and sinful affections, and their motions within him, are what he would not, and what he hates, abstractedly from all penal and ill consequences. If sin remains in him, we see him in conflict with it. This doth not suit the notion of *walking after the flesh*. Walking imports a man's habitual and deliberate course, in which he freely proceeds, without force, struggle, or constraint; neither violently drawn, carried, or captivated; but going according to the motion and inclination of his own will. If the flesh hath its law or commandment, it may be said of the unregenerate man, with respect to the commandment of that law, as is said of Ephraim, with respect to a particular instance of fleshly walking, (idolatry, Gal. v. 20.) and the law requiring it, Hos. v. 11, that he *walked willingly after the commandment*. So the unregenerate man doth with regard to the commandment of the law of sin, as to the habitual and prevailing inclination of his will, whatever check conscience may give. If this is, as it certainly is, *walking after the flesh*, the preceding context represents a man whose character, disposition, purpose, and earnest endeavour, are very contrary to it.

I here add a passage of Dr. Davenant (afterwards bishop of Sarum) on Col. iii. 7. "The regenerate may fall into sin; but they are not wont to walk, nor can they live in sin. For he walketh in sin, who sinneth by his hearty choice, in his constant course, and with the full consent of his will."

The mention of the Spirit here has been the occasion of another argument, respecting the

meaning of the immediately preceding context. On occasion of speaking on the subject of holiness, the apostle very commonly mentions and brings into view the Spirit of God, with his powerful operation and influence; and the mutual opposition is commonly stated between the Spirit and the flesh. But there is no mention of the Holy Spirit in the case proposed in the latter part of chap. vii. as there is here; which, according to some, gives cause to think, that it is here only (chap. viii. 1.) that the apostle begins to speak of the case of true believers, truly regenerated; and that in the preceding context, where there is no mention of the Spirit, the case of the unregenerate, destitute of the Spirit, is represented.

It is true, that the Holy Spirit is not mentioned in the preceding context; nor is he mentioned in all the sixth chapter, where the case of sincere believers, with respect to sin and holiness, is so largely treated of. They have in them the old man crucified, and the body of sin destroyed, ver. 6; they are (ver. 22.) the servants of God, and have their fruit unto holiness. Yet all along in that chapter there is no mention of the Holy Spirit. If it be said, that there is, however, in that chapter what sufficiently distinguishes the case of the true christian, and regenerate person, as there meant; the same may be said of the latter context of chap. vii. as hath been shown largely and clearly in the explication of it.

At the same time it is to be considered, that *the law of the mind* and *the law in the members*, are expressions that are to be found no where else in the scriptures. Yet we cannot justly infer, that what is meant by these expressions occurs no where

else. That the opposition and conflict of the law of the mind against the flesh, or law in the members, is not that of natural conscience or mere reason, hath been shown; as it hath been, that the law of the mind is the principle of holiness, implanted in the soul by the Holy Spirit; or the law of God put in the mind and heart, according to the grace and promise of the new covenant.

In that expression, ver. 1, *who walk—after the Spirit*, the apostle certainly speaks in relation to the Spirit of God. We have sufficient cause to think so from the manner in which the apostle states the opposition between the flesh and the Spirit, (mentioned here, ver. 1.) and follows it out through the following context; wherein, after opposing flesh and Spirit several times, he at length explains what he means by *Spirit* in this opposition, when he tells the Roman christians, ver. 9, that *they were not in the flesh, but were in the Spirit*, by having the SPIRIT OF GOD dwelling in them. It is that Spirit which is meant, ver. 10, 11, as hath been just now observed; and when, ver. 13, he mentions christians through *the Spirit mortifying the flesh*, it is the Spirit of God, in opposition to the flesh, that is meant. Nor can it be doubted, that *walking after the Spirit*, in the first verse, means the same way of walking, and the same influence that is meant, ver. 14, where it is said, *As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God*. Those who walk after the Spirit, ver. 1, are the same as are led by the Spirit of God, ver. 14.

Upon the whole, I conceive the matter thus. In the seventh chapter he mentions the *inward man* as *delighting in the law of God*, and says,

ver. 25, *With the mind I myself serve the law of God.* These expressions, *the inward man*, *the mind*, and *the law of his mind*, signify the soul itself as renewed ; the new man, and principle of holiness within him. Here in the next following verse, chap. viii. 1, he means the same way of walking and serving God, according to the inward man, and law of his mind, with the superadded idea of the Spirit of God dwelling in the christian, and continuing to influence the inward man, and law of the mind, in this way of walking. Having here, ver. 1, once mentioned the Spirit, we see he keeps him much in view, with regard to his various influence and assistance granted to christians, down to ver. 27.

PARAPHRASE. 1. As I have showed, that true christians are, by the faith that hath truly united them to Christ, brought into a justified state, and have the blessedness that God imputeth righteousness to them ; and have showed that true believers, being dead to sin, and made free from its dominion, are become servants of God, and of righteousness, in ordinary, sincere, and earnest conflict against the motions of sin within them : it clearly follows, on the one hand, that there is now no condemnation to them who are truly united to Christ ; and, on the other hand, that it is the certain characteristic of such, that their conversation and walk is not regulated or directed according to the flesh, or the lusts thereof, (whatever temptation and sad exercise they may have by these,) but by the principle of holiness in the new man, and by the Holy Spirit of God, under whose special influence the new man, the law of their mind, is.

2. *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.*

EXPLICATION. In the preceding verse, there is a doctrinal proposition by way of inference, which, in the comprehension of the expression, includes and respects all true believers. Here the expression is of himself personally, yet so as to be evidently designed to explain the general doctrine of the preceding verse.

Some have considered this second verse, as particularly connected with the first clause of the preceding, *There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus*; and as being designed to give some explanation about being made free from condemnation. But as in the sixth and seventh chapter, those immediately preceding this, the subject is sanctification; any thing concerning justification falls in but incidentally, and as connected with sanctification, and in subserviency to his explanations on that subject.

I therefore think this second verse is to be considered as particularly connected with the second clause of ver. 1,—*who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*. It might have been suggested thus: men in their natural condition are the slaves of sin; and, in that state, certainly they cannot walk after the Spirit, being destitute of the Spirit. Men's so walking shows them to be blessed with a happy liberty from the slavery of the flesh, and of the law of sin, which they have been under formerly. This second verse explains how christians have been made free from that

slavery and dominion, as the third verse doth still further explain the matter.

As to the particular expressions of this text, the word *law* comes first to be explained, as it seems to have different senses in this one verse. In the latter clause, *the law of sin and death* hath by some been understood of the law of God; as it assigns death to the transgressors, and whilst men are under it they are under the dominion of sin. Sin is so far from being subdued by it, that there are motions of sins by the law, and sin taketh occasion by the commandment. This, however, cannot be the meaning. It were not consistent with the reverence due to the law of God, nor with the truth, to call it *the law of sin and death*. Yea, it could not be so called, but in plain contradiction to the vindication the apostle hath made of it, chap. vii. 7. *Is the law sin? God forbid*—and ver. 13. *Was that which is good made death to me? God forbid*—

We need not be at a loss for the meaning of this last clause of the text. He had, chap. vii. 25, the next verse save one preceding this, mentioned *the law of sin*, which by means of the flesh had held sinners in subjection and slavery; and in the verse preceding that, he had mentioned *the body of death*. The *law then of sin and death*, is no other than that evil principle dominant in a man; from which the true christian is made free. How made free? This the apostle ascribes to *the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*. Here is another *law*; and if the *law* in the last clause signifies a principle within a man, this may seem to signify also

an inward principle ; a better principle wrought and implanted by the Spirit of life ; even the same which he had called, chap. vii. 23, *the law of his mind*. By this principle is a man made free from the dominion of the other principle or law. This is not widely different from what I take to be the more precise meaning.

It seems most likely, that *the law of the Spirit of life* means the gospel. If the apostle mention, chap. iii. 27, *the law of faith* ; he doth not recede any further from strict propriety in giving here the name of *law* to the gospel, that is the means of faith. It is certain that *law* is often in the Old Testament put for the word of God in general, of which there are many instances in the 119th Psalm. The psalmist says, Psal. xix. 7. *The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul*. It is plain, that he there means the doctrine of gospel grace, as then set forth in the word of God ; for without this the law, strictly so called, doth not convert the soul. At the same time it is to be observed, that the designation given here to the gospel is not absolutely, *the law*, but *the law of the Spirit of life* ; thus distinguishing it from the law, by which the Spirit is not given.

The gospel brings men to the liberty here mentioned, only as it is *the law of the Spirit of life*. He is called here *the Spirit of life* very appositely, in opposition to that other *law of sin and death*, as he now gives a spiritual life in the souls of men, and hereafter, when he shall quicken their bodies at the resurrection, shall raise them to the perfection of life in soul and body.

Now this is a very important thing, in which

the gospel is set in opposition to the law, and hath the advantage of it, that it is (2 Cor. iii. 8.) *the ministration of the Spirit*, which (ver. 6.) *giveth life* : and so the gospel is *the law of the Spirit of life*.

In our text is added, *in Christ Jesus* ; which may be understood thus. The Holy Spirit was bestowed on Christ the Mediator without measure ; he hath been anointed with this gladdening oil : and it being poured on him as our great High Priest and Head, as on the head of Aaron, Psal. cxxxiii. 2, it runs down on the body and members. So the Holy Spirit is *in Christ*, as in a fountain ; out of which every one receives according to the measure of the gift of Christ, Eph. iv. 7. Or, the expression may be taken thus : as the preposition *εν*, *in*, is often put for *δια*, *by*, (so Matt. v. 13, 35, and vii. 6, and in divers other places,) the sense may be taken thus : The Spirit of life *by* Jesus Christ ; by him purchased and bestowed.

We now come to consider the good effect ; and that is, to be *made free from the law of sin and death*. This the interpreters of opposite sentiments to ours, concerning the scope and meaning of the preceding context, consider as a key to open and determine the scope and sense of it. Here, say they, the apostle, after giving a general doctrine, ver. 1, begins to speak of himself indeed. He had, chap. vii. 14—25, been setting forth the case of one carnal, sold under sin, a captive and slave to the law of sin. The apostle, though speaking as of himself, yet could not truly mean himself, as then in a state of grace ; but was certainly personating another, a man under the law ;

and of such a one it could not be said, as here, that he was *free from the law of sin and death*. Here then he is speaking of himself indeed, and stating his own present condition in opposition to that he had been representing: this is clear, express, strong, and decisive on the subject, according to some. Softly; let us consider the matter a little.

It hath been made to appear very clearly, that the strong expressions in the preceding context being the language of sad complaint, there is nothing in it inconsistent with a regenerate state. None will say that true believers, made free in the sense of our text, have not sin remaining in them; yea, oftentimes too much prevailing, especially as to its inward motions. Surely the bitter complaint of persons on this account is no sign of their being under the dominion of sin; but the contrary. Persons under the dominion of sin may indeed have much outcry against it, on account of its consequences of misery and punishment, as hath been formerly observed. So a passionate man, for instance, may cry out of his own hasty and outrageous passion, merely because it brings him into much inconvenience, into many a fray; and perhaps to the commission of crimes of capital consequence. A lewd man may cry out against his own practice, for the loathsome rottenness of disease it hath brought on him, and the ruin it hath brought on his affairs. Yea, an awakened sinner may cry out still more seriously and earnestly against sin, under the sad impression, by the force of the law in his conscience, of Divine wrath, and eternal judgment. Yet in these cases the prevailing disposition of heart, will, and affections,

may be still truly on the side of sin itself, though under considerable restraint. But to say, that a man, setting before him the holiness and spirituality of the law, doth delight in the holiness of the law after the inward man, habitually willeth that which is good, hateth sin, crieth out sincerely against it, and is habitually in earnest struggle and conflict against its inward motions; to say, that such a one (however strongly he may express his feelings of sin) is indeed under its dominion, and its slave, is what I cannot help considering as a most glaring absurdity. When a man is inclined and affected with regard to sin and duty, and maintains a struggle and conflict with sin, as is expressed in the preceding context, it makes a clear and full proof that he is not the slave of sin, but that he is indeed made *free* from its dominion and tyranny. It is not easy to imagine a stronger proof that he is so, whilst sin doth at all remain in him.

A similitude taken from human affairs may somewhat illustrate the matter. Our neighbours the Hollanders cast off the yoke of a cruel, arbitrary tyrant, then the most powerful monarch in christendom, and asserted their liberty. For this they had war a long time, between seventy and eighty years, with some interval of truce. In the course of it they were very successful on the whole, and became truly rich. Yet there was great distress and danger. They were sometimes foiled in battle; their country was plundered; towns sacked; ships and rich merchandise lost; their men taken, and brought into captivity. Private persons in these times might, yea, the republic might, often cry out, Ah, what wretchedness,

what misery ! Yet still in all this distress and wretchedness they were a free people, they suffered, they groaned, they struggled, they fought, and *were* free. They proved themselves to be so, whilst they held their arms in their hands, and stood out with noble resistance in the war which their old master carried on against them, to subject them again to his tyranny. They found themselves sometimes very weak ; but when their affairs were lowest, yet weak and resisting, still they were free. At length the most illustrious republic attained a state of complete liberty ; and their old tyrant ceased from having pretensions to their service in any instance.

It is thus as to the matter before us ; which is of incomparably greater importance to individuals, than their interest in the worldly condition or affairs of any state or commonwealth. True christians are in earnest conflict and struggle with sin, as represented, chap. vii. by which they have often much distress ; so that one of that character may find just cause to cry out, *Wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from this body of death ?* Yet by this sense of things, and by this conflict, however distressing, they show themselves to be, not the slaves of sin, but to be free from its dominion.

Upon the whole, christians are made free from the dominion of sin, whose willing slaves they had been ; and that by the power of the gospel in their hearts, as it is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, and by the grace of God ; which, sin remaining in them, hath, according to the first promise, put enmity in them against it, against the serpent, and what of his poison remaineth in them.

Continuing in this resistance to sin, they will at length attain a state of most perfect liberty, when sin shall do them no more hurt, nor ever more give them any molestation.

PARAPHRASE. 2. I have represented my sad condition by sin which dwelleth in me; and have expressed my thankfulness to God through Jesus Christ, by whom I have been disposed and enabled to resist and maintain conflict with it, with good prospect of success, and final victory, and to be, amidst all the disadvantage that sin brings upon me, serving God and his law, with earnest and sincere endeavour; walking not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. I now come to account for it, and to explain to you how I have been brought into a capacity thus to resist and struggle, and thus to walk, who was once the slave of sin. This hath not happened by the force of the mere dictates of reason in my mind; nor by any resolutions or endeavours that were the mere consequence of these. Nor did it happen by the power and effect of the law in my conscience. I have represented, that when I was most affected with the authority, light, and terrors of the law, I found myself but the more fastened in the fetters of sin; and sin awakened and irritated by the law, did then move the more vehemently in me, and show itself to be exceeding sinful. I acknowledge, to the praise and glory of Divine grace, that it was the power of the gospel, that better law for us, as it is the ministration of the Spirit, the law of the Spirit of life, which is in Christ Jesus as in a fountain, and cometh by him to us, that hath made me free from the dominion of sin, putting within me that inward principle of holiness, which I have called the law

of my mind, and which now resists these evils and enemies that war against my soul, and maintains warfare against the law of sin and death, over which it will be finally and completely victorious.

3. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.

EXPLICATION. This is a text of great importance to be rightly understood, as it contains a summary of the most essential doctrines of the gospel, and at the same time completes the apostle's explications concerning the subject of the two preceding chapters. I shall lay open what I think concerning the general scope of it, and concerning the sense of the particular expressions, in the order in which they lie.

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh—

The first inquiry is, What is it that the law could not do? Divers commentators, whom I much esteem, do understand this to be the justifying of sinful men.

Yet I am not satisfied with this interpretation; yea, I am well satisfied that it doth not hit the apostle's view and meaning. For, 1. Though it is true that the law cannot justify a sinner, as the apostle had proved in the former part of this epistle; yet that is not the present subject. It is evident, that sanctification hath been the subject from the beginning of chap. vi. and the deliverance of persons from the dominion of sin. The subject of the immediately preceding verse is, the

making a sinner free from the law of sin and death, that is, from the power of natural corruption, and the dominion of sin. This was the last thing the apostle had mentioned; and it seems very clear from the connexion, and the manner in which this third verse is introduced with the causal particle (*γὰρ, for,*) that the great thing thus to make free, ver. 2, is *what the law*, ver. 3, *could not do*; it could not make free from the dominion and law of sin.

2. The reason he gives suits that subject more properly than it doth the doctrine of justification, —*In that it was weak through the flesh.* Now that is not the reason why the law cannot justify. Though in proving the sinfulness of gentiles and Jews, chap. iii. 10—18, the apostle's reasoning, and quotations from the scripture, do abundantly prove the dreadful universal corruption of human nature; yet the precise point upon which his argument turns, is, ver. 23, that *all have sinned*; whereby they have incurred the curse of the law, as he elsewhere suggests, Gal. iii. 10. Though there were no such inherent pravity of nature, as the scripture sets forth under the name of *the flesh*; yet the law could not justify any who had sinned, who had at all incurred guilt.

To turn the disability of the law to justify the sinner, upon the corruption of his nature, as this text would do, according to the interpretation I am considering, would imply something by no means consistent with the apostle's clear doctrine; namely, that after a person had transgressed, he might be justified, even by the law, for returning to his duty, and for his subsequent righteousness; if the weakness and pravity of his nature, called the *flesh*,

did not disable him from doing his duty ; which how contrary it is to scripture doctrine, I need not stay to prove, the thing is so clear.

We have next to inquire what *law* is here meant. As to the ritual or ceremonial law of Moses, which is most strictly the mosaic law, and which some do so commonly bring into view in interpreting this context ; the institutions of it were appendages to the gospel, as obscurely represented during that more dark dispensation. They were figures or shadows, that prefigured Christ, and Divine grace through him. So to those who used them with faith, they could not be absolutely denied to have virtue and effect, with regard to sanctification.

It remains, that the law here must be the moral law, which all mankind are and ever were concerned with, and which can be called mosaic only with respect to the particular manner of its promulgation at Sinai, and the subsequent explanations of it by Moses. This law expressing the conditions of the first covenant, doth by its precept require holiness and obedience. In its penal sanction it is a terrible denunciation against sin, and its promise gave great encouragement to obedience. By all this the law might have had great effect with man in a state of perfection, had he duly attended thereto. But as it could not hinder the transgression of man in a state of perfection, much less can it recover the fallen sinner from the slavery of sin, or set him free from its dominion.

The apostle had shown, chap. vii. 5, and ver. 7—13, how matters stand in this respect between the law, and persons under it, in their natural condition, in the flesh ; and represents them so as

to prove what he had insinuated, chap. vi. 14, namely, that persons under the law are under the dominion of sin. It is evident then, that what the law could not do, was, to make a man free from this dominion of sin. The law's being weak through the flesh, comes to the same thing as to say, that the flesh is too strong for the law, with all its light, authority, and terrors, and could not be subdued or cured, but by the Spirit of life mentioned in the preceding verse, and this Spirit comes not by the law.

—*God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh—*

The Son of God did not assume human nature in its beauty, strength, and natural perfection, as sinless flesh, or as Adam's in his creation state. He assumed it in its *present* natural weakness, obnoxious to the miseries of this life, as sinful men are, designing to bear our griefs and carry our sorrows. That Christ's human nature had the frailty that is now natural to man, is certainly meant by the apostle's expression. But to extend it to moral frailty, is extremely shocking. That Christ's human nature, having come into being by the operation of the Holy Ghost, and subsisting in personal union with the Divine nature; that, I say, this blessed Divine Person should be said to be liable to sin, must by christians be accounted quite blasphemous.

Our Lord underwent the infirmities common to man, and the miseries of life meant in this clause, in his birth and early infancy, and therein was like unto sinful flesh. The common infirmities of human nature in this lapsed state, and the miseries

of life in every period of it, without distinction, are by this clause connected with men's sinfulness, or their being sinful flesh. If then mankind are subjected to the now natural infirmities and miseries of human life, in that early period of infancy and childhood; and if Christ was in the likeness of sinful flesh in that early period, wherein men are incapable of moral agency, or of actual transgression; it is plain, that they are sinful flesh, before they are capable of actually sinning in their own persons. The sense of this clause being clear, we proceed to the next.

—*and for sin*—

The Greek, *περι αμαρτιας*, which is the expression here, is very commonly the name of the sin-offering, or sacrifice for sin; of which the English margin gives the hint, rendering thus, *and by a sacrifice for sin*. Dr. Whitby on the place mentions between thirty and forty instances of the Septuagint translation, wherein this expression means the sin-offering; and hints, that a good many more instances might be given. In the New Testament we see that Heb. x. 6, the expression occurs in that sense. Our translators have supplied the word *sacrifice*, putting it in a different character; which scarce needed to be done, as *sacrifice for sin* is so common a sense of the words as they are in the Greek.

The apostle's subject and argument in this place direct us to understand the expression in the sacrificial sense; and the phraseology or expression being so very commonly used in that sense, there is very special reason, arising from the subject and argument, for understanding it in that sense here.

