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SELECT ESSAYS,

DOCTRINAL & PRACTICAL,

ON A VARIETY OF THE

MOST IMPORTANT AND INTERESTING SUBJECTS IN DIVINITY.

TOGETHER WITH

A SERMON,

On the great matter and end of gospel Preaching.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM M'EWEN,
Late minister of the gospel in Dundee.

FIRST AMERICAN
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A

MEMOIR

OF THE

AUTHOR's LIFE AND CHARACTER.

THE Rev. WILLIAM M'EWEN, the worthy author of the following *Essays*, was descended from pious and respectable parents in the town of Perth, who spared neither pains nor expence to give him a truly christian and liberal education. To this they were greatly encouraged by the early attachment which he himself shewed, both to piety and learning.

His constitution of body was rather delicate and weakly; though in common he was tolerably healthy; but his intellectual powers were sound and strong.—He had a penetrating and comprehensive mind; a fine perception; and an elegant taste. These happy talents were attended with solidity of judgment, and a sense of the truly beautiful and sublime, peculiar to himself; and still farther heightened, by an imagination and invention equally lively, and a memory uncommonly capacious and retentive.

To cultivate and improve these admirable natural endowments, he employed the most assiduous care, and unwearied industry. By his diligent study of the Roman and Greek classics; of logic and philosophy; of the best English poets and historians: and, above all, the scriptures of truth, in their originals, with the most judicious and evangelical books of our own and foreign divines; he collected a large stock of the best ideas, and enriched his mind with a variety of select knowledge, and suitable literature.

His studies in divinity were assisted for some years by the advice of the late celebrated Mr. Ebenezer Erskine of Stirling; and finished under the tuition of the Rev. James Fisher of Glasgow.

He was in 1753 licensed to preach the gospel by the associate presbytery of Dunfermline; and, in the beginning of the year 1754, he was ordained, by the same presbytery, minister of the associate congregation in the town of Dundee.

Having, in a solemn and public manner, devoted himself to the more immediate service of the blessed Jesus, in the ministration of his gospel, and had the charge of a particular flock committed to him; he was earnestly desirous to have them grounded in the principles, and actuated by the true spirit of Christ's gospel. Entirely satisfied, that the scriptural plan of redemption, by the blood of Christ, is divinely calculated to draw men's affections from iniquity, and attach them to the blessed God; to sweeten their tempers, and form them to true happiness; it was his daily endeavor, by the most easy and engaging methods of instruction, to fill their minds with the knowledge of these heavenly doctrines. He longed particularly to have a lively sense of God Almighty's goodness, manifested in freely offering pardon and peace to rebellious sinners in the gospel, impressed on their souls; because, from this source, and the influences of the sanctifying Spirit, he was persuaded, that all the noble qualities, the amiable graces, and the important duties, which constitute the dignity or the happiness of our nature, could only be derived.

Far from addressing his hearers in that flattering and dangerous strain, which supposes the powers of the human mind to be as perfect as ever; or but vitiated in a small degree; or, that the soul of man is possessed of such principles of virtue, as need only to be roused into action; he was solicitously concerned to have them thoroughly convinced, that they were ignorant, guilty, impotent creatures. That from such convictions they might perceive their indispensible

need of a Savior; of a Savior in all his mediatorial offices; as a prophet to instruct them, and, by his word and spirit, make them wise unto salvation; as a priest to make an atonement and expiation for their sins, and make their persons acceptable to that awful Majesty, who dwelleth in light inaccessable; as a king to subdue their iniquities, to write his laws in their hearts, make them partakers of a divine nature, and enable them *to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world*, Tit. ii, 12.

In fine, the point he cheifly labored, was, to beget in his people's minds a deep, and abiding sense, that God was their chief good; their only sufficient happiness and portion: that the blessed Jesus was the foundation of their pardon, acceptance, and salvation: that all their dependence, for acquiring the beauties of holiness, and tasting the consolations and pleasures of a religious life, was to be placed in the Holy Ghost, the Comforter; whose office is to *take the things of Christ, and shew them to sinful men*, John xvi. 14; and to *give them to know things that are freely given to them of God*, 1 Cor. ii. 12.

Our author's talent of preaching was much admired. The propositions he insisted on were few; but always of very weighty and edifying import, and naturally resulting from the passage of sacred writ under immediate consideration. His explanations were clear and accurate; his proofs plain and decisive; his illustrations beautiful and entertaining; his applications close and searching. All the heads of the discourse remarkably distinct, yet connected in such regular order, and in such pleasing succession, as gave his instructions the greatest advantage: and every part contributed to the strength and beauty of the whole.