To explain this, let it be observed, that, as hath been formerly shown, the subject here is making men free from the dominion of sin, and sanctifying them. Let it next be observed, that purifying and sanctifying is often in scripture connected with the sufferings, death, and sacrifice of Christ, as the consequence thereof. For instance, John xvii. 19. *For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.* More clearly, Tit. ii. 14. *Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people.* More clearly still, Eph. v. 25, 26. *Christ—loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.* So likewise, 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. *Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed (ἐλυτρώθητε) with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ—.*

Thus the general point is clear, that the scripture connects making men free from the dominion of sin with Christ's sufferings and sacrifice. More particularly; the verse preceding our present text, mentions the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, as making the christian free from the law of sin. But how cometh the Spirit to sinful men, the wretched objects of the curse? Of this we are told, Gal. iii. 13, 14. *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us:—that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith, (that is, through the gospel, the doctrine of faith, compare ver. 25.)* And thus the gospel becomes the law of the Spirit

of life in Christ Jesus. Having then mentioned the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, the explaining of this in our present text evidently required the apostle's representing Christ as a sacrifice for sin, the condemning of sin as the consequence thereof, and his procuring the Spirit of life for freeing men from the slavery of sin, and sanctifying them. We go on to the following expression.

—*condemned sin*—

In general, we must understand this as corresponding with the subject the apostle means here to explain; which is, as he had expressed it, ver. 2, making men free from the law of sin, or relieving them from its dominion. But it is necessary to give an exact explication of the words.

I observe, that κατακρίνειν, *to condemn*, (which is the word here,) and κρίνειν, *to judge*, are sometimes in scripture used in the same sense; that is, that the latter sometimes means the same as the former. For though the latter word strictly and properly signifies *to judge*; yet sometimes it hath a more restricted sense, and signifies *judging favourably*, as Psal. xxvi. 1, κρίνον με, (so the Septuagint,) *Judge me, O Lord*—that is, judge in my behalf: and so in many other instances. Sometimes it hath the restricted sense of *judging unfavourably*; of which there are likewise divers instances. So John xvi. 11. *Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged*; that is, condemned. The word is to be understood in the general meaning of judging, or in one or other, the favourable or unfavourable, restricted meaning, according to the scope or circumstances of the particular passage.

Now I observe, that in the last clause of John xvi. 11, *the prince of this world is judged*—it evidently bears the unfavourable sense (as I said before) of condemning, as *κατακρίνειν*, in our text ; *the prince of this world is condemned*. For the meaning of this we may have recourse to John xii. 31. *Now is the judgment of this world : now shall the prince of this world be cast out*. As to the first of these clauses, I think the favourable meaning best suits the place, thus : Now is judgment in favour of this world, to deliver it from Satan's delusions and thralldom. Agreeable to this is the consequence, ver. 32, that Christ being crucified, shall *draw all men after him* ; that is, not only Jews, who had of a long time been God's peculiar people, but men of all nations ; as the expression, *all men*, must be here understood. The case was thus : in consequence of Christ's death, which he had now in near view, judgment was to be given in favour of the world, and Satan the prince of the world to be cast out from his throne and dominion ; so that Christ by the gospel would draw men of all nations, among whom Satan had reigned, to himself. So then, that Satan the prince of the world is judged, John xvi. 11, means, as John xii. 31, that he is cast out from his dominion and kingdom.

We have seen what it means, that Satan is judged or condemned. We are, I think, to understand most reasonably the condemning of sin here, Rom. viii. 3, in the same way ; as sin, with the lusts thereof, is that by which Satan hath ruled in the hearts of men, and in the world. Sin hath had the dominion in men. It is the fruit and effect of the death of Christ, and his being therein a

sacrifice for sin, (as in our text,) that sin is condemned, and cast out from its dominion over men, in order to its final and complete destruction. Thus a judgment in favour of men being passed against sin, they are made free from the law of sin and death, and are no longer under its thralldom. This was the thing mentioned, ver. 2, which the apostle has explained in this ver. 3. It is by his being thus made free, that the christian hath the liberty, disposition, and power to maintain such conflict against sin, as is represented in the latter context of the preceding chapter. That a person, who expresses so much sorrow with regard to sin dwelling in him, should, by the prevailing disposition of his soul, yet be adverse to sin, and in conflict with it, is well accounted for and explained by what we have here, chap. viii. 2, 3. The last expression of our text is this,

—*in the flesh*—

What *flesh* is here meant? or, in what *flesh* is sin condemned? I take *flesh* here in its more general meaning, as signifying human nature. It so means in this same verse. Christ was sent *in the likeness of sinful flesh*. Here *flesh* signifies human nature in general. The corrupt state of human nature is expressed by the prefixed epithet, *sinful*. It was by what Christ suffered in the flesh, (in his human nature, being a sacrifice for sin,) that sin came to be condemned, and to lose its dominion. This hath been accomplished,

1. With respect to the flesh or human nature of Christ himself. The apostle, as was formerly observed, saith, Rom. v. 21, that *sin hath reigned unto death*. Men, by virtue of the law, became

obnoxious to death by the power and reign of sin. Now the greatest instance, beyond all that ever have been, or ever shall be, of this power and reign of sin, appeared in the death of the Son of God, when he put himself in the place and stead of sinners. But then it is condemned, and by this great exertion of its reigning power and strength on the Son of God, it hath lost its power of thus reigning any more, with respect to him, and his human nature. So the apostle says, chap. vi. 9. —*He dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.* If, as Heb. ix. 27, 28. *It is appointed for all men once to die; so Christ was once offered*—by which the whole power of sin and death over him was exhausted.

The consequence to his people with regard to the reign of sin in their bodily part, and as to this effect, is, that though, according to God's wise constitution, it is appointed for them, as for all men, to die, yet as to them death hath not that penalty in it which the sentence of the law imports; the sting of sin and the curse of the law is not in it. There is nothing of the reign of sin in their death. There is blessing in their death, by virtue of the grace of the new covenant.

2. Sin is condemned to lose its dominion with respect to its inherence in the souls of God's people, and the absolute prevalence it hath had in their hearts and practice. Though the flesh, or human nature, absolutely and generally expressed, includes the whole human race, yet here it must be understood with such limitation, as must reasonably be admitted in many places of scripture, in which Divine grace, its design and effect, is mentioned in general terms. Here is an instance,

But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared—according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, Tit. iii. 4, 5. In the first clause of these the expression is general and comprehensive—*The love of God toward MAN.* Yet the effect in view and expressed, *the renewing of the Holy Ghost*, is not to all men. So in our present text, though the expression, *condemned sin in the flesh*, in human nature, is general, it is not meant that the happy effect takes place in all men universally and singly.

This second point is certainly the special thing (not altogether excluding the other) which must be especially in the apostle's view here. The matter he is explaining, is the making men free from the law of sin, ver. 2, which had dominion over them. The condemning of sin in human nature must respect the ejecting it from this dominion, and depriving it of its power.

Interpreters generally think there is in this verse an ellipsis, a word or two wanting, that must be supplied, to express fully the sense; and some supply thus, *What the law could not do—God hath done.* But I think there is scarce any need of supposing such an ellipsis, or of supplying it. The sense seems to be fully expressed by the words as they are; and the construction seems to be clear and regular without supplying. The verb to be constructed with the word *God*, is expressed, *God condemned sin.* These words, *What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh*, may be considered as in parenthesis; or in interpreting by way of paraphrase, may be transposed to the end of the sentence, thus,

God hath condemned sin—which the law could not do.

PARAPHRASE. 3. I have represented to you in my own name, and from my own sad experience, the case of a true christian whilst in this life, groaning under sin, which dwelleth in him; and in ordinary conflict with it, in its inward motions. Such a person, as to the general character of his behaviour, must certainly be one who walketh not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. A person so exercised inwardly, and so walking, is certainly not the slave of sin, or under its dominion. He hath been made free from its law and ruling power; as I have told you, that I have been by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. I come now to explain to you further, how this happy deliverance from sin's dominion hath been brought about; and to show you what part a gracious God, and his ever-blessed Son, have had in this great change; which hath been actually effected by the more immediate operation and influence of the Holy Spirit. Thus then it is:

God, the blessed Author, and original Cause of all our salvation, hath sent his own only-begotten Son in our nature; not vested with the dignity, beauty, and vigour of its first and best state; but in an humble condition, partaking in the infirmities that are natural to us in our lapsed state, and in the common miseries of human life, which on account of sin we have been subjected to: so that from his birth, being perfectly innocent himself, he bore the penal consequences of our sin; and at length, in due time, became a proper sacrifice for our sin; God having made him a sin-offering for us. On which account he hath given forth

judgment, as against Satan, so against sin : the gracious God, by the sacrifice of his Son, and through faith in his blood, bringing sinners into a state of reconciliation and peace with himself, and under grace, hath condemned sin to be dethroned, and deprived of the dominion it hath unhappily had in them ; and so, making them free from its thralldom, he hath put enmity between them and it ; which will end in its complete destruction, and in their complete salvation.

Thus, by the death and sacrifice of Christ, God hath put an end to that power of sin, by which it reigned unto death, even over his Son, so that death can have no more dominion over him ; and so that the death of his people hath nothing of the penal consequence or reign of sin in it ; and he hath by the same means deprived sin of its dominion in them, by which it hath held them its servants and slaves : Christ having, by bearing our curse, redeemed us from the curse, and made way for our receiving the blessing of the Spirit through (the doctrine of) faith, the gospel ; the gospel is thereby become the law of the Spirit of life, making us free from the law of sin and death.

This great deliverance from the dominion of sin, and making us free from it, the law, however contrary to sin, could not effect ; for as it conveyed not the Spirit, the flesh, the total corruption of nature so called, and the power of sin in it, was too strong for the law, with all its light, authority, promises, and terrors.

Thus have I explained to you what I intimated, chap. vi. 14, and what might at first sight appear a strange paradox ; namely, that persons under the law and its curse, are under the dominion of

sin, its servants and slaves; and that sin shall not have dominion over those, who, by the sacrifice of the Son of God, by the blood of his cross, and by faith in his blood, are brought *under grace*.

4. *That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

EXPLICATION. The Greek word, δικαίωμα, admits, yea requires to be somewhat variously understood in different places. In the plural number, δικαιώματα, it sometimes means the commands of the moral law, and so it is to be understood in Rom. ii. 26. *If the uncircumcision keep the righteousness (δικαιώματα) of the law.*—The word in the singular number signifies the rule of right taken in general; and the plural word here (chap. ii. 26.) signifies the particular branches of it contained in the law of Moses, that is, the moral law of the mosaic promulgation. In Heb. ix. 1, δικαιώματα λατρείας means as our translation gives it, the *ordinances of Divine service*.

In the singular number, as in our text, it may be rendered *righteousness*, as in our translation, or *right*, (*jus*,) as rendered by Beza and the Dutch. It seems to make little difference in the sense which of the two words be taken; though I think the latter word suits the place best, and to render the clause thus, *That the right of the law might be fulfilled*, or take its full effect. Now the righteousness of the law, which it requires, or the right of the law, is two-fold.

1. That sin be punished, or expiated, according to the sanction of the law. This right of the law is fulfilled, or hath taken full effect, *in us*, by

means of Jesus Christ made a sacrifice for sins, and by means of our union with him, he being in us, and we in him by faith; *the righteousness of God in him*, 2 Cor. v. 21.

2. It is the right of the law that the authority of its commandments should be made good and maintained, and that it should be the rule of life and practice. This is an unalterable and unalienable right of the law of God. The Lord could no more dispense with the authority, holiness, and righteousness of his law, than he could deny himself. The grace of God manifested in the gospel is by no means to be conceived as derogatory to this right of the law; nor can any atonement for transgressing the law, set God's creatures free from the authority and obligation of his holy commandments. Divine grace, and the expiation made by Christ, are wholly calculated for establishing the law, even in this view, and for giving it full effect.

Dr. Guyse, in his note on this verse, says, "We cannot be properly said to fulfil the righteousness of the law by our own imperfect, though sincere obedience to its precepts; much less to give satisfaction to its threatenings, both of which go into the righteousness that a broken law demands." These sentiments of the judicious and worthy writer are quite just. But the interpretation here offered doth not make the words to mean, that the right of the law takes full effect, or that the righteousness of the law is fulfilled by the imperfect, though sincere obedience of any christian in this life. The true believer being in union with Christ, and in a justified state through faith, both himself, and his sincere, though imperfect services, are graciously accepted; yet to say, that the

righteousness of the law is fulfilled by this imperfect obedience, is evidently absurd, and amounts to no less than a contradiction in terms. . For imperfect obedience is an obedience that comes short of what the law requires : if it did not, it would be perfect obedience. Now to say, that the righteousness of the law is *fulfilled* by an obedience that falls short of what the law requires, is an evident contradiction.

On the other hand, though it be allowed, that both the active and passive perfect obedience of Christ was necessary, in order to the sinner's being not only freed from condemnation, but also being received into a state of adoption, an heir of eternal life, and of the heavenly inheritance ; yet still the right of the law subsists, as to the demand of perfect obedience and conformity on the part of them who are in a justified state and under grace. If, sincerely aiming at walking in the light, they fall short and sin ; it is happy for them, that the blood of Jesus Christ (1 John i. 7.) cleanses them from, and takes away their sin. But there would be no need of this to persons in a state of grace, if the right of the law to require perfect obedience did not still subsist with respect to them. But it is the design of Divine grace to bring God's people to a state, wherein the righteousness which the law hath right to require, shall be fulfilled in the perfect obedience and conformity of these objects of grace. The text doth not say, that it is fulfilled in their walking, in this state of imperfection, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. But, as ver. 1, it was given as the mark of those who are truly in Christ Jesus, and made free from condemnation, that they so walk ; so here, ver. 4, as to those in

whom Divine grace hath purposed that the right of the law shall take full effect, or the righteousness of it be fulfilled, on the one hand, by the fulfilment thereof by their blessed Surety in their stead and behalf, and on the other, by their own personal perfect conformity thereto at last ; it is again given as their distinguishing mark and characteristic, even in this life, that they *walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*. Their so walking, though with much imperfection, is the sure mark of those in whom the righteousness of the law will sometime be fulfilled, in their perfect conformity thereto in holiness. The apostle's mentioning here again this very distinguishing mark, gives him occasion to pass to these doctrines and explications concerning the flesh and the Spirit, which are presented in the following context ; which hath not fallen within my design to explain in this work.

Before we conclude our explication of this fourth verse with the paraphrase of it, it is fit that from what we have seen in this context, we observe what hath been the design, and what the real consequence of the wonderful grace of God the Father, of his Son Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, with regard to the holy, just, and good law of God. This is the more to be adverted to, that the most true and just account of the doctrine of grace, hath been considered and represented by some, as derogating from the honour and authority of the law. But if the apostle has proved that the law cannot justify any man, this reflects no dishonour on the law, man having transgressed. In this case it became the law, not to justify, but to assign just punishment. The honour and authority of the law required this.

He hath also proved, that the law cannot sanctify a sinner. But this is owing to the pravity and perverseness of men's nature, in which sin, with its various lusts, hath dominion ; not to the defect of any thing that should be in the law, which marks out to men perfectly their duty, with a sanction of suitable promise and threatening.

Surely there is no honour given to the law by those proud zealots of the law, who think by their own righteousness, doing in some poor sort what it was at any rate and ever their duty to do perfectly, that they can cover the defects of their obedience to the law, and make the transgression of it pass for nothing.

Nor do they give honour either to grace or to the law, who suppose that the grace of the new covenant hath made abatement of the holiness required by the law, and hath substituted sincere, though imperfect obedience, in the place of the perfect obedience which the law hath originally and ever required. Grace hath provided in a very different manner for the comfort and salvation of sinners, and for the honour of the law. The righteousness of the law must at any rate be fulfilled in us, and its right have full effect.

If those who give full scope to their lusts, in the indulgence and gratification of them, do offer dishonour to the law of God ; some noisy and pretending zealots of the law, and of good works, come into the next class to those for offering dishonour and disgrace to the perfectly holy and righteous law of God.

If sinful man was to be saved, it did not fall to the part of the law to produce the great effect. It could not possibly be effected but by grace : and

the sinner is justified by grace through faith, not by the law or by his works. He is, at the same time, made free from the dominion of sin in him, not by the law properly so called, but by the gospel, as it is the law of the Spirit of life; and by the sanctification of the Spirit is he made holy: and all this of the most free and abounding grace. But we proceed to the

PARAPHRASE. 4. The Divine scheme and method of grace effects and accomplishes the salvation of God's people in a way highly honourable to the law. Grace frees from condemnation, and justifies them through the redemption that is in Christ, and by his blood, and by his having become a sacrifice for sin; God, as from infinite love to his people, so from infinite regard to his righteous law, not sparing his own Son, when he was substituted in their stead to bear the punishment of their sins: and thus the right of the law, with respect to the punishment of transgression, hath taken full effect, for the redemption of the transgressors, in a manner most honourable to the law, and to its authority, and hath taken effect in them by virtue of their union with Christ, and their being the righteousness of God in him.

God's people being thus brought under grace, sin cannot have dominion in them. Being made free from the curse of the righteous law, sin is, at the same time, deprived, by a just sentence of condemnation, of its dominion; they are blessed with the Spirit, by him they are made free from the law of sin; and being sanctified, they are advanced in holiness from one degree to another, until at length they are perfected therein. Nor doth grace bring its blessed objects to the perfection of

bliss and happiness, until it brings them to the perfection of obedience to the authority of the law, and to perfect conformity to its holiness ; and thus the right of the law taketh full effect in them, as to all its demand of punishment, or of obedience and conformity. Thus, if from the law there arose a necessity for the saving of sinners by the most rich and abounding grace, grace doth save them in such way as not to make void the law, but to establish it. The holy Divine law and Divine grace reflect glory, the one upon the other reciprocally ; and both will shine forth in joint glory eternally in heaven. The law setting forth, in the brightest light, the beauty of holiness, with the vileness and fearful demerit of sin, will show the abounding grace that hath brought those who were children of wrath thither, with infinite lustre and glory ; and grace will do honour to the law, by showing in sinners, formerly very vile and polluted, the purity and holiness of the law fully exemplified in their perfect sanctification ; and Christ, the Lamb that was slain, by whom the interests of the law and of grace have been happily reconciled, and inseparably united, will be glorified in his saints, and admired in those who believe.

We, in whom the righteousness of the law doth already take place in a good degree, and in whom it shall be completely fulfilled hereafter, are such as are distinguished, in this life, by walking not after the flesh, (which is not subject to the law of God,) in the grosser gratification of its lusts, or in a more refined way of a slavish, mercenary, self-exalting, carnal religion ; but after the Spirit, who writes the law, with its authority and holiness, in our hearts, enabling us to mortify fleshly lusts,

and to serve God in newness of life, under his influence, who is not a Spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and of a sound mind ; we have, according to the necessity of our state of imperfection, the blood of Jesus to cleanse us from all sin, even that blood, in the shedding of which the right of the law did so remarkably take effect, and by the daily and constant application whereof to us, the right of the law takes effect, and its righteousness is fulfilled in us.

APPENDIX.

WHEREIN THE APOSTLE'S DOCTRINE, PRINCIPLES, AND REASONING, ARE APPLIED TO THE PURPOSES OF HOLY PRACTICE, AND OF EVANGELICAL PREACHING.

SECT. I.

Containing a recapitulation of the apostle's doctrine and principles in the context before explained.

HAVING searched carefully into the scope of this context, and the meaning of the particular parts thereof, it now appears very clearly, that the apostle's design is, therein to set forth and explain the gospel doctrine of sanctification. This subject he keeps all along in view, until in the first four verses of chap. viii. he gives the summary of all the doctrines and explications contained in the two preceding chapters concerning it. In the course of his reasoning, he labours carefully to show the different condition of persons under the law and of those under grace, with regard to sin and the practice of holiness.

Divers interpreters have, by being *under the law*, or *under grace*, understood being under the mosaic law, or under the grace of the gospel dispensation; and that the apostle's view and purpose is, to show to believers who were of the gentiles, that they were free from the obligation of

that law, had no need of it, nor had any disadvantage by not being subjected to it; and to convince those believers who were of the Jews, that they acted contrary to their real and most valuable interest, by their attachment to the mosaic law, now that God did set even them also free from its obligation.

Enough hath been said to disprove this interpretation; and it hath been shown, that we have no reason to think the apostle means by the *law* in this discourse, any other law than that which all men have been concerned with. To say, that by being under the mosaic law, persons were under the dominion of sin, (mentioned chap. vi. 14.) would be extremely unreasonable. True believers, the spiritual seed of Abraham, were, during the Old Testament, under grace; and the case of millions proves, that men may be under the New-Testament dispensation of grace, and not be under grace as to the real state of their souls, nor made free from the dominion of sin. But referring for these things to what hath been said in the proper places, we find with the apostle in this context these important matters.

1. To be under the law, and to be married or united to Christ, are conditions of men that are incompatible. Christians become dead to (free from) the law, chap. vii. 4, that they may be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead.

2. Persons under the law, not married to Christ, are incapable, while in that state, of bringing forth fruit unto God. Persons not delivered from the law, are (ver. 6.) incapable of serving in newness of spirit. What accounts for this is,

3. That whilst persons are under the law, they are (chap. vii. 5.) in the flesh, under the power and prevalence of natural corruption, being (chap. viii. 9.) destitute of the Spirit, which cometh not by the law, Gal. iii. 2. So that they who are under the law, in the flesh, cannot please God, cannot do what is acceptable to God, Rom. viii. 8.

4. In this state the law, with its whole force directed against sin, yet doth not subdue sin. Instead of that, there are in those that are in the flesh, under the law, motions of sins by the law, chap. vii. 5; and, ver. 8, sin taking occasion by the commandment, and thereby awakened, worketh in a man all manner of concupiscence. Hence,

5. Sinners under the law, and in the flesh, are under the dominion of sin, its servants and slaves, chap. vi. 14, 17, 20, unable by any powers of their own to deliver themselves from that slavery, or from under that dominion. The notion of dominion and slavery imports no less.

6. It is Christ who maketh a sinner free from this slavery and from the dominion of sin. *Who-soever committeth sin is* (John viii. 34.) *the servant of sin*. So here, chap. vi. 16. *To whom men yield themselves servants to obey, his servants they are to whom they obey*. But, (John viii. 36.) *They whom the Son shall make free, shall be free indeed*. The apostle's discourse explains this general matter by the following particulars.

7. Sinners owe their being made free from sin, or being dead to sin, to the death of Christ, and to their fellowship with him in his death, and in the benefits and fruits thereof; which is exhibited and sealed to christians in their baptism, chap. vi. 3, 4. For,

8. Christ in his death was a sacrifice for sin, chap. viii. 3. And as this was not for his own sin, but for the sins of his people, the law which denounced death to sinners in its righteous sanction, is satisfied in their behalf, by his death. So,

9. Christians are redeemed from the curse of the law, (Gal. iii. 13.) by Christ's being made a curse for them; and, as here, chap. vii. 4, they are dead to (made free from) the law, and the death and the fearful curse it denounces, by the body of Christ crucified. If sin, by virtue of the law which gave it that strength, hath reigned unto death, Christ, coming in our place and stead, did become subject to that reign of sin. But by his death, chap. vi. 10, he died unto sin, and so became free from that reign of sin unto death; and therefore it is, as ver. 9, that *he dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him*: in consequence of which believers should reckon themselves *to be dead* INDEED *unto sin*, ver. 11. So that now their death is not by the reign of sin, nor is the sting of it in their death.

10. The consequence of Christ's becoming a sacrifice for sin is, likewise, that God hath condemned sin to be dethroned and deprived of the dominion it hath had in his people, chap. viii. 3.

11. This judgment and condemnation is executed by the gospel conveying the Holy Spirit into the souls of God's people; and so becoming the law of the Spirit of life in (or through) Christ Jesus, making them free from the law and dominion of sin and death.

12. Thus sinners, being justified through faith in Jesus Christ, even through faith in his blood, (Rom. iii. 24, 25.) and sanctified by being born

of the Spirit, (John iii. 5. 2 Thess. ii. 13.) they pass from death to life, from being under wrath, and the curse of the law, to be under grace, Rom. v. 1, 2. And so sin shall not have dominion over them, according to chap. vi. 14.

13. Yet, whilst they continue in this life, sin remaining in them will give them trouble, and they will be ever in such danger of hurt by it, that their case will require constant fear, watchfulness, and conflict. But whilst by their groaning for sin that dwelleth in them, and their conflict against it, they prove that they are not its slaves, nor under its dominion, they have at the same time cause to thank God through Jesus Christ, as for making them free from its dominion, so for the sure prospect of being hereafter perfectly delivered from it.

14. Christians having sorrow or serious regret for sin in them, and being in earnest conflict with the law in their members, with the lusts, and irregular passions, and inordinate affections of the flesh, their way of walking cannot (as to their ordinary and habitual course) be after the flesh; nor can they be the slaves of sin; but being made free from sin, and become servants to God, (chap. vi. 22.) they walk after the Spirit; have their fruit unto holiness, (which is the necessary and certain characteristic of the true christian,) and the end everlasting life: to which end, and final issue, holiness is indispensably necessary, though, however necessary, yet eternal life is not proper wages which men win by their holiness, but is the gift of God, through Jesus Christ.

SECT. II.

Showing the advantage, with regard to holiness, that ariseth from persons being under grace.

THE advantage to sinners, with regard to holiness, is either such as is, in some sort, extrinsic, arising from the blessed privilege and benefits of a state of grace; or such as ariseth from genuine principles of holiness, and of holy practice, in the souls of those who are under grace, that cannot have place or operate in any who are not so.

To explain the advantage, with regard to holiness and holy practice, that is in some sort extrinsic, arising from the privilege of a state of grace, let the following matters be considered.

1. When men by their guiltiness were under the curse of God's law, this withheld from them these blessings and favourable influences of Heaven, by which their souls being made good soil, might become fruitful in holiness and good works. As the earth, when the curse seized it, was to produce naturally thorns and thistles, so the hearts of persons under the law and its curse, do produce no fruit truly good and acceptable. Men being in the flesh, in an unjustified state, and sin having the dominion over them, Satan hath ruled in them, and by means of sin, and the lusts thereof, he hath wrought effectually in them. But it will not be so with those who are under grace, in a state of favour with God. These enemies may infest, but shall not have the dominion over them. The virtue of Christ's death having reached them in their being born of God, and in their gratuitous justification, sin is condemned to

lose its rule in them ; the prince of this world is judged and cast out. If it is comfortable in relation to our outward enemies, it is especially so with respect to our invisible and spiritual enemies, as Rom. viii. 31. *If God be for us, who can be against us ?*

Christians being justified by faith, and under grace, this, as hath been hinted above, opens to them the treasures of heavenly blessings. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, (now become their God and Father through him,) blessing them (as Eph. i. 3.) with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. This must have much sanctifying effect. Particularly and especially having been born of the Spirit, justified, and brought into a state of grace, God giveth them his Spirit to dwell in them, chap. viii. 9, and they are sealed by the Spirit unto the day of redemption. Formerly Satan wrought in them, by means of the blindness and errors of their mind, and by means of the various lusts that prevailed in their unrenewed hearts. But now the strong man is despoiled of his armour, the curse of the law, and sin dominant in them ; and he hath not the advantage over them that he hath formerly had. Being renewed in the spirits of their minds, and having the Holy Spirit dwelling in them, he doth direct and rule their renewed faculties for the advancement of their sanctification. His more special reproofs and consolations, his humbling and quickening influences, he measures variously to them, with infinite wisdom, in the manner most proper for further subduing sin, and promoting holiness. Dwelling in them, and being in them as a well of water springing up unto everlasting life, he will be

in them an effectual principle of spiritual and heavenly desires and pursuits, and a true source of holiness, a principle effectually directing and disposing them to walk after the Spirit.

2. By reason of the influence of the Spirit thus dwelling in those who are under grace, and entitled to the comforts of it, they will find their comfort much concerned in holy living and practice. The comfort of christians arises from objects, which however agreeable to right reason when revealed, yet are above the reach of reason to discover, and are not suitable to the principles and disposition natural to the hearts of men ; such objects as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man. So the apostle says concerning the doctrine of Christ, and of grace, 1 Cor. ii. 9. As we need the Spirit that is of God, ver. 12, that we may know the things that are freely given us of God ; so to maintain usually, and with advantage, the comfort of our heart on such grounds, requires the ordinary and favourable influence of the same Spirit of grace. But, as sin indulged and entertained in the heart, or having course in men's speech and behaviour, grieveth the Holy Spirit, (as the apostle speaks, Eph. iv. 30.) the consequence will be, that he will withhold his favourable influence, and leave them to that sense of condemnation which is natural to the hearts of the guilty, and to the darkness of mind and inward frame that naturally flows from it. In this case the reasoning of their own minds, however just, will have but very weak influence or effect, for recovering their peace, and for enabling them to overcome the temptations, which the enemy of their peace and comfort will in such cases be ever

ready to suggest. Now, as the peace and comfort of his mind from grace is a very important interest of every one who is under grace; the connexion between holiness and comfort by the influence of the Holy Spirit, which I have been representing, is a constant and most cogent reason to every such person, to be watchful against sin, and earnestly studious of holiness.

3. Holiness is greatly promoted by the advantage which persons under grace have in worship. Divine worship, inward and outward, public and private, makes of itself a considerable branch of holy practice; and when it is followed out with good conscience, sincerity, and success, hath much good effect in all the course of holy practice and good works. One under grace approaches God in worship with great advantage. I observe this connexion in the apostle's words, Heb. ix. 14, where he represents *the blood of Christ as purging the conscience from dead works, to serve (λατρεῖν) the living God*. When the conscience uncleansed lieth under guilt and condemnation, one is greatly at a loss in serving and worshipping God. But when one is justified, brought under grace, and hath his conscience freed from guilt and condemnation, he may approach and worship God with confidence and comfort. Godly persons under the Old Testament, however truly under grace, had not this benefit in so great a degree as now under the New Testament, when grace is more fully displayed, and the Spirit given in greater ordinary measure. Now all believers are priests, with respect to the privilege of near approach unto God. Yea, (which exhibits the matter in a still stronger light,) whereas anciently the

high priest only went into the most holy place, in near approach to God's throne, the mercy-seat, now all believers have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, through the veil that was rent, that is to say, his flesh, and to come up as to God's very throne of grace. Believers have (according to Eph. iii. 12.) *boldness*, or liberty, (in opposition to bondage of spirit,) *and access with confidence by the faith of him*. This makes the worship of God comfortable. When the Spirit helpeth our infirmity in such holy exercise, making intercession for us according to the will of God, and likewise in return intimates, in due time and measure, the love, mercy, and favour of God to the heart, this further engages the heart to God, which is, of itself, the further sanctifying of it, and gives great alacrity and vigour in walking with God, and in all good works. When in worship God gives inwardly the sense of his favour, and the light of his countenance, or, when he gives in outward providence proofs of his faithfulness, mercy, and care, in consequence of earnest recourse to him, and as in answer to prayer, it powerfully disposes the heart to say, as Psal. cxvi. 1, 2. *I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.* And ver. 9. *I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.* And ver. 12. *What shall I render unto the Lord?* Such is the good consequence of comfortable and successful recourse to God in worship. It is easy to understand what happy effect this sort of intercourse with God must have in all holy practice, and in walking with God. Thus those who are under

grace have the strongest engagements, and the greatest excitements to holy living, by the advantage which they comfortably have, in their intercourse with God in worship, beyond what men can have who are under the law and its condemnation.

4. The grace they are under doth especially give efficacy to the doctrine of the word of the gospel, to every part of the word of God, and to all Divine institutions, as the chief ordinary means of promoting holiness. The prayer of the great Intercessor, that *God might sanctify them through his truth*, will have effect upon all his true disciples. The light of God's word doth mark out to them, in every part, the way in which they ought to walk, and giveth them instruction in righteousness. God's Spirit bringeth his holy commandments and righteous judgments into their renewed hearts in such a manner, as makes them sweeter to them than honey, than the honey-comb. By God's word they receive seasonable and apposite correction and reproof, agreeably seasoned with the love of their best Friend. If the threatenings of it are made useful for curbing the rebelliousness and wickedness of the flesh; the promises and comforts of it are especially made useful for strengthening and quickening the principles of grace, and for making them active in all fruits of holiness. The good hope through grace, which God's word holds forth before them, is made effectual for raising them above the world, and making them victorious over the terrifying and alluring temptations of it; and for encouraging them to be stedfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. The securities of God's

promises give vigour to their hearts in walking with God ; and in maintaining the christian warfare against sin inwardly, and outwardly also ; even if there should be occasion to resist unto blood, striving against sin. If we observe how it happens as to those, who are yet in an unconverted state, and under the curse, whilst they are under the same dropping of the word of God, usually with little effect, we have occasion to say, it is happy with a view to the sanctifying effect of the truth, for one to be under grace, as to his real state before God.

5. The grace which God's people, freely justified, are under, will direct every thing in an effectual tendency to their sanctification, and furtherance in holiness. It will give that direction to all providential dispensations. If these be favourable, it will be for encouraging and strengthening them in the Lord's ways. For sometimes they are encouraged to serve the Lord their God, with joyfulness and gladness of heart, in the abundance of all things.^a If they have the cross to bear, that will tend to make the fruits of the cross of Christ the more precious to them ; to take off their hearts from the world ; to preserve them from the prevailing evils of it ; and for that end, to co-operate with Divine grace to mortify their members that are upon the earth ; to cause the consolations of grace to have the better relish in their hearts ; to humble them, and keep them in the greater dependence on the Lord and on his grace.

Nor are strokes and crosses dispensed to them indiscriminately. The Lord corrects them in judgment, not in mere anger.^b In measure, when

^a Deut. xxviii. 47.

^b Jer. x. 24.

it shooteth forth, doth he debate with it ; he stayeth his rough wind in the day of his east wind.^c Judgments are not proportioned to the demerits of those who are under grace ; but are suited to their strength, and the good purposes to be accomplished by them. God is faithful, and will not suffer that the objects of his grace and special favour be tempted above that they are able.^d If they are chastened, it is in order to separate them from their sins. The declared intention of all God's chastisements is the profit of his children ; that thereby they may be made partakers of his holiness.^e If there is special danger from a particular lust of the flesh, (for instance, from pride, or being exalted above measure,) the Lord knoweth how to give some special trial, or thorn in the flesh, to prevent its operation and effect. If the flesh breaks forth in evil works, he will visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes.^f When the Lord sees, that, through their weakness, and the greatness of their distress and trouble, they are in danger to fail in their faith, or in their general integrity, he will relieve them by a seasonable interposition of his providence.—*He repenteth himself for his servants, when he seeth that their power is gone.*^g If, through their unwatchfulness, the flesh and the devil prevail against them, and they fall into grievous sins, (the leaving them to which is the most fearful of all providential dispensations,) yet Divine grace, wisdom, and omnipotence will make even this to contribute, as to making them more humble, so to the making them more circumspect and holy in

^c Isa. xxvii. 8.^d 1 Cor. x. 13.^e Heb. xii. 10.^f Psalm lxxxix. 32.^g Deut. xxxii. 36.

all their ways ; as we have cause to think concerning David, and divers other saints. What wonder of grace this ! Such is the direction which the grace they are under gives to every sort of providences respecting God's people ; causing all things to co-operate with grace for good to them ; sanctifying all dispensations to them, to be the means of sanctifying them. How different the case of the men of the world, who, though under an external dispensation of grace, yet are not under grace, as to the real state of their souls !

6. The habitual view and impression of the great day of the Lord must give great excitement to watchfulness against sin and temptation, to holiness and fruitfulness in good works. But to those who are under condemnation, the thoughts of that day bring such great terror, as tends to turn away their mind from the view of it ; or, if they cannot do so, to give them such alarm and confusion, as bring distress and perplexity upon them, with so much weakness as is prejudicial to holiness. But a soul truly converted to God, justified and under grace, has cause to think of that day with great comfort ; looking for the grace that is to be brought unto him at the revelation of Jesus Christ ;^h which will bring him complete deliverance from sin, redemption from misery and death, with the consummation of holiness and happiness. He may with confidence wait for the Son of God from heaven, whom God raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.ⁱ Such is the advantage of being under grace, whereby a christian, delivered from the wrath to come, may fix his mind on that day with

^h 1 Pet. i. 13.

ⁱ 1 Thess. i. 10.

peace and comfort ; excited by the hope he hath in Christ Jesus against that day, to purify himself as he is pure ;^k while there remain to be considered, consistently with the consolations of grace, those awful circumstances of the coming of the Lord, that may, though without confusion or amazement, awaken in the christian the utmost concern, to be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless.¹

7. As the people of God are the purchase of Christ's blood ; so, when his blood is actually applied to them, and they are justified and brought under grace, they are from thenceforth his most special charge, committed to himself to rule and preserve them, and complete their salvation. He is sufficient for the charge, and faithful in the execution of it. He doth fulfil the will of his Father ; of which he saith, *This is the will of him that sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day*, John vi. 39. With a view to this important charge of its happy objects, which Divine grace commits to the Redeemer, all things are delivered to him of his Father, who hath given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as he hath given him.^m All power is given him in heaven and in earth ;ⁿ and it is given him to be Head over all things to the church.^o The Captain of our salvation, infinitely powerful in himself, and mighty to save, being furnished with such extensive power in his mediatorial character for bringing many sons unto glory, the great work he hath to do upon them, upon his

^k 1 John iii. 3.

¹ 2 Pet. iii. 14.

^m John xvii. 2.

ⁿ Matt. xxviii. 18.

^o Eph. i. 22.

church, is, *that he may sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he may present it to himself a glorious church !^p* It is when all his church shall be gathered in, and fully sanctified, that he shall bring them home to God, his and their Father, to be perfectly happy in the immediate fruition of him ; when God himself shall be to his people eternally *all in all.*^q Thus the sanctification of believers is insured, by their being given in charge for that purpose, to Him who died for them and rose again.

8. It appears, then, that the Lord's people have very great advantage with regard to sanctification, and the preserving them in holiness, by their being *under grace*. But further, this is secured by a sure covenant. The grace they are under is the grace of the new covenant. If we consider that man, in his first and perfect state, did fall from God through the temptation of the enemy, and his abuse of the freedom of his own will ; if we consider what place and strength sin retains now in the hearts of the best, whilst in this life ; how weak they are, and what innumerable snares and temptations they are surrounded with ; we may venture to say, that it would not be becoming the wisdom of God to make a new display of his grace to such creatures, in a new covenant, without ordering it so as would secure the effect of grace. It becomes us indeed to reason modestly concerning the wisdom of God, and what becometh it. But with regard to the present subject, we may thus reason the more confidently, because his word hath declared his new and second covenant to be everlasting, well ordered, and sure.

^p Eph. v. 26, 27.

^q 1 Cor. xv. 28.

Here is the sum of it, as the Lord hath given it forth, *I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, (Heb. from after them,) to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me,* Jer. xxxii. 40. Here, besides the general declaration, that the covenant will be everlasting, the Lord doth more particularly describe how it shall become so. Upon the one hand, he promises that he will not turn away from after them, to do them good. Thus he expresses and promises his constant care of them. As they are, whilst in this life, but as children learning to walk, and still in danger of stumbling, he will set them before him, he will follow after them, to observe them, to care for them. Thus the psalmist, Psal. xli. 12. *As for me, saith he, thou upholdest me in mine integrity; and adds, for comfortably explaining this, Thou settest me before thy face for ever.* As if he had said, I am ever before thy face, under thine eye, to be seasonably corrected and helped by thee; and thus it is that thou upholdest me in mine integrity. Thus also, Gen. xvii. 1. *The Lord said unto Abram, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.* Here there is a hint to him of being careful to be perfect, or upright and sincere, as walking before an all-seeing God. Yet God's omniscience is only implied, not expressed. The thing expressed is God's being almighty; and the encouragement meant we may conceive thus: When I have engaged thee to walk in my way, have good courage; consider thyself as a child walking before and under the eye of a kind father; consider me as ever after thee, to observe and care for thee, to assist, support, and protect thee.

Thus the Lord promises (Jer. xxxii. 40.) that he will not turn from after his people, to do them good.

The only thing that can be imagined to deprive them of the benefit of this Divine care and grace, is, that they should depart from the Lord, and from his ways; and so refuse his care, resist it, and withdraw themselves from it. But this is provided against by the promise, *I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.* If the tenor of the covenant were thus; I will not cease to do them good, on condition that they cleave to me, obey me, and not depart from me; if, I say, the covenant amounted to no more than this, it would be a law covenant; even if there should be some abatement in the condition, in condescension to human infirmity. Whereas the covenant of grace is a covenant of promise, that gives security, by mere grace, on all hands, with regard to the sanctification of God's people, and their preservation in a state and course of holiness, to their final salvation. The right of inheritance is not by the law, or by works. *For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by GRACE; to the end the PROMISE might be SURE to all the seed,* Rom. iv. 14, 16.

But is it not true, if the christian should wholly and finally depart from God, that this would deprive him of all the benefit of grace? I answer; This hypothetical proposition is of undoubted truth; yea, the truth of it is implied and presupposed in the promise itself; which is likewise of certain and infallible truth,—*I will put my*

fear in their hearts, that they SHALL NOT depart from me.

But how can it be consistent with that freedom of will which is essential to moral agency, that the sanctification and perseverance in holiness of God's people, should be thus previously secured by grace, and by the promise ?

Ans. It is acknowledged that none can be called moral agents, who do not act with freedom of will. Yet there are moral agents, who are incapable of doing what is evil ; and, at the same time, do not act with the less freedom of will ; yea, they enjoy the liberty of the will in its perfection. There are likewise moral agents, who cannot do what is truly morally good ; yet act with free will. This is acknowledged by the greatest patrons of the pretensions of free will. So, the general proposition, That the power alike to do good or evil is essential to the freedom of the will, and is necessary to moral agency, is deserted, I see, by the most able and learned of them. The saints in a state of glory will, by the grace that brought them to that state, be preserved in holiness eternally ; and that very consistently with the freedom of their will. Shall it be said concerning the saints on earth, amidst their own imperfections, and the snares which abound in the world, that it is, indeed, beyond the reach of infinite wisdom and grace to preserve them in holiness, to advance and perfect them therein, without destroying the freedom of their will ? It certainly were very unreasonable to say so. As it is certainly true, that men, as all other moral agents, do act with free will ; so we have seen that God's covenant of grace and

promise hath secured the sanctification and perseverance of those who are under grace. The word of God abounds with promises to that purpose. If any say, that God cannot accomplish with *certainty* these purposes of his grace and providence, that are to be brought about by means of moral agents endowed with free will, without destroying the freedom of their will, they are far from being well founded in philosophy or sound reason, and speak in extreme opposition to the word of God, yea, to the common notions of mankind, who pray to God to bring about events, that must, by the nature of things, be brought about by the free will of rational agents, without ever thinking that he is to destroy or suspend the liberty of their will.

We have been considering the advantage, in some sort extrinsic, respecting holiness, and freedom from the dominion of sin; even that which ariseth from a *state* of grace, from the believer's being under grace, the object of special Divine favour. Let us now consider the advantage of an intrinsic sort, which the true christian hath by being under grace, as to the true and necessary inward principles of genuine holiness, which cannot take place, or have effect, in any soul that is under the law and its curse, under guilt and condemnation.