And indeed such was the depth of his thoughts; such the propriety of his words; and such the variety, force and fire of his style; so remarkable was the justness and solidity of his reasoning, and so judicious the

change of his method; that notwithstanding he invariably pursued the same end; yet proceeding by different paths, and varying his address, according as he meant to alarm, to convince, or comfort; he was so far from growing tedious, that he never failed to please as well as to improve his audience.

In imitation of the great apostle of the Gentiles, that most amiable and accomplished preacher, he was peculiarly careful to cultivate a spirit of zeal and devotion in all his discourses. Accordingly, he was fervent in spirit, as well as cogent in argument. When he argued, conviction flashed; when he exhorted, pathos glowed. And by distributing to each of his audience a portion suitable to their several states, he endeavored rightly to divide the word of truth.

The same zeal and fervor which influenced and animated his public addresses from the pulpit, appeared also in the discharge of the much neglected duties of catechising; teaching from house to house; and visiting the sick; as well as in the administration of the holy sacraments.

In the most unaffected devotion towards God, and in a diffusive love to all men; in modesty, humility, and candor; in a gravity of deportment, tempered with becoming cheerfulness; in purity of manners, and integrity of conduct, Mr. M'Ewen was a pattern to all around him. His hearers had abundant reason afforded them to believe that he lived above this sordid world, even while he was in it: that he was no lover of filthy lucre; no hunter of carnal pleasures; but that his hopes, and all his views of happiness, were hid with Christ in God: that he directed all his aims to the glory of God; and considered the honor of Jesus Christ as the final cause of his existence; that he carried on no base and sinister design; that he had no separate interest from the glory of his divine master, and the welfare of his people; but that the whole desire and delight of his soul, was to set forward their salvation; that by their being *made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light*, his

exalted Lord might *see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.*

On the 29th of December 1761, he came from Dundee to Edinburgh; and, on Sabbath following, preached (his last sermon) in Bristo meeting, from Isa. lxiii. 4. *For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.*—On the Monday evening, he was married at Dalkeith, to the oldest daughter of Mr. John Wardlaw, late merchant of the same place. In this important period of his life, when a variety of temporary prospects ingross the attention of the most part of mankind, it was observed, that, in his social intercourses with his friends, he discovered a strong inclination to fix the conversation to that awful, yet delightful subject, the eternal world, into which all must soon enter. Like one established in the faith, he seemed daily to be *looking for, and hastening to the coming of the Lord Jesus.*

On Wednesday afternoon, attended by his friends, he went to Leith, in his way home to Dundee; and that same night he was suddenly taken ill, owing as is supposed, to the cold and wet he had suffered in his crossing the Frith the preceding week. His disorder soon issued in a violent fever, which rendered him unfit for any conversation, and on Wednesday night, the 13th of January 1762, put an end to all his labors, in the 28th year of his age, and 7th of his ministry. Cut down in the prime of life, and public usefulness, his death was universally lamented as a severe and afflicting loss to his friends, his congregation, and the church of God. His body was interred in the church yard of Dalkeith.

In December 1758, he published a sermon delivered at the ordination of the Rev. Alexander Dick, in Aberdeen, entitled, *The great matter and end of gospel preaching*, from 2 Cor. iv, 5. This discourse was reprinted in 1764, and has been much esteemed by the best judges, on account of the clear evangelical strain of doctrine, together with the nervous and pathetic manner of address, which runs through the whole of it.—It has now undergone five impressions.

In 1763, his meditations on the types and figures of the Old Testament were published in a neat volume 12mo.——The favorable reception which this piece met with from the public, shews, in a much stronger light, the distinguishing excellency of it, than any thing else that could be advanced. Five editions of this work having been already sold, and the demand for it still continues.

With regard to the following sheets, they contain the substance of what the author originally composed and delivered in the pulpit, in the form of sermons. His heart, his time, his study, were entirely devoted to the duties of his profession. To contract the force and spirit of a subject into a small compass, and to exhibit it to the mind in one clear and easy view, was a study he was remarkably fond of. And though he prepared his discourses for the pulpit with great diligence and accuracy, he frequently employed a leisure moment in digesting them, after they had been preached, into the form of little Essays.

From his collection of manuscripts in this kind, the following Essays were selected. Each of them was committed to paper at one sitting, without any design of publishing them; and none of them appear to have been written over again, or revised by the author. It should not then be thought strange, if, in some things, they will not bear a critical examen with regard to the *minutiæ* of graceful composition. More important matters engaged Mr. M'Ewen's attention; nor was fame, as a writer, by any means his aim.