It is of essential consequence with regard to holiness, that a man have right inward principles in all his actions. A man's external actions and behaviour may be good, and yet have nothing of true holiness, if all doth not proceed from right inward principles. Yea, a man doing much good outwardly, from evil principles, and to a wrong

end, his course upon the whole may be quite diabolical and wicked. A man's external practice, when it is good, makes but one side, the outside of practice. From rational moral agents, God, who is a Spirit, requires the worship and service of the heart and spirit ; and their practice is to be judged of by him, who searcheth the reins and heart, (Jer. xvii. 10. Rev. ii. 23.) according to the inward disposition and principles that influence it. If one should, from ambitious views, as Absalom, strive to reach by iniquity a state of life, in which he might gratify every lust, and after obtaining it, recommend himself to men by all acts of kindness and beneficence, by mercy and liberality to the poor, by avoiding every immorality, yea, and by showing great regard to religion and devotion ; should this man's practice be denominated holiness ? No, surely ; all his apparent goodness is from sinful lusts dominant in him. Men may, yea ought, to judge favourably of one, when his speech and behaviour express only what is good ; but this is still with a reserve to the judgment of the heart-searching supreme Judge, who only can with absolute certainty judge of a man's holiness. It is therefore of essential consequence to advert to the inward principles of practice and behaviour ; and if even the good outward behaviour of a person, yet under the law, and its condemnation, cannot proceed from right and holy inward principles ; if these can only have place and effect in the heart of one under grace ; it proves the advantage, with respect to holiness, of being under grace ; yea, that sin will have dominion, and there cannot be true holy practice with any who is not in a *state* of grace.

We learn from the word of God, that there is no good or acceptable work without faith and love. The doctrine concerning the first of these is precise and clear, *Without faith it is impossible to please God*, Heb. xi. 6. The inspired writer explains this, and gives the reason thus, *For he that cometh to God, must believe that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him*.

The scripture shows us the only true and solid ground on which sinful men can have faith in God, *Who by him (Christ) do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God*, 1 Pet. i. 21. The atonement made for men's sins by Christ's sufferings and death, and God's testifying his acceptance thereof by raising him from the dead, together with the testimony of the word of God concerning Divine grace through Christ, makes the only proper and solid ground, upon which sinful men can have faith in God, or believe him to be to them a rewarder. Now it is by this sincere faith in Christ, and in God through Christ, that sinners do pass from death to life, and, being justified, come under grace; nor can it be an habitual principle of practice, in any who are not so, as to their real state before God. So, whatever appearance of virtue or goodness they may have, those who are in the flesh (and so are yet under the law) cannot please God, Rom. viii. 8, nor have for a principle of action and service that faith, without which it is impossible to please God.

The other principle essential to true holiness, to acceptable obedience, and good works, is love. This, according to the apostle, Rom. xiii. 8, is *the*

fulfilling of the law ; and if it is so with respect to the second table, which he hath there particularly in his view ; it is so as to the first, according to Matt. xxii. 36, 37. *The great commandment in the law is, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God.*—This is indeed the sum of the whole law, and a necessary principle of obedience to it in every part. But how doth this love enter, and reside in the heart of man, to whom it certainly is not natural ? The apostle accounts for this, 1 John iv. 10. *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.* Faith representing, with satisfying conviction, to the heart of an awakened, serious, and humbled sinner, this most wonderful and endearing love of God, testified in redeeming us from death and wrath by the death of his Son, engages the heart to him, to love and to serve him. When the love of God, thus manifested in Christ Jesus, touches the heart with comfortable effect, it doth, as the flame of one candle touching another, kindle the love of God in the heart. But then if this love, which is essential to holiness, enters into and arises in the heart only by means of that faith, by which one comes under grace, it is plain it can be a principle of practice only in the hearts of such as are under grace. It is faith that worketh by love, Gal. v. 6.

The true inward progress and connexion of things, respecting the principles of holy practice and obedience, we find, 1 Tim. i. 5. *Now the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.* It is worth while to consider this verse somewhat closely.

The end of the commandment is charity. This word in our language hath undergone a considerable change of meaning in the use of speech. The Greek word is no other than the common word for *love*; as it hath been observed, that *love is the fulfilling of the law*. The apostle shows here how this love is connected in the heart; and mentions a series of causes, by which the true love, whereby the end of the commandment is obtained in the practice of men, is produced.

1. It is love *out of a pure heart*. Without giving any prolix explication of this, we may learn what a pure heart means from James iv. 8. *Purify your hearts, ye double-minded.* The *pure heart* here is the same with *a true heart*, Heb. x. 22, and means its sincerity. So love out of a pure heart, is the same as out of a sincere heart, and the apostle's expression means the sincerity of love.

2. This sincerity of love comes from *a good conscience*. A man's conscience may be called good, in general, when it hath in it a true light to direct a man's way and behaviour, with such impression of the authority of God the great Lawgiver, as powerfully and effectually enforces conformity and obedience to its dictates. In short, it is a good conscience that doth its office in the proper manner. But the apostle's special meaning of a good conscience here, is, I think, to be understood as opposed to an *evil* conscience, mentioned Heb. x. 22.—*having your hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience*. There is evidently in these words an allusion to the ancient typical sprinkling of the blood by which atonement was made, and persons were made free from the charge

of guiltiness and defilement, and from the consequences of it. An evil conscience is a conscience charging guilt, a condemning conscience, that gives the sad impression of wrath and judgment for sin.

Now it is (Heb. ix. 14.) the blood of Christ that purgeth the conscience, so as that there shall be *no more conscience of sins*, Heb. x. 2 ; the conscience, once purged, retaining no longer a charge of guiltiness, and of judgment for it. So there are two ways of having a good conscience ; one is, by not having transgressed ; the other is, by having the guilt taken away, by the application of that blood which taketh away the sin of the world.

By means of a conscience condemning, and terrifying with the apprehension of wrath and judgment, God's enemies may (as Psal. lxvi. 3.) *submit themselves unto him* (or, according to our margin, *yield feigned obedience : Heb. lie unto him.*) But whilst the conscience retains the charge of guilt, condemnation, and wrath, there cannot be purity, or sincerity of heart toward God, or sincerity of the love of God. Human nature is so formed, that it cannot love any object that is adverse and terrible to it.

It is when the conscience is relieved from the sense of condemnation and wrath, and that by means so wonderfully endearing as the redeeming love of God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ ; it is then that the heart kindles in love, and comes, with purity and sincerity of heart, to be well affected to God, and to his service. Then God's people come to *serve him* (Luke i. 74, 75.) *in holiness and righteousness, without FEAR ; then*

the christian hath *boldness and access with confidence* ; the conscience being *purged from dead works*, he serves God comfortably. The fear arising from an evil conscience hath torment, and excludes love. But this fear being removed by the heart's being sprinkled from an evil conscience, and love entering, it (1 John iv. 18.) *casteth out fear* ; for *there is no fear in love*. If, through the christian's neglect and unwatchfulness, fear shall return with some bondage and torment ; love recovering itself, with the proper force, casts it out. The christian, sensible of being under Divine grace and favour, love hath free course and prevalence in his heart, and alloweth him not to entertain harsh, or unfavourable, or discouraging thoughts of God. So wisdom's ways become to the christian ways of pleasantness, he walks cheerfully in them, and is encouraged to say, *If God be for us, who can be against us?* There is,

3. *Unfeigned faith*. This is at the top of the series in this text ; and is in the christian the proper source of those other principles of holy practice here mentioned. Concerning it these general things are to be considered.

1. It is *unfeigned*. Not merely as opposed to a false and lying profession, when there is not within a faith of any sort. It is a sincere, in opposition to an insincere faith ; which, however, may be real in its kind. *Ανυποκριτος* (if the use of speech with us would admit it) might be rendered precisely, *unhypocrite* ; a faith of such kind as hypocrites never have. The apostle John says, 1 Epist. v. 1. *Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God*. This faith is not a mere assent of the mind to the truth of the proposition,

That Jesus is the Christ ; for such faith the devils have. It is such a faith as is an evidence that one is born of God ; as this text says. So also, John i. they who believe in Christ, ver. 12, are, ver. 13, born of God. When Philip preached Christ at Samaria, it is said, Acts viii. 13, that *Simon* (the sorcerer) *himself also believed*. It is not said merely, that he professed to believe ; which one might do who had inwardly no faith at all. The scripture is not to be contradicted, that says expressly, he *believed*. Yet the man remaining (ver. 23.) in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity, surely he was not born of God, nor had the faith that is the fruit and consequence of being so. We see, 2 Thess. ii. 13, that *sanctification of the Spirit* and *belief of the truth* are connected.

It is said, John ii. 23, 24, that *many believed in his name—but Jesus did not commit himself unto them*. Can it be said, that these were born of God, or had that faith which comes by being born of God ? We are told, John vi. 60, 61, that many of Christ's disciples murmured, and were offended at his doctrine ; and, ver. 64, Christ said to them, *There are some of you that believe not. For* (so the evangelist adds) *Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him*. Here, upon the one hand, these men were disciples, which they could not be without some sort of faith ; yet, on the other hand, they believed not ; Christ told them so, they had not the unhyprocritic, the unfeigned faith, which those have who are born of God.

By what hath been said, we may be satisfied, that the opinion is far from being well founded, which hath been held by some learned men,

agreeably to their scheme and system ; namely, that the faith of hypocrites, and that of sincere christians, are in themselves of the same nature and kind.

2. This faith unfeigned is such as hath for its natural and proper consequence a good conscience, with love in purity and sincerity of heart.

It is said, Gal. v. 6. *In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love.* Here the true, unfeigned, unhypocritic faith is distinguished from the false faith of hypocrites, by this, that it *worketh by love.* But how could love, and working by love, be ascribed to faith, if faith hath in itself no efficacy or power in the heart thus to work ? When working by love is ascribed to faith, it certainly imports, that true faith hath efficacy so to work, and to determine the heart to the choice of what is right and holy. So this shows, that there is in the nature of the true unfeigned faith, that which is not in the faith of hypocrites, whose faith hath no such efficacy, no such fruit, whose faith therefore is in itself of a different nature and kind from the genuine faith of the true christian.

Upon the whole, as the apostle doth, Rom. viii. 1. give it as a certain distinguishing mark of them that are *in Christ*, united to him by faith, that they *walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit* ; so in the text we are now especially considering, (1 Tim. i. 5.) it is plain that the love which is the end of the commandment, is, as to the ordinary habitual disposition and practice of the christian, certainly connected with unfeigned faith, and is its native, certain consequence. One thing

remains yet to be observed for explication concerning faith, as here meant.

3. Faith, in the comprehensive view of it, doth in various ways influence holy practice. When the inspired writer is to show, Heb. xi. how faith enabled holy men of ancient times to do and to suffer as they did, he sets out, ver. 1, with giving this general and comprehensive description of it, *Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.* Faith doth, by the light and authority of the word of God, demonstrate with powerful conviction and impression, and realize to the heart the being and grace of God, ver. 6, 27. It inwardly realizes Divine threatenings and promises, ver. 7, 13, &c. It realizes Christ and the things of Christ, to the heart.

But then, as I have said before, a good conscience is most fitly to be understood here, (1 Tim. i. 5.) as opposed to an evil conscience; so that a good conscience is a conscience relieved from condemnation, a conscience that enjoys and gives peace; it seems, upon this view, that faith is to be considered here in the special view and precise notion, as it is connected with our justification, reconciliation, and peace with God. The apostle's doctrine concerning that subject he thus expresses, Rom. iii. 24, 25. *Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ: (compare Eph. i. 7.) whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through FAITH IN HIS BLOOD.*

It is the blood of Christ (he having given his life a ransom for many) that hath made peace. It is by the application of it to the conscience,

that the sinner, thereby truly purged, hath no more conscience of sins, Heb. x. 2. It is, chap. ix. 14, this blood that purges the conscience. It is by it, chap. x. 22, that our hearts are sprinkled from an evil conscience. This is that blood of sprinkling, chap. xii. 24, which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.

Now faith in Christ, faith in his blood, is, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, the intellectual means, or instrument, by which this blood is effectually applied, as by sprinkling, to the conscience, to free it from condemnation, and to give it peace, to free it from fear and terror of wrath, and so to diffuse comfort through the soul, from a sense of reconciliation and peace with God.

Let us now take a brief view of the series of inward principles of holiness, as contained in the text under our eye; beginning at the first. An unfeigned faith in Christ, and in his blood, gives peace in the conscience, and removes that apprehension of wrath, which is so powerful a cause of the alienation of the heart from God. By this the heart comes to be reconciled to God's sovereignty and holiness, and love, out of a pure, sincere heart, prevails; and thus the end of the commandment is truly attained, according to the christian's measure, in this state of imperfection.

Though these principles of holiness are formed, and have real effect in the heart of a christian; yet often he is not so sensible thereof as he hath cause, and as his comfort would require. This is often owing to ignorance and mistake; to the remaining darkness of his mind; to the perplexity that sin, which dwelleth in him, and the motions thereof, give him; and to the various temptations

of the enemy. Yet these principles have place and real effect in every soul that is, through Christ, brought under grace; however much such souls may, from the causes just mentioned, not have the distinct view or sense thereof, nor the proper degree of comfort.

At the same time it is evident, that these essential principles of true holiness cannot exist in a soul yet under the law and its curse, and not under grace. Such a one being destitute of the faith that would unite him truly to Christ, and bring him under grace, and not having his heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, is incapable of the love of God, which is the end of the commandment; and so is incapable of true holiness, whatever appearances he may have.

SECT. III.

Containing several directions, which the doctrine of the context before explained affords to the souls of sinners, who are seriously concerned about their most important interests: with the explication and solution of divers questions respecting the conversion of sinners.

WE have been observing the advantage, with regard to sanctification and holy practice, which they have who are under grace, by the privilege of their state, and the benefit thence arising of having Divine grace, faithfulness, care, and power to act for them; and by the true and genuine principles of holy practice in their existence and operation; and which cannot be in any such as are under the law and its curse, and not under

grace. From the scripture light and doctrine concerning these matters, there is important direction to those who have at heart their greatest interest. I begin with suggesting two things that ought to be particularly adverted to.

One is, that persons should not rest, or found their hope on mere external privilege. All the members of the visible church are under a dispensation of grace, that encourages sinners to seek God, and to return from their strayings, by the prospect of pardon and acceptance through Jesus Christ. But, as hath been formerly observed, (on chap. vi. 14.) many are thus under a dispensation of grace, who are not under grace, as to their true spiritual state before God, but remain under the curse of the righteous law, and have the wrath of God abiding on them. Men's trusting to external privilege with regard to the state of their souls, is not better than the vain confidence of Jews in former times, who said within themselves, (Matt. iii. 9.) that they had Abraham to their father, and so were entitled to the privileges of the covenant. A man may have been solemnly admitted a member of the church; he may have a sort of faith, that is no effect or evidence of being born of God; and by virtue of his profession of it, may externally enjoy all outward church privileges, as a believer, as one in Christ, and under grace: but how little may all this amount to as to his present real state! as he may all the time be destitute of that faith, by which he would be truly united to Christ, and so be a member of that church of the first-born (Heb. xii. 23.) which are written in heaven.

Another thing that should be carefully adverted

to, is, that persons trust not to their own works of righteousness for their acceptance with God, or for changing their natural state into a state of grace and favour. All have sinned, and so incurred the curse of the righteous law. If a man should thereafter do his duty as completely in every part as an angel, he but doth in so far what he was bound to do; and this doth not make amends for transgression, nor is pleadable against the curse of the law. This must be removed by other means than the righteousness of a man's own works. What makes the delusion of trusting to these, for bringing a man into a state of grace, still the more absurd, is, that, according to the apostle's doctrine, which we have been illustrating, a man is incapable of the true acceptable practice of righteousness and holiness, until he is under grace, as to his real spiritual state, being until then under the real dominion of sin.

We learn from the apostle's doctrine, that the condition of a person under the law is truly very wretched. To be delivered from the law, (chap. vii. 6.) is a great deliverance; and to be dead to the law, (that is, to be set free from the thralldom and bondage of it,) as ver. 4, is a happy freedom. Without this, a man is incapable of bringing forth fruit unto God, and of serving in the newness of the Spirit. This deliverance and liberty hath been purchased at a costly rate, the crucifixion of the body of Christ. For the law (chap. iv. 15.) worketh wrath to sinners; it denounces a curse against every transgressor; so that the natural condition of every one, not delivered from the law, is, to be under wrath, and under the dominion of sin.

As Divine love and mercy hath, with infinite

wisdom, made a way for the relief and deliverance of sinners, which is set before them by the gospel of the grace of God ; it is of the utmost consequence, in order to persons improving seasonably, truly, and effectually the great means of salvation, which the gospel sets before them, that they should have most serious consideration and deep impression of their most wretched spiritual condition by sin, and the curse of the law. .

Such, however, is the vanity of the mind, the self-flattering disposition of the heart, with a strong inclination in men to keep their mind at ease, and this often supported by erroneous notions and principles ; that it is a matter of the utmost difficulty to bring persons to fixed consideration, just views, and serious impressions of their present spiritual wretchedness, and of their fearful prospect of a future eternal state. The strongest reasoning, and the most cogent arguments, often appear to have little or no effect in this way. Those who become truly serious about their salvation, have commonly occasion to observe a superiour hand bringing them to it ; by some sudden alarming providence, bringing their sins to remembrance, awakening their conscience and heart ; by continued or repeated tribulation and affliction opening their ears to discipline ; or by the word of God, particularly of the holy and righteous law, conveyed in a striking manner into the conscience.

But when it so happens, the love of inward ease inclines the heart to avoid and put away these sad views and apprehensions. As when Felix trembled, on hearing Paul *reasoning of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, and said, Go thy way for this time ; when I have a convenient*

season I will call for thee; (Acts xxiv. 25.) so men often deal with their own consciences, suggesting to them fearful, but just apprehensions; they put them aside, and resolutely endeavour to avoid them. So it is done by many sinners, with fatal consequences to themselves.

It were well that sinners would lay their heart and conscience open to the light of God's word and holy law; that they should have full views of their manifold sinfulness; that their sins and transgressions should come particularly to their remembrance; and that the righteous judgment of God, and the wrath to come, should appear in their awful reality to their apprehension. But, as nature avoids and abhors every thing that gives dread and terror, and as men's hearts are disinclined to every view of things that tends to give them low and humbling views of themselves; there is need of the Spirit of God, whose office it is to convince of sin. If the law gives the knowledge of sin, and worketh wrath, in the sense and apprehension of sinful men; it doth not so with the proper force and effect, until it is conveyed into the heart and conscience by the power of the Spirit of God; and that with a degree of light, impression, and energy, such as the self-conceit, the vanity, and carnality of the heart, cannot surmount or overcome, so as to divert or extinguish it. If awakened sinners understood their true interest, they would, instead of avoiding or resisting the Spirit of God, or the convictions of sin, and the impressions he gives, rather pray earnestly for the Spirit, to do this his office more and more powerfully in their hearts and consciences. If they understood the merciful design of God, during this day of salvation,

in thus awakening, searching, bringing their sins to remembrance, and pleading with them by his Spirit and law in their consciences; they would see cause thankfully to submit themselves to this his discipline in their conscience, and be disposed to fall in with the gracious design of it, betaking themselves by faith to Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

But matters do not commonly take this turn all at once. If the conviction of sin and the impression of wrath continue to go deep in the heart, and the arrows of the Almighty stick fast in it, the sinner is led from this to groan and cry out, *What shall I do to be saved?* And whatever encouraging and comfortable answer to the important question is suggested by the gospel revelation, nature doth secretly insinuate its own way, and give a different direction. The awakened conscience, sensible of the eternal and indispensable obligation to holiness, to all manner of duty and good works, applies itself thereto, and labours in reformation of life and practice. So far it is right in itself. Indeed, if there is in an awakened conscience a sense of the danger of sinning, with an impression of Divine wrath for sin, and yet the lusts of the heart so far prevail, as to have a free course, and to exclude reformation in practice; it makes, for the present, a condition of very unpromising appearance.

But although practical reformation is right in itself, the unhappiness often in the case is, that sinners incline to trust thereto, and to found their confidence of pardon, reconciliation, and acceptance with God, on their own righteousness and

good works. Indeed, in the first state of mankind, it was by the law, and by works of righteousness in conformity thereto, that men were to be justified. Man being without sin, in the perfection of his nature and moral powers, the law *could have given life*; and in that state of things, *verily righteousness should have been by the law*. But the state of things is altered; *the scripture hath concluded all under sin*; (Gal. iii. 21, 22.) and the law, with all the righteousness of a man in conformity thereto, cannot justify the sinner, or bring him to a state of acceptance with God. Yet this having been the old way, the bias of nature is still towards it. Though the minds of men under the gospel may have orthodox notions, yet the ground of hope which the gospel sets before them is contrary to the previous conceptions of the natural mind. It is necessary that the ground of confidence and hope which the gospel presents, should be realized to it by a superior light and power. Until it is so, the natural man doth not receive the things of the Spirit, (1 Cor. ii. 14.) which are no other than the things of Christ, (John xvi. 14.) which he is to show to men effectually: I say, the natural man doth not receive these things of Christ, and of the Spirit, so as to rest his soul on that sure foundation which God hath laid in Zion. In that view the heart treats them as foolishness, and doth not trust to them for hope and salvation. The self-exalting way of self-righteousness is what the natural mind suggests, is what the natural heart inclines to trust in. It was not owing to any thing peculiar to the Jews, but to principles that are natural to mankind, that *going about to establish their own righteousness,*

they submitted not themselves to the righteousness of God, Rom. x. 3.

However, an awakened serious sinner, going on in this way of self-righteousness, hath what the apostle dignifies with the character of *a zeal of God, Rom. x. 2.* He labours earnestly for higher and higher degrees of devotion ; he labours hard in reforming his practice, and in every good work. But those to whom the Lord doth at length give a better light, and bring unto a better way, have occasion to observe and acknowledge, that, whilst they were in the course I have been now representing, they felt a struggle between the law in their conscience, and the flesh, or the power of sin in their hearts, according to the sad experience represented in the past time by the blessed apostle, Rom. vii. 5—13, and that all their concern and labour to avoid and subdue sin, and to be truly holy, hath been miserably unsuccessful.

Being yet in the flesh, not having their nature renewed, nor being under the sanctifying influence of the Spirit of grace ; if the law in their conscience hath strict and urgent demands of holiness, and all manner of duty ; yet the flesh, which (Rom. viii. 7.) is not subject to the law of God, acts rebelliously against it, and exerts itself in unholy lustings and affections. So that with those who are in the flesh, there are motions of sin, even by the law, though it opposes sin with all its light and authority. If the deluded sinner formerly thought of the law as only requiring external conformity, and so found it easy to have a good opinion of his own purity and righteousness, yet now the law, which is spiritual, entering into the heart, saying, *Thou shalt not lust*, prohibiting

and condemning the inward lustings and affections of the heart that are contrary to holiness, he now hath by the law the knowledge of sin in good earnest ; hath amazing and confounding views of the extent of sin's dominion, of the deep root and great power it hath in his nature. But though sin is thus discovered in its extent and power, all the endeavours of a serious soul, with all the authority of the law in the conscience, are not able to subdue it. Instead of that, sin taking occasion by the commandment, thereby awakened and irritated, (chap. vii. 8.) works in the heart all manner of concupiscence. If the conscience of the sinner is awakened by the law coming with force into it ; sin in the heart, with its unholy lusts and affections, is thereby likewise awakened, and exerts itself with the greater vehemence. So *sin working death* to the wretched sinner *by that which is good*, (ver. 13.) *becomes* (shows itself to be) *exceeding sinful*, exceedingly rebellious and wicked, unconquerable by mere human power.

The consequence will be as Paul found it, and represents, chap. vii. 9. *I was alive without the law once ;* (without its light and authority he entertained a good opinion of his own condition ;) *but when the commandment came, sin revived, saith he, and I died.* Former sins revived in his conscience with a fearful sting, and apprehension of wrath ; and the conscience enlightened by the holy commandment, feeling the force of its authority, and insisting most urgently for present conformity, the issue is far otherwise than it ought to be. Instead of the heart's conforming cheerfully and dutifully with the holiness of the law, sin revives in its various lustings, unholy affections, and

rebellious motions; nor doth the sinner find that the authority of the law, or the force of his conscience, or all the endeavours of his yet carnal heart, under the bondage of the law, and not truly sincere on the side of holiness, can subdue these unholy motions and lustings of his soul. His heart being searched by the holy law, his best devotions, good works, and righteousness, do now (Isa. lxiv. 6.) appear to him as filthy rags. However wretched his condition had appeared by the wrath which his guiltiness subjected him to, yet whilst he expected, by his serious care, and earnest endeavours, to bring not only his outward practice, but his heart inwardly, unto a conformity with the holiness of the commandment, he still had, in his own apprehension, some resource in himself, with regard to his comfort, and the confidence of Divine mercy and acceptance. But when, after serious endeavour, under the authority and impression of the law, to restrain sin, and to work up his heart to a holy temper and practice, the effect is, that sin, taking occasion by the commandment, worketh in him all manner of concupiscence; that sin, actively disposed to lust, taking occasion by the commandment, deceives him, and so slays him; that sin, that evil principle, showing its extreme wickedness and power, worketh death in him by that which is good, even by that good law, by the direction and influence whereof he sometime hoped to come to a good condition and state; it is now that the sinner dieth indeed, in his own sense and apprehension, and that his self-confidence vanishes.

But there is hope in Israel concerning this case. God is merciful. So he hath proclaimed his name, *The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious—*

Exod. xxxiv. 6. He hath favoured, yea, he hath purposed the salvation of sinful men; and hath, with infinite wisdom, provided for accomplishing it, in a way consistent with all his perfections, tending to establish the authority of his law, and to maintain the honour and dignity of his government. He hath provided a Saviour, and laid help upon one who is mighty. He hath sent his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and hath made him to be a sin-offering for us, though he knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. A good ground is laid for the reconciliation and peace of sinners with God by the blood of the cross. If God doth by the instructions and discipline of the law in the consciences of sinners, as with a violent shower of hail, sweep away the refuge of lies, which, through the delusion of their hearts, they have trusted to; he doth at the same time acquaint them in the preceding words, that *he hath laid in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth, shall not make haste,* Isa. xxviii. 16.—*He that believeth on him shall not be confounded,* as 1 Pet. ii. 6. A Mediator hath, by the appointment of the Father, interposed, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people; and to maintain the peace and all the interests of his people, by his continued intercession; being *able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them,* Heb. vii. 25. He is a Captain of salvation, appointed to bring the many sons unto glory, and as he hath been consecrated to this office through sufferings, he is able to execute it by his power.

It is, at the same time, to be considered, that, according to the various ways in which Christ is set forth and represented to us in the word of God, there is requisite a suitable acting of men's minds and hearts corresponding thereto. Is he set forth as a *propitiation*, and his *blood* (his giving his life a ransom) as that which taketh away our guiltiness and condemnation? this requires *faith in his blood*, the faith by which the sinner shall trust in that blood for pardon and peace, the faith by which the heart shall be sprinkled from an evil conscience, and so the conscience purged from dead works, the faith that giveth confidence, with reference to that blood, in approaching unto God, even as unto the holiest, according to Heb. x. 19, 22. *Having—boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, &c.* and according to Eph. iii. 12. *In whom we have boldness and access with confidence through the faith of him.*

Is Christ represented as *the sure foundation which*, not man, but *God hath laid in Zion?* then *believing on him* is the soul's secure resting on that foundation, and building thereon a good hope, which will not give disappointment, or shame, to any, not to the chief of sinners. For, *He* (any sinner; whosoever heareth the gospel) *who believeth on him shall not be ashamed*, 1 Pet. ii. 6.

Is Christ set forth as a *Saviour*, and offered as such to perishing sinners? then faith is a *receiving him* (John i. 12.) with an eye to the several offices by which he executes the great undertaking of saving sinners. To receive him not only in the character of our great High Priest, to procure for us reconciliation and peace, and all the blessings

of grace ; but also in the character of the great Teacher and Prophet, submitting our minds absolutely to his light and instruction, with regard to all the truth he reveals ; and likewise in the character of Lord and King, subjecting ourselves to his government in the way of cheerful, universal obedience, yielding ourselves to be ruled by him, and trusting in his power for all the purposes of our salvation.

Thus, I say, faith in Jesus Christ is, in the acting thereof, somewhat varied according to the various views in which the word of God exhibits him to us. Yet we are not to conceive as if this variation in the acting of faith in Jesus Christ made so many different kinds of faith. For the truth is, that true faith, in every soul in which it is, hath in it all that these different forms of it import ; and that either implicitly, or more explicitly and sensibly, according as the different scripture views of Christ do strike the mind, suitably to the different views and feelings of the soul ; in which the influence and power of a superior hand is to be acknowledged.

But man is a reasonable being. His trust, and his whole conduct, will be directed naturally according to the light that is in his mind. He cannot found his confidence or hope on any thing, without having in his mind a true perception of it, and a satisfying conviction of its truth and reality. Now the scripture represents the minds of sinful men as ignorant and blind with regard to the matters of God, the things of Christ, and of the Spirit. These things of Christ, and of salvation through him, are not deducible from any principles or notions that are naturally in the minds of

men. They are such as *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man*, 1 Cor. ii. 9. Now, as it is the Spirit of God that discovers these Divine counsels of grace in the gospel revelation; so it appears that the inward instruction and illumination of the mind by the same Spirit is needful, in order to men's knowing effectually these spiritual and gracious truths, according to ver. 12. *We have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God*; (see also 2 Cor. iv. 6.) It is to be considered besides, that this method of salvation is not agreeable to the disposition of the natural and carnal heart, (as hath been formerly observed,) which powerfully inclines to seek the grounds of a man's justification and acceptance in himself; and to trust to a man's own powers and endeavours for sanctification. Hence it is that men are so averse to *submit* themselves unto the righteousness of God, or to despair of their own powers and endeavours, with regard to any thing in the practice of religion. As there is need of a Divine illumination of the mind, there is need of a powerful Divine influence to renew the heart, and change the disposition of it.

Until this Divine illumination and influence take effect in the mind and heart, the awakened sinner must be in great perplexity, being painfully sensible of the curse of the law for transgression, that excludes all possibility of the sinner's working out a justifying righteousness for himself, and having a deep impression and experience of such dominion of sin, as makes it impossible for him to subdue it, or to sanctify himself in any true degree,

or in sincerity, whilst under the law, and in his natural state in the flesh. Under these views and impressions, I say, the condition of a serious awakened sinner will be very doleful. His condition may be fitly represented, in the figurative way, by the case of Hagar the bond-woman, as related, Gen. xxi. 15, 16, 19. When her own provision was spent, she sat desponding and weeping, until God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water, which, it seems, was near, when she was most sorrowful and despondent, though she did not perceive it until God opened her eyes.

In this condition the sinner is called to be assiduous and earnest in prayer to God for his mercy, and for his Holy Spirit, to give that illumination and influence, that will enable him to live by faith in Jesus Christ; and to attend in the most careful and earnest manner on the preaching of the gospel, by which Divine grace works such great effects on the souls of men: thus watching daily at Wisdom's gates, waiting at the posts of her doors.

There is an objection that may be suggested here to this purpose, namely, by what good reason, or to what good purpose, can such sinners be urged and exhorted to do as hath been now said, if the truth of the case is indeed, that a sinner in his natural condition, in the flesh, and under the law, cannot do any thing pleasing to God, or acceptable; and that no assurance can be given him of any spiritual mercy or blessing to be certainly connected with the utmost exertion of his natural powers, which in that state he is capable of, in seeking God and his mercy? On the contrary, it

may be said, if we will deal reasonably with such sinners, in advising and exhorting them to earnestness in using the means of grace and of salvation, should we not assure them, that if they do what they can by their natural powers, grace will not be wanting, to connect certainly spiritual blessings with their earnest endeavours? are we not well warranted in giving them such assurance, by what our Lord says, *Ask, and it shall be given you—for every one that asketh, receiveth, &c.*? Luke xi. 9—13.

Concerning this, I have these several things to suggest.

1. It appears by the scripture, that it is only the prayer of faith that will be acceptable, and will procure blessings. And the faith by which men please God, and by which their prayers become acceptable, cannot proceed from the heart of any sinner, without special Divine influence. But however we understand the promise in this place, it must be acknowledged on all hands, that a command to seek God, and to pray to him, is directed to persons who are in their natural, unregenerate state. So also are they commanded to turn to God with their whole heart, to repent, and to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, with the encouraging promise of mercy and acceptance through him. But these commands to repent and believe, with the promises annexed, do not establish a connexion between the promised mercy, and any thing that sinful men are capable of doing by the utmost exertion of their mere natural powers.

2. Though sinners, yet in the flesh, and under the law, can do no work in the manner pleasing

to God, or that would entitle such to any spiritual blessings, by any Divine promise; yet such are capable of conceiving, with deep impression, their extreme wretchedness by sin and its consequences. Though their sense of sin and misery does not proceed from the same principles and views, as in the children of God; yet they may have a deep sense of their misery by the curse of the law, and the Divine judgment, to which by sin they have become obnoxious; and by their inability to make themselves free from the dominion of sin in their nature and heart, to subdue sin and the lusts thereof, or to sanctify their own hearts. They are, even in their yet unregenerate state, capable of such a sense of things in these respects, as will destroy their carnal confidences, and bring them very low in their views respecting their state, despairing of all help from themselves or others, sensible that there can be no help for them but from Divine sovereign grace and mercy alone. Surely it is in this posture, and with this sense of things, that sinners ought to lay themselves before the footstool of Divine mercy. If the Lord will show the riches of his mercy, and the abounding of his grace, surely he will be most likely to do it to those, by whose views of their own state his grace and mercy will be most exalted and most glorified.

3. It were most unreasonable to say, that sinners in their natural condition should not be exhorted to pray, to repent, or believe in Jesus Christ, without assuring them of a certain connexion between their own exertion of their natural powers, and their obtaining saving mercy and blessings. The apostle Peter did not think so, when he said to that vilest of men, *Repent—and*

pray God, if PERHAPS the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee, Acts viii. 22.

4. The command to seek God, and to believe in Jesus Christ, to believe the testimony and record of God concerning him, lays obligation to these duties on every one to whom such command is directed, as it is to every one who hears the gospel. It therefore becomes every such sinner, to be very careful that his conscience and heart be duly affected with the authority and encouragement of such a command, and with the obligation it lays upon him; so as to exert himself in the duties required, and that with the most earnest endeavour. Will a person under the law, and feeling its force and authority in his conscience, exert himself in other commanded duties, as prayer, alms-deeds, and every good work besides; and should he not, with a view to the authority of the Divine commandment, exert himself in earnest attempts to obey it in such duties as have been now mentioned; yea, should he not be very much excited thereto, by considering, that it is matter of very great encouragement to his dark and comfortless soul, that such a command hath been directed to him?

Christ is offered to the sinner; he should attempt to lay hold of him. His hand is withered; but he should, without hesitation, stretch forth his withered hand, at Christ's command, which is a command of grace, and often conveys the strength needful for the obedience required. He should endeavour to apply to his wounded conscience, and troubled heart, the blood of sprinkling, by which there is peace. He should, as his need requires, endeavour on every occasion to feed his famished

soul with the bread of life, with the flesh and blood of a crucified Saviour, as the gospel represents it before him. Nor should he for this require any other internal call, than that of his needy condition. He hath most sufficient warrant for his faith in Jesus Christ, by the full and free offer and call of the gospel, and by God's testimony and command.

The sinner continuing in this way of serious efforts, hath no cause to despond, being under such a dispensation of grace. Though his natural powers and endeavours come short, it may happen to him as to the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda, (John v.) with respect to an outward bodily case. Still sensible of his ill condition, he continued to make earnest efforts. But being quite impotent, his natural powers and his endeavours came short. When he had, however, cause to despair of any good coming in that way, Divine mercy interposed seasonably, and the Saviour cured him with a word of power. Such an issue the sinner may look for, in continuing the serious use of means and suitable endeavours.

What gives effectual relief to the heavy-laden soul of a sinner is, when, by the direction of Divine sovereign grace, the word of the grace of God doth seasonably impress the mind with special light and power, so as to realize to it the unseen things of Christ, and of his gospel, with full and satisfying conviction of the truth thereof, and of the report of the gospel concerning the abounding grace of God, the sufficiency and efficacy of the blood of the cross, and the sufficiency of Christ as a Saviour, mighty to save; as well as of the free offer and call of the gospel, as warranting him in particular to receive Christ, to apply the blood of

sprinkling to his conscience, and to have peace thereby.

We learn from John i. 12, 13, that those who truly and sincerely believe in Jesus Christ, are born of God, and their faith is a consequence and evidence of their being so. Now, this new birth is sometimes ascribed to the Holy Spirit, as John iii. 5.—*Born of water, and of the Spirit.* Sometimes it is ascribed to the word of God, as 1 Pet. i. 23. *Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God.* So James i. 18. *Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth.* How is it to be understood, that this new birth is ascribed to these different causes?

There is no difficulty in the matter. These are not opposite or inconsistent causes, but causes co-operating, the one in subordination to the other. For, on the one hand, according to Gal. iii. 14, *we receive the promise of the Spirit through faith*, that is, the doctrine or word of faith, the gospel; and (as 2 Cor. iii. 8.) the gospel is *the ministration of the Spirit*. So by the gospel the Spirit is conveyed into the heart. On the other hand, the Spirit gives efficacy to the gospel in the minds and hearts of men. He doth by a pleasant exertion of mighty power change the disposition of the heart, forming it for God, and putting a new spiritual life and strength into it; while at the same time, by the word of the promise, or of the gospel, (the blessed means by which he worketh,) he conveys that comfortable light and satisfying conviction into the mind, which hath the happy effects before mentioned, of turning the heart to God, with faith in the Lord Jesus Christ;

thus working on the souls of men in a manner suitable to their faculties and rational nature.

On this occasion some may suggest what they consider as a considerable difficulty, thus: In that regeneration by which men are begotten, or born of God, the principles of holiness are infused into the soul. If then this being born of God is previous, in order of nature, to the faith by which the sinner is justified, it follows that the sinner's sanctification is previous to his justification, by which he comes under grace; which they may readily consider as a notion of hurtful tendency, and contrary to the statements concerning sanctification we have given.

It will tend to elucidate this matter, that we distinguish between the habit, or physical principle of sanctification, and the practice of holiness. As to the first of these, it is plain from the texts formerly cited, (John i. 12, 13. and 1 John v. 1.) that being born of God, is previous to a man's truly believing in Jesus Christ. Yea, we may be satisfied about it, by considering the nature of things. If faith is not properly or merely an act of the Holy Spirit, but an act of the human soul, it cannot be produced without a principle in the soul, that shall be an adequate cause of such an act. A gracious act, as faith is, cannot be without a gracious principle producing it.

It is, at the same time, to be observed, that when, for the relief of a burdened and distressed soul, the word of faith enters into the mind, with the influence of the Spirit of faith, whose power renews the heart, the first thing that must follow in such a soul, by means of the light which the Holy Spirit introduces into it by the word of God,

is that faith in Jesus Christ, and in his blood, by which the sinner is justified, and so comes under grace.

From this it follows, that the practice of holiness and good works cannot intervene between a man's being born of God, and his coming under grace by his justification. It appears also, that asserting a man's being born of God to be previous to justifying faith, is very consistent with what hath been said in the explanations formerly given; namely, that a man cannot have all that is essentially requisite to the true and acceptable practice of holiness, until, being justified by faith, he comes under grace.

As it appears, by the texts formerly cited, that being born of God is previous to one's exercising faith in Jesus Christ; the same thing appears further from the language used in these texts, which mention the sanctification of the Spirit previously to believing. So 2 Thess. ii. 13.—*God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.* So also 1 Pet. i. 2. *Elect—through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, (that is, obedience to the gospel by that faith in Jesus Christ, which it especially requires,) and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.* It is still to be remembered, that this sanctification of the Spirit is the consequence and fruit of Christ's having died, having risen again, having ascended to the right hand of God, and his having (John xvii. 2.) received power over all flesh, that he might give eternal life to as many as the Father hath given him.

As the scripture evidence respecting this point

is clear, I think none need apprehend any ill consequence from asserting, that the sanctification of the Spirit, which is the same, in the stricter sense, as being born of God, is, in the nature of things, previous to the faith by which the sinner is justified.

But with respect to holy practice ; as it is a rational practice proceeding from a right and sincere disposition of the heart, influenced by right views, to a right end ; the truth stands that hath been here asserted, that none is capable of such a practice and course, but one who is justified, and under grace, and that such practice of holiness and good works cannot intervene betwixt the sanctification of the Spirit, and the sinner's being, through faith, justified, and brought under grace ; as hath been said before.

What hath been now observed, may serve to answer a question which has been thought to have some difficulty ; namely, how can it be accounted for, that in the chain of grace represented Rom. viii. 30, a matter so important as sanctification is not mentioned ? It hath been endeavoured to solve this difficulty in various ways. But as the *calling* is by the sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, I see no good reason why sanctification may not be understood to be included in the *calling* there mentioned ; which is a *holy calling*, 2 Tim. i. 9, and christians are said to be *called saints*, Rom. i. 7. 1 Cor. i. 2, that is, saints by their calling.

It will not be amiss in this place, I think, to consider another question respecting the conversion of a sinner ; namely, Which takes place first in such souls, repentance, or faith in the Lord Jesus Christ ?

I expect it will appear, by a due consideration of this point, that it is not of such importance as some have thought. But to proceed distinctly.

Sometimes repentance is mentioned in scripture in a more large and comprehensive meaning. So Luke xxiv. 47. *That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name*—Acts iii. 19. *Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out*—and Acts v. 31. *Him hath God exalted—to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins.* Now, as justification and remission of sins are by faith in Jesus Christ, which is not mentioned in these texts, it is plain, that repentance, which alone is mentioned in them, as required in order to remission of sins, includes that faith in Jesus Christ, with which justification and remission of sins is connected. We are therefore by *repentance*, in such texts, to understand all that is comprehended in the conversion of a sinner; and so it seems to be for explication of repentance, according to this larger meaning, that, being converted, is added, Acts iii. 19. *Repent—and be converted.*

At other times, repentance and faith in Jesus Christ are distinguished, and distinctly expressed; as Acts xx. 21. *Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.*

1. *Repentance towards God.* The sinner hath strayed from God. He set up his own will, his lust, and the desire of self-gratification, in opposition to God. He withdrew himself from his authority and rule, and sought his happiness in the creature, and not in the Creator, who is blessed for ever. The heart, under the influence of carnal

lusts, wanders in pursuit of good and happiness in the enjoyment of the creatures ; and being insatiable by any thing found in them, says, (so do the *many*, Psal. iv. 6.) *Who will show us any good ?* But the soul of the sinner, deeply convinced of sin, and its fearful consequences, by the law ; distressed with its terrors ; persuaded of the vanity of its former pursuits after imaginary happiness ; being now renewed by the sanctification of the Spirit before mentioned ; and viewing God in the encouraging and amiable light, in which the gospel represents him ; doth, with shame and sorrow for his past conduct and straying from God, return to him, to seek his happiness in him, in his favour and enjoyment, as Psal. iv. 6. *Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us ;* yields himself to his government and rule, with sincere purpose of dutiful obedience. . Thus we see repentance explained by turning to God, Acts xxvi. 20.—*That they should repent, and turn to God.* See also 1 Thess. i. 9.

2. *Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.* The faith here mentioned, is not the faith of God's being and perfections ; nor the faith of the word of God, as it marks out to us the way in which we ought to walk ; nor the faith of a future life and happiness. All these are indeed comprehended in faith, in the large sense of it. But the faith here mentioned, with respect to the conversion of a sinner, is *faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ.* God hath in himself infinite glory, excellence, and amiableness ; but it is the glory of God, that shineth in the face of Jesus Christ, (2 Cor. iv. 6.) that makes him especially amiable in the eye of the sinner, and that doth effectually attract his heart toward God. It is Christ, and him crucified, that the sinner needs

to be told of, to encourage his conversion and approach to God. It is the blood of sprinkling that alone gives confidence to the guilty soul in returning and approaching to God. By his mediation Christ is the way, John xiv. 6, and no man cometh unto the Father but by him. In the conversion of the sinner, God is the end, and Christ is the way to that end; and thus it is that the conversion of the sinner imports, *repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Now, as to the question concerning the priority of repentance or faith, the one to the other; it is right to understand and hold, that the light which entereth into the mind by the illumination of the Holy Spirit, and by the word and doctrine of the gospel, showing, in the most satisfying manner, the truth, reality, and excellency of the things of God, of Christ, and of things unseen, must be prior in the soul to any particular acting of grace, which is necessarily directed and influenced by this light, which is the light of faith, as it is the evidence of things not seen.

But if we consider the question as respecting the activity of the soul in conversion; then, as I have said, that in conversion God is as the end in which it terminates, and Christ the way to that end, through faith in him, the only way in which the sinner can come to God acceptably, and with any well-founded confidence, then the question concerning the priority of repentance or faith is such as this other question, Which is first, in order of time, or of nature, my setting out for Edinburgh, or my taking the way to it? which were a useless question.

It has been right and useful to consider faith in Jesus Christ, and repentance, separately, and to give different definitions of them. Yet as they are acted in the soul, they are involved the one in the other; and as they are acted inwardly, both might well be comprehended in the following definition —“ Repentance unto life, or the conversion of the sinner, is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, from a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, turns from sin unto God, founding his confidence, and resting on Jesus Christ for pardon and acceptance with God through his mediation, and for complete salvation.”

I know that some will not bear to hear that repentance is previous to justification; but will have it to be wholly the consequence and effect of a sinner's being justified, and coming under grace, and that repentance is, from thenceforth, the continued exercise and practice of the christian to the end of his course. I doubt not but many such do mean what is right in the main, though their way of conceiving things hath this evident inconvenience, that it would direct them to express themselves in a way contrary to the language of scripture, which calls on sinners to repent, in order to (and so previously to) the remission of sins.

It may tend to give some further light concerning this point, that we consider how, and in what cases the true believer is required in scripture to repent, or is said to repent.

1. I observe, that when such have considerably declined with respect to their love, fruitfulness, or integrity, they are called on to repent. Thus, Rev. ii. after giving commendation to the angel of the church of Ephesus, the Lord says, ver. 4, 5.

I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works. Thus also, in that same chapter, the angel of the church of Pergamos having much offended the Lord, by suffering those who held the doctrine of Balaam, and those who held the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, the Lord says to him, ver. 16. *Repent.*—So likewise the angel of the church of Laodicea having fallen into a fearful condition of lukewarmness, the Lord says to him, chap. iii. 19. *Be zealous therefore and repent.*

2. When a christian hath come under the predominance of any particular lust, he is called to repent, and forsake it, and the practice that hath been the consequence thereof. Thus the apostles having, Matt. xviii. 1, shown pride and ambition to be very predominant in them; the Lord said to them, ver. 3. *Except ye be converted, (the same in meaning as, Except ye repent,) and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.* Job was happy as to his state and general character, and gave a very exemplary proof of patience; yet in one thing he was dangerously wrong, *because* (chap. xxxii. 2.) *he justified himself rather than God;* so far even as to insinuate what was reproachful to God with regard to his dealing with him; saying, (as Elihu represents, chap. xxxiii. 9, 10.) *I am clean without transgression—Behold, he findeth occasions against me.*—This in Job's views and disposition might continue to be matter of controversy between God and him. But by Elihu's pleading with him, and more especially by the Lord's own appearance and

pleading, he was at length brought down from his height ; and after so confidently pleading his own righteousness, and impeaching Divine Providence, he comes to this, *I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes*, chap. xlii. 6. It was then, and not till then that the Lord gave forth judgment for him against his friends, and turned the captivity of Job. It is only in such special cases as these that I observe sincere believers, or true christians, called on to repent, or the word *repent* used with respect to their disposition and course.

According to our conception, we may, perhaps, say, that the whole life, exercise, and practice of a true christian, is no other than repentance continued and extended to the end of his course ; nor can I think that way of conceiving things is to be found fault with. But we are inquiring here concerning the scripture meaning of the word ; and as to that I have not observed any where in scripture, that the ordinary exercise and practice of the christian is set forth under the name of *repentance*. Those things which some do conceive as a continuation of repentance, should, according to scripture style, be accounted *fruits* or *works meet for repentance*, Matt. iii. 8. Acts xxvi. 20, rather than be called, any of them, or the whole together, by the name of *repentance*.

Let me observe, by the way, this affords what may satisfy us about the meaning of our Lord's expression, Luke xv. 7, where he explains his parable of the hundred sheep, whereof one was lost, and recovered, to the great joy of the owner ; *I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over*

ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance. It seems reasonable to think, that the ninety and nine sheep are creatures of the same species with the sheep that went astray ; that is, not angels, but men. Who then are the ninety-nine just persons among men, who need not repentance ? What hath been just now observed helps us to answer, They are those sincere christians, who walk uniformly in a pure and upright course, free from any remarkable sins or predominant lust, labouring earnestly to perfect holiness in the fear of God. These, according to the scripture style and use of the word, need not repentance.

Some earnestly maintain, that repentance is not previous to, but is a consequence of justification ; in order to guard against the legal disposition, which men are naturally so prone to, or rather, that is so deeply rivetted in men's hearts naturally, and which is indeed of the worst tendency and consequence to the souls of men. Upon the same view, some have denied regeneration, or the sanctification of the Spirit, to be previous to faith or justification. It is certain, however, where true regeneration is, and the sincerity of repentance, that there is a disposition of heart the most remote from legal. At any rate, when men would provide an antidote against error upon one hand, they should be very careful that they strike not against the truth, on the other hand, or give advantage to the adversaries of the truth. To me it appears to be the truth clearly set forth in the word of God, that no sinner is justified but the penitent sinner ; and that the penitent, or repenting sinner, is justified by faith alone, by faith in

Jesus Christ, and in his blood, from which blessed object faith derives its virtue to justify the sinner, and not from any thing in a man, previous, concomitant, or subsequent to his faith; however certainly connected true unfeigned faith is with good dispositions and good works. To represent repentance distinguished from faith, as in a class of co-ordinate conditionality with faith in the matter of justification, or attaining an interest in the covenant of grace and blessings thereof, I cannot consider otherwise than as a notion ill founded and of hurtful tendency.

Thus we take considerable time, and use many words, in explaining what happens instantaneously in the human soul, so as not to be measured by time. A ray of Divine light, by one declaration or promise of God's word, entering the mind and heart, with an effectual touch of Divine power, may effect, in an instant, in the soul of a serious and humbled sinner, all that hath been here said concerning the sanctification of the Spirit, repentance towards God, and that faith in Jesus Christ, and in his blood, with which the justification of the sinner is immediately connected, and that hath for its certain consequence, freedom from the dominion of sin and holy practice.

One or two things remain, however, which it is fit to add in this place. Though as to the great substance of it, the conversion of the sinner is effected as hath been represented, yet there may be a considerable variety as to manner and circumstances. The spiritual state of all men by nature is the same, yet there may be a great difference as to circumstances. Some are in great ignorance; their course hath been in remarkable

opposition to purity ; and they have perhaps fallen into ways of gross wickedness, highly dishonourable and provoking to God. In such, the law giving the knowledge of sin, and working wrath, often strikes the conscience with greater force and terror, and alarms the whole soul to a high degree ; so that, if Divine goodness and care did not secretly work to prevent it, the consequences might be fearful. In such, when Divine grace directs these convictions to a happy issue, their conversion and relief by faith may be more evident and observable, and sensibly comfortable in a higher degree. The Lord may likewise design to prepare some for more special usefulness, or for more special trials, by greater experience of the trials of the law, and of the consolations of grace. Yea, some have greater softness, vivacity, and sensibility in their natural spirit and temper, and thereby more sensible terrors and consolations than others, who have perhaps the reality of this work in greater degree, and with greater effect in all holiness and good fruits.

Upon the other hand, some have been brought up under the purity of the gospel, and with a greater degree of light and knowledge ; perhaps under the best examples, which have not altogether been without effect, being preserved from the more gross ways of the world ; and possessing, perhaps, greater natural vigour of spirit, with greater equality and sedateness of natural temper. Though such have experienced most serious conviction, and deep impressions of their sinfulness, and their wretchedness by sin ; yet, perhaps, the law of God doth not strike them with such sensible force, or alarm them so very much by its

terrors. The law may impress them more gradually and may (if I may with propriety use the expression) soak by degrees into their minds and consciences. In such, their belief, peace, and comfort, through faith, may at first be less sensible and observable. But the word of the grace of the gospel entering into their minds and hearts by slower degrees, their faith grows up to greater strength, and with its proper effect in holiness and fruitfulness in every good work.

At any rate, as to vital principles, whatever difference may be as to manner and circumstances, yet matters will, with every soul truly converted to God, be according to the general views given by the scripture, which acquaints us, that they are (Matt. ix. 12.) the sick who need the physician; that (1 Pet. ii. 7.) to those who believe, Christ is precious; that true faith will not allow the christian to be habitually (2 Pet. i. 8.) idle and unfruitful in the knowledge of Christ. It will be an active working principle, a faith that worketh by love.

Another thing fit to be added here is this: however needful the ministry and discipline of the law in the conscience and heart of a sinner, giving the knowledge of sin and of wrath, is, to determine him to flee for refuge; yet he is not to consider the views and impressions that come in this way, as qualifications that entitle him to the comforts of the gospel; or to think, as if without these in a certain measure and degree, it were unwarrantable and unfit for him to lay hold of Christ, or of any comforts of grace. If he is truly and seriously convinced of his need of a Saviour, it were well for him even immediately to betake himself to him, believing in him. If they are the sick

that need the physician, it were vain and highly imprudent to stand off till they were more sick. Many a life has been lost in that way. Whatever the disorder, whatever the pain, as to the degree of it, it were good for a man to betake himself soon and seasonably to the physician. Delay in such cases is often hurtful, and extremely dangerous. It were good for a man to be often thinking seriously concerning his spiritual condition, which is his most important interest. When he is so, and obtains increased views and impressions of sin and wrath, it were good for him, having Christ and his grace set before him, and freely offered, to endeavour, having an eye upward for Divine influence, to lay hold of Christ by faith, to apply the blood of sprinkling to himself, for giving him peace; and to apply the comforts of free and rich grace, and of the promise suitably to his condition: yet this still so, as that the conscience and heart shall be kept open to further views and convictions of sin, and of judgment for it, from the law; in order to cause a man to take the more fast hold of the hope set before him, (which is *the hope of righteousness through faith*, Gal. v. 5.) to hold Christ the more precious, to have the greater relish of the consolations of grace and of the promise, and to have ever the greater fear of sin, as of the greatest of all evils.

The special design of this section was, to point out what direction the scripture, particularly the context we have been considering, gives to sinners, yet in their natural, unconverted state, with respect to their most important interest, especially with regard to their justification and sanctification. When the sinner, who hath been at ease in his

sins, is first awakened to seriousness, what especially affects his mind and conscience is, the law as it worketh wrath, and the great concern is to be freed from condemnation and judgment. Some, when they have got some kind of peace and settlement of mind with regard to this matter, take their ease and have no further concern. They rest in a form of religion, with no real holiness or fruitfulness.

But those in whom this work comes to a better issue, through the mercy of God, are led further into themselves, to perceive the alarming dominion which sin hath in them, and their inability to sanctify themselves. This becomes matter of weighty concern with them.

The remedy with respect both to the sinner's guilt and his depravity, is, to be made free from the law and its curse. Whilst he is in this condition, as he is under wrath, so sin hath dominion in him. He is at once delivered from the Divine wrath, from the dominion of sin in his heart and nature, and made capable of holy practice, by being justified through faith, and brought under grace, Rom. v. 1, 2, with chap. vi. 14. Sinners coming into union with Jesus Christ by faith, they (Rom. vii. 4.) *become dead to the law* (free from its curse and bondage) *by the body of Christ, that they should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that they should bring forth fruit unto God.* This is the doctrine of the scripture, and the way which it marks out to sinful men, in which they can come to a capacity of bringing forth fruit in a practice truly holy, and acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

We should now show what direction our context affords, as to comfort, and holy practice, to persons now truly in a state of grace. But as this will, in some form, come in our way hereafter, I shall not lengthen this section, by saying any thing particular concerning it in this place.

SECT. IV.

Concerning true evangelical preaching.

WE proceed now to point out some directions that our context, and the apostle's doctrine in it, afford to the preachers of the gospel. As there are commonly persons differing as to their spiritual condition and state in every public audience, the discourses should exhibit things suited to such various conditions of men. There may be such difference in the case, even of persons in the same unconverted state, that may require their being addressed and treated in a different manner. Some such are quite secure and thoughtless about their condition; whilst others of them are serious, and under the sharp discipline of the law in their conscience. There may also be considerable difference in the particular condition and circumstances of persons in a state of grace: some such are weak, others are strong. A distinction that includes all the members of the church is, that some are in their natural condition, under the law and its curse, and under the dominion of sin; and that others are in a state of grace. As the apostle says of the ancient Israel, Rom. ii. 28. *He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; and*

chap. ix. 6. *They are not all Israel, which are of Israel* ; so may be said of the New-Testament Israel, the gospel church. All members of the church externally are not the true circumcision, described Phil. iii. 3.

It is, however, the way of some preachers to consider all their audience under the general character of believers and christians, (as they are by profession and outward privilege,) and to exhort them indiscriminately, without any hint of the difference that may be, as to their real spiritual state, to the practice of holiness : explaining it, and each particular virtue, and enforcing these with such motives as the nature of the subject affords ; pressing them to labour earnestly to overcome their evil habits, and withdraw themselves from under the power of them, and by careful attention to their heart and practice, to acquire new habits of holiness and virtue ; encouraging sometimes their sincere endeavours in this way, with the prospect of the aids and assistances of the Holy Spirit. As to these, the children of God do indeed need them, with regard to all their course, work, and exercise ; but persons in their natural state need much more than particular aids and assistances.

This way of preaching tends to keep persons in ignorance of their natural condition, and of the sad disadvantage which they therein labour under, with respect to true holiness ; or to cause them to overlook it, and to imagine their powers amount to more than they do. It is certain, there can be no true holiness, no sincere serving of God, until a person is made free from sin, from its dominion. It is in that order that the apostle conceives and

represents things, chap. vi. 22. *Being made FREE FROM SIN, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness.* It is right that a man should strive against ill habits; but there is a great deal more in the dominion and slavery of sin, than acquired evil habits. The dominion of sin is too strong for any human power or endeavour. The apostle says, chap. viii. 3, that the law could not make a man free from the law of sin and death. Why? the law doth not encourage reformation (so some explain) by any promise of pardon. True; but this is not all; nor is it to this that the apostle ascribes the disability of the law: but he says, the law could not make a man free, in that it was weak through the flesh, the corruption of our nature, that evil principle in men, whose tendency and influence is ever in opposition to the direction and demand of the holy law.

The case hath required a great deal more than were requisite for curing and reforming any mere ill habits. It required, as we have seen, that Christ should become a sacrifice for sin; as to procure pardon, and to bring sinners under grace, so to procure, that sin should be condemned to be ejected from its throne and dominion. It becomes sinful men to labour in every way of duty and means against sin. But the condemning sentence against sin must be first truly executed by a superior hand, before a man can do any thing sincerely and successfully in the matter. So the apostle says, chap. viii. 2. *The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.*

The first main intention therefore of the preacher,

with respect to such sinners, should be to bring them truly to Christ, by the faith that would truly unite them to him, to derive from him peace and comfort, sanctifying influence and strength ; that so, being married to him, they might bring forth fruit unto God.

Subservient to this main intention is this other ; namely, to acquaint such sinners with the wretchedness of their condition, by the light of the law ; to show them the evil of sin in itself, and the fearful judgment, curse, and wrath, which by the law is due to it ; to explain to them the holiness which the holy and spiritual law requires ; and, besides their actual sins, to mark out to them the contrariety to this holiness, which they may observe in their own nature and heart, by comparing these with the perfect rule, and the light of the word of God ; and to convince them by the word of God, and what they may find in their own experience, how impossible it is for them, (being the slaves of sin, and it having invested all their faculties and powers,) to reform or sanctify their own hearts, or to practise holiness in a manner truly sincere, and acceptable to God.

At the same time, with a view to sinners becoming serious and earnest in the matter of salvation, it is fit, that the preacher lay fully before them the abounding and exceeding riches of Divine grace ; the sufficiency of the Saviour ; his love to sinners ; the complacency he hath in their betaking themselves to him ; and the absolute freeness, (without money and without price,) with which Christ and all grace is offered in the gospel, even to the chief of sinners. This should be done in such a manner as to obviate the tempt-

ations of various sorts, which arise from their own ignorance and mistake, or from the device of the enemy, which, by reason of the darkness and weakness of their minds, they are commonly too ready to entertain to their great hurt. It was appointed anciently, that the highways to the city of refuge should be open and clear, that nothing might impede the course of a man thither, when he was fleeing from the avenger. So should the preacher labour, by the direction of the word of God, to obviate and remove every thing that might discourage or hinder the motion of a serious and humbled sinner towards Christ by faith, for refuge and salvation.

I have noticed the directions, which our context affords to sinners themselves, with regard to their wretched natural state. As these may serve likewise for the use of the preacher, in dealing with such, I shall insist no longer on this part of the subject.

The other class, of whom the preacher ought to have much consideration, is sincere believers, who are truly in a state of grace. The important intention with regard to them is, the building them up in holiness and comfort. In comfort, particularly in what concerns their sanctification; as indeed their feelings and experience do often occasion more sorrow and discouragement with regard to this subject, than with regard to any other. Yet it is of great importance that their comfort and joy should be maintained; as the joy of the Lord is their strength.

We see the apostle in our context acting on this view very remarkably. His special purpose is to exhort to the practice of holiness, to the avoiding

and resisting of sin. But he brings forth every argument clothed, as it were, with consolation, respecting the subject, (concerning which christians do commonly find such cause of discouragement,) and respecting the happy and certain issue. To be *dead to sin*, (chap. vi. 2.) affords a strong argument, why christians should not live in sin. But how great the comfort, to be made free from its dominion, as that expression imports ! Christians are obliged to be in practice conformed to Christ's death, and to the design of it. But how great the comfort, that they have fellowship with him in his crucifixion and death ; so that, though sin remains in them, and gives them much molestation, yet the old man is crucified by virtue of the cross of Christ, and so being enervated and weakened, they may take courage to decline its service ! If christians have fellowship with Christ in his death, whereby they are made free from the dominion of sin ; how unspeakably great the consolation, that they shall be planted together in the likeness of his resurrection ; and, having died with him, that they shall live with him in newness of life here, and in eternal life hereafter ; and may reckon themselves to be dead indeed unto sin, (made free from its reign and dominion,) and alive unto God through Jesus Christ ! Such consolations tend greatly to sweeten and recommend to the heart the arguments enforcing holiness and holy practice.

This particularly hath that tendency, chap. vi. 14. *Sin SHALL NOT have dominion over you ; for ye are not under the law, but under grace.* As if he had said, The law would have left you wholly to your own free will, to stand or fall according

to its direction and determination. If a sinner were delivered from the law, and that miserable condition into which his sin had brought him, and put anew under the law, he could have no security for preserving himself from coming anew and quickly under the dominion of sin. But the christian being under grace, the object of special Divine favour, yea, a child of God, Divine grace will take care that he fall not under that thralldom again; according to the declaration of the last-mentioned text, and according to the promise of God's covenant of grace, Jer. xxxii. 40. And though the means needful to be used, by way of chastisement, may be so bitter and painful, as may make sin ever fearful to him, yet he will be recovered from his straying, and from his disordered frame; his faith shall not fail, or be quite eradicated; but his seed shall, by Divine influence and care, abide in him. Thus the apostle goes on, comforting, and exhorting at once, by the most encouraging considerations and the most cogent arguments, to ver. 22. *But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life*; in which words he gives a summary of what he had said more largely in the whole chapter.

Let us go a little farther in observing how the apostle manages this subject. As the condition of sinners under the law is so extremely miserable, the apostle sets out on that subject, chap. vii. 4, with stating this very comfortable sentiment to christians; namely, that they were dead to the law, and entered into marriage with a better Husband, by whom they would become fruitful in holiness. It is not until after this, that he shows

from his own experience, when under the law, how great the power of sin, in opposition to holiness, is, in the case of those who are under the law. But as sincere christians, acquainted with the spirituality of the law, and with their own hearts, might find still with themselves what was very opposite to the holiness of the law, there was great need of providing comfort against this. He doth so, by representing his own case and experience in his state of grace, in order (as Augustine said judiciously) that a sincere soul might not conceive excessive dread or discouragement from what the apostle found in his own case; and in the end he leads the true christian, ver. 25, to a joyful thanksgiving to God for what he had attained, and for his happy prospect.

Thus the apostle's arguments against sin, and for enforcing the practice of holiness, are all along dipped in consolation; and this way ought the preacher of the gospel to follow in exhorting christians to holiness.

Yet often it is needful, in dealing with christians, to administer something else than mere consolation. The case even of true christians is commonly various. If some especially need comfort, others need something else in the mean time.

For this we may observe the apostle's distinction and advice, 1 Thess. v. 14. *Warn them that are unruly, or disorderly.* If a christian doth in his practice, perhaps in a remarkable degree, leave the rule of holiness, and act contrary thereto; it is needful, for recovering him, to warn him with proper authority, and sharpness of rebuke, acquainting him with the danger of his present course: it is not comfort that is then most needful or fit.—

Comfort the feeble-minded. Some christians, through the weakness of their spirit, do not retain their comfort; but it is easily shaken or overturned; especially when there is the pressure of heavy affliction and tribulation, with various temptations. Their case needs to be carefully attended to; and all proper means used to revive and strengthen them, and to establish them in comfort and hope through faith.—*Support the weak.* Some labour under a great degree of ignorance, (as, for instance, the christian gentiles as to their full liberty from all the mosaic yoke; which was the weakness of some mentioned in Rom. xiv.) and with unsteadiness of temper otherwise; their ignorance makes them easily stumble, or puts them in danger of going out of the right way. Such need to be supported by those who are strong, particularly by their teachers, with proper instruction, increase of light, and with charitable condescension to their weakness, so as not to give them needless offence. Though, as to matters of necessary and strict duty, other christians or ministers are not to be brought into bondage to their weakness, by virtue of any claim they can found on considerations of offence.

Thus true christians should, according to their different cases, be somewhat differently treated. But it is still true in general, that christians, from their inward and outward condition in this evil world, do need that care should be taken by preachers, and others, to labour in advancing and establishing their comfort, in the proper, seasonable, judicious, and well warranted manner.—I should now proceed to the other special purpose which a preacher of the gospel should have in

view, with respect to true christians, and that is, the advancing them in holiness. But I choose a subsequent place for that subject.

Before we go farther, we have full occasion to observe, of how great importance it is to preach the special doctrine of the gospel, the doctrine of faith; and that not only in order to give sinners encouragement respecting free justification, but also with regard to sanctification. The gospel, the doctrine of faith, which is the special truth of God, and of Divine revelation, this is the great means of sanctification; according to that declaration and petition of our blessed Saviour to his Father, *Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth*, John xvii. 17.

It is not always the gospel that is delivered from the pulpit. A man may preach very sensibly concerning the Divine perfections, and the authority of God's government and laws. He may set forth the general obligations to duty and obedience. He may inculcate the amiableness of virtue in general, or of particular virtues; and may represent many worthy examples, for men's encouragement and excitement. He may earnestly call on men to repent of their sins, and to reform the disposition of their hearts, and their course of life. He may inculcate this with all the advantage of elocution, earnestness, and action, that would entitle him to the character of the complete orator. The composition may be very skilful; the language elegant and pathetic; and the preacher may be so greatly applauded, that it may sometimes be said, *He hath his reward*. Not only may the ears of the hearers be tickled; but their minds may be very agreeably entertained with sentiments

that are in themselves just, and with many a good thought. Yet in all this there may be nothing by which a soul may be relieved and refreshed, that labours, and is heavy laden; nothing by which a serious soul may be directed to the proper sources of sanctification. A discourse may have in it much truth that is consistent with the gospel, and presupposed by it, and yet have nothing in it of the gospel, properly so called. Of such a discourse, with all its advantage of sentiment and expression, it may be said, as the apostle says of the law, that it is *weak through the flesh*. The corruption of nature, in which sin hath dominion, is too strong for philosophy, logic, and rhetoric; too strong for refined speculation, strong argument, and the greatest oratory.

It is only the law of the Spirit of life that can make men free from that unhappy law of sin and death, which prevails naturally in the hearts of men; and what arguments or exhortations will prevail with the hearts of men to be truly holy and virtuous, whilst they are under the miserable law and dominion of sin? It is the gospel that is *the ministration of the Spirit*. Men receive the Spirit *through faith*, Gal. iii. 14, *by the hearing of faith*, ver. 2. It is the gospel that exhibits God's highest glory, which he chiefly designs to display before sinful men; even that glory of God which shineth in the face of Christ. It is the gospel that sets forth the glory of Christ, and by which the Holy Spirit himself is glorified; and it is that which will be honoured with the concomitant influence of the Holy Spirit. It is true, after all, that whilst the faithful preacher may be *to God* (2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.) *a sweet savour of Christ*, he

may be *to them who perish the savour of death*, through their own fault : yet the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit is not likely to attend any other means, even any other truth, than the truth and doctrine of faith, the gospel ; which will be *the savour of life unto life* to some. But however it may happen to hearers, or however the blessings of grace may be dispensed, it is happy for the preacher, that he himself should be *to God a sweet savour of Christ*.

If it should now be asked, what is that special doctrine of the gospel, and, strictly speaking, the doctrine of faith ? I shall answer briefly.

All revealed truth ought to be greatly valued, and received by faith ; and, if properly used, may be subservient to the main subject and design of the gospel. But the special subject of the gospel is Christ ; and preaching Christ, according to the light and direction of the word of God, is preaching the gospel. The angel preached it to the shepherds, Luke ii. 10, 11, saying, *Fear not ; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord*. To preach Christ the SAVIOUR and the LORD, is the sum of gospel preaching. To exhibit him as a powerful Saviour, not merely to save us from our ignorance or our errors, as a Prophet and Teacher sent from God ; or merely as a powerful Lord, to protect us, during our course of obedience to him, in our way through this world, and at last to raise us up by his power to eternal bliss ; but in the most comprehensive sense, to save us from our sins. Under this character was he introduced into the world,—*Thou*

shalt call his name JESUS ; for he shall save his people from their sins, Matt. i. 21. The whole extent of this salvation is comprised in these few words, *He is of God made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption*, 1 Cor. i. 30. Besides that illumination of our minds, and instruction by his word, which is contained in the sense of his being made unto us *wisdom* ; the two great parts of our salvation that are to be carried on and effected in this life, are his being made unto us *righteousness and sanctification* : and how he is the Saviour to us with respect to both these, is what the blessed apostle explains and asserts in the context I have been explaining, and in the preceding part of the epistle.

With regard to the first of these, as he had proved, chap. iii. 19, that all the world is guilty before God ; so he had shown how Christ is made unto us righteousness, and how sinners are justified, ver. 24, 25, formerly cited ; to which is to be added, Eph. i. 7. And as to the other part, our sanctification ; as, by his being a sacrifice for sin, he hath procured the condemning of sin in the flesh ; so he doth make sinners free from its thralldom by his Spirit, and carries on their sanctification by his Spirit, by his word, and by his providence, until at length he shall present his church a glorious church, without spot. Thus is Christ a Saviour, saving us from our sins. When we were under the guilt and dominion of sin, thus hath God saved us by him : *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost ; which he shed*

on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour ; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life, Tit. iii. 5—7.

We may observe how exceedingly careful the apostle was, in preaching, to make Christ, and his cross, his chief subject. To the Corinthians, the Greeks, who were as much taken up about wisdom of sentiment, refined speculation, and elegance of language, as the men of most politeness and fine taste in our times, he says, 1 Epist. i. 17. *Christ sent me—to preach the gospel ; not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.* When men labour greatly about artful composition, refined philosophical sentiment, and well turned expression, it were well that this saying of the apostle should occur to their minds, and that they would beware lest the tendency of their labour should be, to make the cross of Christ of none effect. *We preach not*, saith he, 2 Cor. iv. 5, *ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord.*

Although the preaching of Christ crucified was to the *Greeks foolishness* ; yet he asserts, that *Christ crucified* is (ver. 24.) *to them who are called, the power of God, and the wisdom of God.* So to these same polite, speculative, wise, and elegant Greeks, he says again, chap. ii. 1, 2. *And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.* We have reason to think the apostle had very extensive knowledge. But from whatever part in the circle of knowledge

he drew his lines, they all, with him and in his preaching, centred in Christ, or were drawn from that centre in every direction.

In all this, the preacher hath large scope for his meditations and discourses. But, with propriety, purity, and gravity of language, it is only the most unaffected plainness and simplicity of style, that can suit subjects so very sublime. To endeavour to set forth such subjects with flourish and ornament of speech, is silly and pedantic, hath nothing in it of true oratory, and shows that the man's own heart is not seriously enough affected with the importance of the subject to himself and to his hearers. The homely, but decent and grave style, is most adapted to the profit, commonly, of the greatest part of an audience ; and those of better rank and education, who wish to have their conscience open to, and their hearts seriously affected by the word of God, may reap the most valuable advantages by those sermons that are most profitable to persons of lower condition.

The chief thing in preaching should be to preach Christ, and the doctrine of the gospel concerning him ; but it is also necessary to set forth and to inculcate earnestly the design of his death, and of the grace manifested in the gospel through him. If it was his gracious design to bring sinners to peace, grace, and favour with God, and at last to a state of blessedness and glory ; it was no less his design to sanctify them. So Eph. v. 25—27. *He gave himself for his church, that he might sanctify it*—and Tit. ii. 14. *He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* The demand for preaching Christ

and free grace, is so far from being opposite to the end of preaching holiness and good works, that indeed men cannot preach holiness and good works to good purpose, and with good effect, without bringing along with them, all the way, the doctrine of Christ, and of free grace. It is at the same time true, that men's preaching is essentially defective, if they preach not Christ in a manner subservient to holiness. Some men, when they hear a demand for evangelical preaching, and the doctrine of grace, with complaints of legal doctrine, have been ready to exclaim, and to say, that those who make them cannot bear to hear of holiness and good works. This is far from the disposition of pious souls, who have a true relish of the truth of the gospel, and a just zeal for it. Yet, if the manner in which some preach holiness and good works gives disgust, there is often too much cause for that disgust. Those are particularly happy, who have the skill to give free grace through Jesus Christ, and holiness, their proper place, in a proper connexion the one with the other.

In the mean time, if faithful men are most frequently employed in preaching Christ, and the doctrine of grace, there is special reason and need for it. The consciences of men have naturally in them light and impressions favouring holiness and good works ; whereas the peculiar doctrine of faith, in which all the comfort and hope of sinful men are founded, are such as nature gives no hint of. They are, according to that text formerly cited, 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10, things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man ; and which we

could not have discovered by any light, or principles, naturally in our minds; nor have come to the knowledge of them, if God had not revealed them to us by his Spirit. Yea, as hath been also formerly observed, there are principles and dispositions naturally in the hearts of men, which tend to lead them to some other foundation of their confidence and hope, than that which the gospel and the doctrine of grace directs them to. It is the more necessary therefore to labour much in explaining and establishing the truth concerning Christ crucified, and all the proper doctrines of faith which are connected with that fundamental subject, and in inculcating these upon the consciences and hearts of the hearers. When the truths of faith are effectually received into the heart, they of themselves dispose it to holiness; and the true faith of these truths works by that love which is the fulfilling of the law. Indeed, in sincere christians love to God and men, with its fruits, in all kinds of duty, and of holy dispositions, is to be considered as the effect rather of the doctrine of grace itself received into the heart, than as the consequence of the direct exhortations to that love and duty. So that when a preacher is not employed in direct and explicit exhortations to holiness, but in setting forth the love and grace of God in Christ Jesus, he is not so remote from the purpose of advancing holiness as some apprehend.

But still the practice of holiness and good works is of too much consequence not to be insisted on, and urged in the most careful, direct, and earnest manner. Some who insist only on the encouragements and consolations of grace,

are defective in this respect. I am not apprehensive of very considerable danger by this to true believers, sincere christians, for the reason I have been just now suggesting. But as all who have the appearance are not truly such, many may be much hurt in this way. The doctrine of Christ crucified, and the consolations arising from the richness and freeness of Divine grace through him, may be to many *as a very lovely song, of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument*, (Ezek. xxxiii. 32.) when these doctrines have never been truly, and with proper effect, received into their hearts. There is a description of sermons that do not urge the holiness, which the hearts of too many professed christians are not disposed to, that do not reprove their vices and unholy passions, or the false and foul steps in their walk, or their unfruitfulness in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; and the preachers themselves may be greatly applauded, whilst their preaching is very defective. Yea, as the children of God themselves have the remainders of the flesh in them, they sometimes have much of the fruit thereof in their disposition, temper, and behaviour, that they do not choose should be touched or exposed in a proper light, even to their own view. Yet the health and purity of their souls require that these evils should not be cherished under any disguises.

The doctrine, then, of faith, and of Christ crucified, should be exhibited in its proper connexion with holiness and good works. This connexion hath been much mistaken by some, who represent holiness and good works as necessary to men's having an interest in Christ, and being justified;

which is very contrary to the gospel, and is extremely hurtful and dangerous. Some, upon the other hand, who teach justification by faith, and not by works, and have just sentiments concerning the necessity of holiness in the general, yet in preaching are too negligent in insisting upon the certain and necessary connexion between faith and good works, between justification and true holiness, the one as the fruit and consequence of the other. As this may be of pernicious effect to hypocrites in the church, it cannot be doubted but it must be very hurtful to those who are sincere, not to have the instructions and excitements with respect to holy disposition and practice that are proper.

It is then to be considered, that the gospel and doctrine of grace is *the doctrine that is according to godliness*, 1 Tim. vi. 3, which tendeth in the whole, and in every part of it, to promote the practice of godliness. Let us likewise consider what the apostle in divers places means by *sound doctrine*, and *wholesome words*, particularly, 1 Tim. i. 9—11. *The law is made—for the lawless—for liars and perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to SOUND DOCTRINE, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God.* Here it is plain, that *sound doctrine* (*υγιαινουσα διδασκαλια*, *healthful, wholesome doctrine*) is the doctrine of the holy commandment, the rule of duty, as enforced by the gospel. So chap. vi. after he had, ver. 1, 2, enforced the duty of christian servants, he adds, ver. 3. *If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, (υγιαινουσι λογοις,) he is proud, knowing nothing.* Thus also Tit. ii. 1. *But speak thou the things*

which become sound doctrine: ver. 2. *That the aged men be sober, &c.* And so he goes on, speaking of practical matters, the duties of christians in the several relations, ranks, and conditions of life. I conclude; if any do urge holiness and good works, without connecting these, as the proper consequences, with the doctrine of Christ crucified, and with faith; they certainly, according to the whole tenour of the gospel, have not sound, healthful doctrine. At the same time, if any do separate the doctrine of faith, and of Christ crucified, from that of holiness, practical righteousness, and good works, surely, according to the apostle Paul, in the places I have been observing, neither is their doctrine sound, wholesome, or healthful doctrine.

It appears in the context we have been considering, how much the apostle had at heart to excite christians to the practice of holiness. This is so obvious through the whole of it, that, after the close view we have been taking of it, we need not speak more particularly on it here.

Let us then proceed to observe what arguments remain, consistent with the doctrine of grace, by which the preacher may excite christians to watchfulness against sin, and to the practice of holiness, and all kinds of good works.

It is, in the first place, needful that christians should be deeply impressed with the authority of the laws of God, their Creator and Supreme Law-giver; and that preachers should inculcate this on all classes of their hearers. Some, who, I am persuaded, did not mean any thing unfavourable to holiness, or to any duty, seem to have thought, as if the believer's being delivered from the law, included in its meaning, their being released from

this original obligation of the law, and their having substituted in its place to them the law of Christ. That expression, *the law of Christ*, doth indeed occur in one place, Gal. vi. 2, where it evidently signifies the law of mutual brotherly love, by which christians bear one another's burdens, which is the subject of exhortation there. As to the law in general, it is to be acknowledged that the law and holy commandment coming to believers from the great Prophet and Apostle of their profession, and being the instrument and rule of his kingly government over them, there is a great deal in this view, and way of conveyance of it to them, to sweeten and recommend it to their hearts.

But still it is wrong to set up the law of Christ in opposition to the authority of the law of the great Creator and Sovereign of the world; or to suppose that the doctrine of faith gives any reason for this, or any countenance to it. When the apostle is, Rom. vii. giving an account of things respecting those who are strangers to Christ, being in the flesh, and under the law, he commends the law *as holy, just, and good*. This certainly is the law of God the Creator. When, a few words thereafter, he says, ver. 14, *the law is spiritual*, it is plain it is the same law he speaks of, as he gives no indication of his using the word in a different sense, now that he speaks with a view to the case of a believer. A little onward he says of the same law, that he *delighted in it according to the inward man*; and concludes the chapter with saying, that *with his mind he served the law of God*. If he *served* it, surely he was under its authority.

Our apostle says, Rom. viii. 7, that *the carnal*

mind is not subject to the law of God. Shall it be said, that the spiritual mind and spiritual man, under the influence of the Spirit of grace, doth voluntarily conform to the law of God, but is not indeed *subject* to it, or to its authority? this would seem to be too absurd. For as the unhappy distinction of the carnal mind is *not* to be subject, we must suppose the spiritual mind to have the opposite character of being *subject* to the law, and its authority.

The apostle says, Rom. iii. 31. *Do we make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law.* It is true, that the law was greatly established and magnified by the satisfaction Christ gave it; yet it is not easy to conceive that a doctrine did not tend to make void the law, if indeed it released all true christians from its authority and obligation.

If the matter be justly considered, the obligation which true believers, or others, are under to regard and submit to Christ the Mediator's kingly government, and his other mediatorial offices, is founded upon, and proceeds from the authority of God the Sovereign Lawgiver, and of his law. If it were possible for them to be loosed from the obligation of the law of God the Creator and Supreme Lawgiver, they would at the same time be set free from the government of the Mediator. But they are subject to the kingly government and authority of the Mediator, by virtue of their being, and continuing to be under the authority and law of him who said, *I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion*, Psal. ii. 6. They regard him as the great Prophet, by virtue of his authority who said from heaven, *Hear ye him*,

Matt. xvii. 5, and, as Deut. xviii. 15—18. They consider him as their great High Priest for his being *called of God, as was Aaron*, Heb. v. 4—6. Let not then the christian think, that, by being free from the law in the sense meant by the apostle, Rom. vii. he is not under the authority of the holy commandment, as it is the law of the Creator and Supreme Ruler of the world.

Another set of arguments that ought to be carefully urged and inculcated, are those that arise from the grace of God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ. The authority of God in his laws is that which doth, and still ought to affect the conscience. But consolatory arguments are those which do most effectually and powerfully affect the heart. The exceeding riches of the grace of God, in his kindness to us through Jesus Christ, should make the authority of his government and laws venerable and amiable to us, and every one of his commandments acceptable to us; and, for this end, such as ought to be much inculcated. The love of our Lord Jesus Christ, who loved his people, and gave himself for them, is a most powerful argument for that love, which engages the heart to the Lord, and to the study of holiness. *Ye are not* (saith the apostle, 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.) *your own, ye are bought with a price.* This is wonderful grace, inexpressibly comfortable: and how strong and engaging the argument it affords for christians to *glorify God in their bodies, and in their spirits, which are his!* In temptations to sin, how powerfully may that thought, *Do ye thus requite the Lord*, strike the heart which hath any sincerity in it!

A strong argument to enforce holiness, arises from the necessity of it, in order to the actual

attainment of future happiness and eternal life; and the certain inseparable connexion between fleshly, unholy living, and eternal death. *Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord*, Heb. xii. 14. On the other hand, *If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die*, Rom. viii. 13. Upon this latter text some have unreasonably commented, and argued thus: Therefore it is evident, say they, that true believers and saints, and the apostle considered the Romans he wrote to as such, may fall wholly off from holiness to fleshly living, and die eternally; else why should they be thus warned? But there is no ground for this argument in the apostle's proposition. The thing asserted is, according to the nature of such hypothetical propositions, the certain connexion between one thing and another; between continued fleshly living and dying eternally. Let us apply this way of arguing to such another hypothetical proposition, and see how it will hold. When the mariners attempted to leave the ship wherein Paul was, he said, *Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved*, Acts xxvii. 31. Would it be inferred from this, that the mariners might actually leave the ship, and that the other people aboard might all actually perish, notwithstanding God's having absolutely promised them by his angel and by Paul, ver. 22. 24, that there would not be the loss of any man's life among them? Surely this could not be inferred. Neither from the conditional proposition, Rom. viii. 13, can any thing be inferred contrary to the absolute promises of God's covenant, Jer. xxxii. 40. The truth declared to the Romans is, that eternal death will be the certain consequence of living after the flesh;

and the conviction and impression of this in the minds and hearts of God's people, and powerfully affecting them, is one considerable means by which the purpose and promise of God will take effect, in their perseverance and salvation. There is nothing in the promises of God that derogates from this certain truth, If men shall live after the flesh, they shall die; nor any thing in this that derogates from the truth and certainty of the promises of the new covenant.

It is likewise needful and fit that christians consider, and that preachers inculcate upon them, that the practice of holiness and good works is the sure way to attain and maintain the fixed and habitual assurance of their good state, and of their eternal salvation. If (as Rom. viii. 16.) the Spirit of God shall bear witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God, and so heirs of God; this is the evidence by which our spirit, mind, and conscience hath its part in this witnessing. It is by their fruitfulness in holiness, (as 2 Pet. i. 4—7.) that christians are exhorted, ver. 10, to make their calling and election sure. When the apostle commends the Hebrews, chap. vi. 10, for their good works; he desires them, ver. 11, to *show the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end.* A christian may have well-founded present consolation by the direct exercise of faith on Jesus Christ, and the promises of the new covenant. But fixed, habitual, and well-established comfort, as to their state and hope, cannot be maintained, but in the way of purity, and upright walking with God. Nor will the Holy Spirit, whose influence is needful in this case, countenance or support the comfort and hope of the

christian in any other course. As something hath been formerly (Sect. II.) said on this and the next following point, the less needs to be said on either in this place.

There occurs next the consideration of Divine chastisements. Fatherly chastisements indeed they are to believers, the children of God, and designed to make them partakers of his holiness. But how fearful may these chastisements be, for what is wrong or defective in the christian's general course, or for particular deviations from purity and integrity! Many instances of this sort are related in the word of God, with respect to those to whom grace did abound in pardoning. Thus, Psal. xcix. 8. *Thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions.* What terrible dispensations, outward and inward, may be included in this vengeance! A child of God, who had great assurance that things would go well with him finally, felt as he expresses, Psal. cxix. 120. *My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments.*

Further, it is in the way of holiness that the christian will have, not only inward peace, but that fellowship and intercourse with God, and light of his countenance, which will make wisdom's ways ways of pleasantness to him. Thus, 1 John i. 7. *If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.* By this the Lord sometimes putteth more gladness in the hearts of his people, than the world have (Psal. iv. 7.) by the increase of their corn and their wine. The apostle John's words show us in what way and course this may be looked for.

Indeed, in any course that the christian can hold, whilst in this life, sin will cleave to him, and to all his best works and righteousness; which might make him very uncomfortable, if it were not for what is added,—*And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.* But if the psalmist had so much gladness by the light of God's countenance, he experienced also a contrary dispensation, Psal. xxx. 7. *Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled*; ver. 8, *I cried to thee, O Lord*, ver. 9, *What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit?* Those who have the experience of these various dispensations, and of walking (Psal. lxxxix. 15.) in the light of God's countenance, will feel great weight in this argument and motive for fruitful and holy walking with God.

Finally, a very powerful argument to encourage and excite the christian to holiness, to advancing therein, to avoid and strive against sin, arises from that comfortable consideration and principle suggested, Rom. vi. 14. that *sin shall not have dominion over him.* This is express and clear; and the inconceivably valuable advantage of this is represented, not as depending merely on the slippery free-will of man, but on the christian's being under grace. This grace he is under, and because Christ is set at the head of the kingdom of grace, a Captain of salvation, secures the christian from ever falling again under the dominion of sin. There is a great deal in this to excite the christian to labour in advancing in holiness and good works, maintaining warfare against sin, an enemy already dethroned, and deprived of its power and dominion, with a sure prospect of complete victory

over it at last. The apprehended impossibility of accomplishing their design, doth often hinder men from beginning, or proceeding with courage even in a laudable attempt or undertaking. But to be called to a course of holiness, in warfare against an enemy already deprived of his power, and that with sure prospect of victory and glory; surely there is in this very much to give incitement to every soul that can think wisely and dutifully on the important subject.

Such are the arguments that may be suggested to christians, for enforcing holy practice, consistently with the doctrine of grace, and with the comforts of the grace they are under. Yet the cry with some is, as if by this doctrine the necessity and care of holiness were quite superseded; and as if there remained not arguments and motives sufficient to enforce holiness. But do there not remain sufficient reasons and motives for holiness and good works, unless we delude sinners, by directing them to look for their justification before God to their own righteousness and works? which is a way of justification incompatible with the condition of a sinner. If there were no other way of justification, certainly sinners must lie under condemnation for ever. Yea, this would exclude true holiness, and works truly acceptable to God, from among men for ever; as is clear from the apostle's doctrine in the context we have been explaining: in which it is evident, that the sinner must be gratuitously justified, through the redemption that is in Christ, and by faith in his blood, and so brought under grace, before he is capable, being delivered from the dominion of sin, of holy and righteous practice, or of works truly

good or acceptable to God. However, though men's good works have no place or part in justification, yet the doctrine of grace, and the experience of that grace directs christians to say, as Eph. ii. 10. *We are God's workmanship, (not our own workmanship,) created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which he hath before ordained (προητοιμασεν, before prepared) that we should walk in them.* And the glorious preparation which Divine wisdom and grace have made, for bringing sinners, who were at the same time under the curse of the law, and under the dominion of sin, unto a state of grace and favour, and unto a course of holiness and good works, is what our context explains and proposes in a clear and strong light.

But can there be arguments sufficient to enforce holiness and good works, if God's purpose and promise do absolutely secure the salvation of every one of God's true people? We have seen in the various arguments formerly suggested, that there are indeed such: and if these have not effect, it proves the person to be under such dominion of sin, as will be too strong for all arguments and motives whatsoever.

Some seem to think it the only way to enforce holiness effectually, to acquaint men that their salvation depends absolutely and merely on their own behaviour, and the determination of their own will: and that if christians are delivered by God's promise and covenant, and by their faith therein, from the terrors of damnation, and the wrath to come; there can remain no sufficient force in any argument or motive to holiness. But the truth is, if christians have no security against the wrath to come otherwise than from their own

behaviour, and use of their free will, they, conscious of the deceitfulness of sin, and of their own hearts, and of all the temptations and hazards attending their course, might see reason always for terror and dread, in a manner and degree not favourable to holiness. For, though fear hath its use for the restraining and curbing of sin, yet the proper principle of true holiness is love, and the faith which worketh by love. But if the christian hath nothing to look to for securing him against damnation and wrath but his own use of his free will, with such aids and assistances as his free will may use or neglect, there will be cause for continual fear and terror, even such fear as hath torment, and is inconsistent with the love that is the principle of holiness; according to 1 John iv. 18.

But the Divine scheme of grace hath mixed and tempered things well for the advancement of holiness. Is the salvation of God's people secured upon the best and most solid foundation? yet there remains a great deal for the children of God to fear, with regard to sin and its consequences, with regard to God's threatenings against the sins of his children, and the terrible dispensations, outward and inward, that may be the actual consequences of their sins. This in so far is among the marks of God's people, that they tremble at God's word; and we see, Ezra ix. 4, that the special designation and character of godly persons is, that they *tremble at the words of the God of Israel*.

There is, at the same time, a sure and well-founded hope, a strong consolation, an exalted prospect, the most endearing and attractive motives, tending to increase love to God, to his sovereignty and holiness, and to strengthen the hearts

of christians in labouring for conformity to it. Certainly it was the best scheme for promoting holiness, that, with a proper curb of fear upon the unholy lusts and unruly passions of the heart, did and still doth contribute most to the advancement of love, and strengthening the hearts of christians in their course. Thus then it is; while by Divine grace the christian hath the greatest cause for the love that is the true principle of holiness, there remains at the same time a fear subservient to this love, and to holiness; not a tormenting fear, inconsistent with love, but a fear that hath its root and spring chiefly in love.

Some, who seem not to employ much thought on the argument, express it thus in general: If God's purpose of grace and his promise hath absolutely secured the salvation of God's people, then they may go on as they please in unholiness and fleshly living, their salvation being so well secured. But for the argument to strike against the doctrine of grace we have been asserting, it should be formed thus: If God's purpose and promise have secured the perseverance of his people in faith and holiness, to the attainment of a final and complete salvation, then they may live as they list in unholiness and impurity. This is the only form in which the argument can strike against the doctrine of grace; and the glaring absurdity it contains supersedes all occasion of giving it any direct answer.

Concerning holiness, this is evidently the issue of our whole discussion, namely, that the grace of the new covenant hath provided for the advancement of holiness and good works, and for the sanctification of God's people, in a manner and

degree much beyond what the sentiments of the adversaries of grace will allow them to admit.

As to the argument taken from the liberty of the will, that impotent idol, which hath been set up against the glories of Divine grace ; something hath been said before concerning it, and I shall here add but a little briefly. All moral agents act with free will. But there is a principle in nature of powerful influence and effect, previous to all exercise of free will, that directs and determines the will in its actings, and in the use of its liberty. In angels and saints, in a confirmed state of holiness, this principle is the perfect rectitude of their nature, which directs their free will to that only which is holy, just, and good. In some other moral agents, the previous principle is the corruption or pravity of their nature, or the dominion of sin therein, which directs the will to that which is evil, and makes it at present incapable of true holiness. In both cases the moral agent acts freely, according to the direction of his own mind, and according to his inclination, without any sort of force or violence : and so the will may have all the liberty that is necessary to moral agency, whilst at the same time it, and all the faculties of the soul, may be enslaved, and under the dominion of sin, until it shall be made free according to the glorious scheme of grace through Jesus Christ, and by him. So that when Luther was publishing his answer to Erasmus's book on free will, he did very properly entitle his own excellent treatise, *Concerning the enslaved will (de servo arbitrio)*. Free it is in its manner of acting ; yet truly enslaved to sin, in every natural man, until the Son shall make him free indeed.

True believers, whilst they are in this life, are in a sort of middle state between the two characters before mentioned. Their nature is renewed by grace, and they have the seed of holiness in them, which seed shall remain in them: they have also in them a sad remainder of the original corruption: and both these draw different ways; so that they cannot do completely the things that they would, Gal. v. 17. But though this remaining corruption considerably disables them, and too often draws them aside from the right way, yet the grace they are under will preserve them from ever falling under the dominion of sin; and will care effectually for their safety in the final issue, according to our context, chap. vi. 14. Should it be thought a thing incredible, that the sincere christian should be certainly kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation?

But how can we conceive or comprehend, that the previous certainty of God's prescience of future events, which are to be brought about in concurrence with the will of man, or that the certain accomplishment of Divine counsels and purposes which are accomplished by means of the human will, can be consistent with the freedom of the will? Can the will be free in its determination; and yet, at the same time, that determination of the will be fixed and certain in the Divine prescience and decree? So it is, however, on both sides; there is such a previous certainty of events, and the human will, having its part in bringing about those events, is free. Besides that the Divine prescience and decree, and the certainty thereof, can be proved by just reasoning from the infinite perfection of the Divine nature; the

doctrine can also be satisfactorily confirmed from the scripture ; and it can be shown, by very many particular instances recorded in the word of God, that this previous certainty of events in the counsel and purpose of God, is consistent with the liberty of the will.

What if we cannot conceive or comprehend *how* it is so ? The mischief of aspiring to know and comprehend beyond our sphere and capacity began very early with us. But it becomes us to confine our understanding, as to knowledge, inquiries, and conceptions, within its proper limits and capacity. It will be a happy time and state, when the mind shall be satiated with the best knowledge, without aspiring to comprehend all things, even things which no finite mind can comprehend. I do indeed suspect, that in this matter, namely, to comprehend the consistency of the liberty of the will, with the previous certainty of events to be brought about by it, there is something of this sort, something that cannot be fully comprehended by finite beings in any state. I therefore cannot think those have been wisely employed, who have pretended to explain this matter, so as to bring it within the grasp of human minds. I see that some, with great and vain pretension to be ingenious, have produced on this subject speculations of a most mischievous tendency ; speculations adverse to all freedom of will, and at the same time to all moral agency ; consequently adverse to all virtue and religion. The rule of our faith and duty is set before us ; and we should be satisfied with it. To pursue our inquiries in Divine things beyond what this light and rule direct us, will be vain and dangerous.

But as this is not a proper place for enlarging much in the controversial way, I shall conclude this point with giving the sense of a passage of the great Augustine, in his book, *De spiritu et litera*, thus: "Do we then make void free will by grace? Far be it from us: we rather establish free will. For as the law is not made void by faith; so neither is free will made void by grace, but established. For the law is not fulfilled but by the free will. But by the law is the knowledge of sin; by faith is grace obtained against sin; by grace is the soul cured of the disease of sin; by this cure or health of the soul is the will free. By the will's being made free, is delighting in righteousness; by delighting in righteousness, comes the doing of the duties of the law. So, as the law is not made void, but established by faith, as faith obtains the grace by which the law is fulfilled; in like manner free will is not made void, but established, because grace so heals the will, that righteousness is freely delighted in. These things which I have connected as in a chain, can be warranted by texts of scripture to the sense of each. The law saith, *Thou shalt not lust*. Faith says and prays, *Heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee*. Grace says, *Lo, thou art made whole, sin not, lest worse happen to thee*. The soul healed saith, *Lord my God, I have cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me*. Free will saith, *I will offer a FREE-WILL offering to thee*. Delighting in righteousness saith, The unrighteous have told me what they delighted in, but they are not according to thy law. How should then wretched men dare to be proud of their free will before they are made free; without observing that

the very word *free will* imports the will being made free? for *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty*. If then persons are the slaves of sin, why should they boast of free will? for *his slave one is, of whom he is overcome*. But if they are made free, why should they boast as of their own work, and glory as if they had not received? are they so free, that they will not submit to have him for their Lord, who saith to them, *Without me ye can do nothing*; and, *If the Son shall make you free, then shall ye be free indeed?*"

But with all this excitement to the practice of holiness and good works, there is one thing yet remains which christians should have much at heart, and in which faithful preachers should labour to assist them. As christians should look anxiously to the sincerity of their hearts, to the sincerity of grace and love in them; so ought they to labour carefully for the increase of that knowledge and light which is needful to direct the good principles that are in them, in their operations: and herein they may have great benefit by faithful and judicious teachers.

There are two places of scripture especially worthy to be considered on this occasion. One is Col. i. 9, 10, where the apostle earnestly prays for the Colossian christians thus: *That ye might, saith he, be filled with the KNOWLEDGE OF HIS WILL, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God*. Here, after great commendation of their faith and love, in the preceding verses, we see he reckons their being

filled with the knowledge of the will of God, so necessary in order to their walking worthy of the Lord, and being fruitful in every good work, that he makes the most earnest addresses to the throne of grace, on this account, for them.

The other place is, Phil. i. 9—11. *And this I pray, that your love* (some would express it in our more usual language, *that your grace*) *may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent.* The margin hath it, *that ye may try things that differ.* I take the meaning to be, that they might have that knowledge, good judgment, and spiritual sense, by which they might be able to distinguish between duty and sin, and to discover their duty in every case, however dark or doubtful it might appear. He wishes their love to increase and abound; but, at the same time, that their knowledge and judgment might abound also for giving their love the proper direction, in every instance of conduct and behaviour. It is in this way, and not otherwise, he expects they might be, as he adds, *sincere, and without offence till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.* There is nothing has a more unpleasant and painful effect, than when a christian, truly sincere in love, and in a zeal of God, falls into mistaken courses, through want of needful light, by which to distinguish between sin and duty, and which might obviate and counteract the influence of his own and other men's passions. Yet so it happens. Some abound in light and knowledge, who are not so anxious about the sincerity of their hearts, and the uprightness of their

walk, as they ought to be. Others, conscious and confident of their own sincerity, are no less confident on that account, whatever light or arguments oppose it, that their course is right ; and so they despise and reject the offer of better light, that might show them what is wrong in their way. Therefore it were good not to engage hastily in any new course ; for when once christians are so engaged, too many things concur to exclude the light that may be unfavourable to their course.

In this preachers should labour much to be useful to christians, for increasing their light and knowledge, and improving their judgment in all cases of duty and sin. Here they have a very large field, and great scope for showing at once their ability and fidelity, in setting forth the obligation and necessity of holiness, in explaining its general nature and ingredients, in explaining particular virtues and duties, and in enforcing them ; showing the fallacy of the various colours and disguises, under which a sinful work or course may be concealed. It is from the word of God that christians are to derive all their light and knowledge concerning such subjects ; and as their teachers have commonly more opportunities, and greater advantage for studying and understanding the word of God ; so should they endeavour to enlarge their own stores, for the use of christians, out of that treasure of Divine wisdom. Let a man exert all the vivacity and vigour of his mind in refined speculation ; let him abound in quaint and striking thought and expression ; let him collect all that is most valuable concerning virtue, in the writings of the philosophers and wise men of the world ; all will come much short of the light and instruction, con-

cerning such subjects, that is to be obtained from the word of God. 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*—(is profitable for giving the knowledge of Divine truth; for convicting and confuting contrary errors; for conveying the light and reproof that tend to correcting what may be wrong in men's course and works; and for instruction in all that concerns the practice of righteousness)—*that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*; that the christian may be complete in that character, and furnished for every good work; that *the man of God*, so called in a more special sense, may be complete in the character of a minister of God, and thoroughly furnished for every good work pertaining to his office; for advancing the profit and salvation of his people; particularly in giving them, from the scripture, all the instruction needful with regard to the practice of righteousness.

There are, however, several things respecting this matter, which it were fit for preachers to observe.

1. That they especially use the language of the word of God. This is the style most proper for such subjects; the style most grave, serious, and emphatic. Human language, especially when it is much laboured, and wrought up to elegance and oratory, may tickle the ears and minds of hearers, and conciliate their esteem of the preacher's talents; but will never make such impression on the hearts of persons serious in religion, or be received with such relish, as the language of the Holy Ghost, properly used. He was a good

and very successful preacher, who said, *Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual*, 1 Cor. ii. 13. that is, as some understand the last clause, very suitably to the matter and scope of the verse, suiting spiritual language, such as the Holy Ghost himself useth, to spiritual things; which, in the next following verse, he calls, *the things of the Spirit*.

2. That on occasion of explaining and urging duty, or particular instances thereof, they direct christians to discover and observe, what may have been, in omission or commission, contrary thereto in their practice; and to the renewed application, by faith, of the blood of sprinkling, for renewing and supporting their inward peace and comfort. *With thee there is forgiveness, that thou mayest be feared*, Psal. cxxx. 4. Faith's view and improvement of the blood of sprinkling, and of pardoning grace, is essential in the religion of a sinner. Whatever improper use hypocritical and insincere persons may make of pardoning grace; the view and comfort of it is exceeding needful for every serious and sincere soul, for encouragement and support in godliness, amidst the views such may have of their own strayings and failures.

3. That in explaining holiness, and the particular virtues and good dispositions that are included in it, they mark out the opposite vices and corrupt tempers that are naturally in the hearts of men; that they show the fallacy of these appearances of virtue, which oftentimes do but colour over a very sinful disposition and practice; that they mark out to christians the opposite plagues, lustings,

and unholy affections, which, through remaining corruption, are yet, commonly and in too great a degree, in their hearts; with the difficulty thence arising in the practice of each virtue; and the hinderance this gives to their progress and advancement in holiness. To represent, as in contrast, the several virtues and holy dispositions, with the opposite evils of men's hearts, happily suits the case of real christians. Without this, mere theories concerning virtues and duties, however just, and however much the nature, amiableness, excellency, and advantage of virtue be set forth, will not be really profitable. Some content themselves with setting forth the righteous and good man, and the man to whom they give a designation from some particular virtue, in such a way as if indeed the man, in his real disposition and practice, did represent righteousness and goodness, or the particular grace or virtue, as completely as the preacher's definitions and illustrations do. This is flying too much above the heads of christians. It is by all means fit to acquaint them fully with the operation and influence of the opposite principles that remain in them; in order to put them on their guard against those evils on the part of the flesh, which, if unobserved, may have a very ill effect with regard to their disposition and course.

It is fit, at the same time, that for their encouragement, christians be acquainted with the condescension of Divine grace, which often doth grant favourable acceptance, through Jesus Christ, of the sincerity that is attended with much failure and imperfection, yea, hath a very considerable mixture of what is evil.

But if, with proper descriptions of christian virtues and duties, men's hearts be searched, with a view to show the opposite evil dispositions, and corrupt biases, which, on the part of the flesh, are in them ; as this will tend to make them the more watchful, so will they be thereby led to have the necessary recourse to the fulness that is laid up for them in him, in whom it hath pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell, for the renewed and more powerful influences of the Spirit.

Christians are often too easily satisfied with the disposition and frame of their own hearts. But if, with sincere and earnest desire to advance in holiness, they looked more closely into the law, as it is spiritual, and into their own hearts, they would see, to their great benefit, more of these motions of sin in them, by which they do what they would not, and are unable to do, in manner and degree, as they would ; as the blessed apostle represents in our context, chap. vii. 14—25. Such views and feelings contribute greatly to the christian's purity in heart and in practice, and to his advancement in holiness.

But now to bring this work to a conclusion : it is good for those who are the servants of sin, and under its dominion, to become sensible of the wretchedness of that condition ; and to betake themselves to the Son, to make them free indeed ; to pray earnestly for that Spirit of life, which cometh by Christ Jesus, to make them free ; without trusting to any powers or endeavours of their own for recovering their liberty. It becomes those, who, by being justified through faith, and brought under grace, are made free, to acknowledge the grace which hath made them so ; to keep ever in

their eye the rule of duty, with earnest endeavours to attain conformity to it : knowing that the design of Divine grace, in delivering them from the law and its curse, and in making them free from the dominion of sin, was, according to our context, that they might be *the servants of righteousness*. It becomes them to have habitual recourse to the Lord, and to the promises of the new covenant, for renewed influences of grace, to enable them to hold on in their course of faith and holiness, and to encourage their hearts and support their hope with this comfortable consideration, that sin shall not have dominion over them, as not being under the law, but under grace. It becomes ministers to labour in leading persons to know themselves, and to know Christ ; to mark out to them, by the light of God's word, the way in which they ought to walk ; and to enforce holy practice by evangelical principles, arguments, and motives, which alone will have effect.

THE END.

BUNGAY: PRINTED BY J. R. AND C. CHILDS.



Date Due

D 27 '38

AP 2 '54

AP 26 '54

MY 21 '54

~~JAN 21 '54~~

~~JAN 21 '54~~

JAN 31 1990

MAR 31 1990

MAY 23 1990





1942



Princeton Theological Seminary Libraries



1 1012 01196 9815