But it is hoped the reader, who peruses them with the humble child like spirit of a christian, and seeks religious advantage in all he reads, will not lose his labor. He will find a just and lively representation of true christianity, in a variety of its most important articles, and distinguishing peculiarities, enforced by a very warm and pathetic mode of expression, happily conspiring at once to enlighten the understanding and persuade the heart. Apparent repetitions will doubtless sometimes occur; but this will be chiefly in those

things which lie at the root of all vital religion, and evidently lay very near the author's heart; which is very different from that thin starvling common-place work that flows from a barren head, or unfeeling heart. As these Essays were the first effusion of thought, they ought to be considered rather as the production of the heart, than the head, which, it is hoped, will be no disagreeable recommendation of them to the sober christian.—From a few cursory specimens, the reader could form no adequate idea of a work replete with such a vast variety of important subjects; and, therefore, I have only to add, that as no order has been observed in writing these sheets, I have not attempted to methodise their contents, or combine them into a regular series.

SELECT ESSAYS, &c.

ON THE GREAT EVIL OF SIN.

O SIN, thou only evil in which there is no good, thou superfluity of naughtiness, thou quintessence of what is odious and execrable, whose nature is entirely opposite to that of God, and the reverse of his holy law, who claimest the devil for thy sire, while death, and hell, and misery, confess thee for their only parent! how hast thou troubled all the creation! upon what creatures hast thou not transmitted thy baleful influence!

Ye angels of darkness, once the angels of light, how are ye fallen! how changed! how is your fine gold become dim! what plucked you from your starry mansions, where you did walk with God, high in salvation, in the climes of bliss! you were the angels that sinned; therefore you could not keep your first and happy state, but were driven out from God, flung from eternal splendors to everlasting horrors. "The crown is fallen from your head; wo unto us, for you have sinned."

Ye sons of men, once were you blessed with innocence and peace, in the morning of your existence, when our grand parents first lifted to the heavens their wondering eyes, and reposed themselves in the blissful bowers of paradise, that happy garden, planted by

the Lord, and fitted out for their reception. The understanding was bright as the light. The will, all pure and holy, reigned queen of the affections, and swayed them with a golden sceptre. The memory was faithful to his trust, being replenished only with good things. And, O how peaceful was the conscience! how serene! nothing unholy was hatched in his heart, or uttered by the lips, or manifested by the actions.—Disease had not invaded our body; death would not have dissolved our frame. We should have been strangers to the miseries of life, and to the dreary mansions of the grave. But sin, that cursed monster, sin hath quenched our intellectual light; hath inthralled the will to vile unruly passions; hath vitiated the memory, tenacious now of evil; hath banished true peace from the conscience. Some are harrassed with direful apprehensions, and consumed away with fearful terrors. What multitudes are stretched on the bed of pain! it was sin which bade the head ache, fevers to revel through our veins, convulsions shake the human frames, and agues agitate our bodies.

See there, in that house of mourning, the pale and ghastly corpse extended on the bed. Descend into the silent grave, and view the putrifying flesh, and the mouldering bones. Ah! where are we! to what are we reduced? Is this that heaven-labored form, which wore the divine resemblance? Yes, yes; "sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

But can we venture lower still in our meditations, into those dismal regions, where God's mercies are clean gone, and where he will be favorable no more? Hear how they shriek and roar; see how they toss in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone!—Unhappy beings, what brought you to that place of torment? "We are filled with the fruit of our own ways, and are reaping the wages of sin." Yes; it was sin which laid the foundation-stone of your prison, and filled it with these inexhausted treasures of wrath and indignation.

Not in the rational creation only we discern the fatal evils of this accursed thing. "The whole creation groaneth and travelleth in pain together until now." Once it died of a dropsy of waters, in the days of Noah; and shortly will expire in a fever of flames, when "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat." Even now the husbandman, conscious of the sickliness of nature, acts like physician to the earth. Sometimes he opens her veins with the plough, and covers with soil, as with a strengthening plaster; sometimes lays her asleep, by suffering her to lie fallow for a time.—Without these necessary precautions, she would refuse to yield her increase, and cleanness of teeth would be in all our borders.

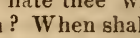
Is it a small thing for sin thus to affect the whole creation? The garden of Gethsemane knows, and Calvary can tell, how sin hath affected even the great Creator. Bread of life, why wast thou hungry? Fountain of life, why wast thou thirsty? Why wast thou a man of sorrows, O thou Consolation of Israel? Thou glory of the human race, wherefore wast thou a reproach of men, and despised of the people? Thy visage was more marred than any man, and thy form than the sons of men. Sin nailed thee to the cross; sin stabbed thee to the heart; sin, like a thick impenetrable cloud, eclipsed thy Father's countenance to thy disconsolate soul; sin laid thee in a grave, O thou resurrection and the life!

Who would have believed, that the enemy would have entered within the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem, pulled angels from their thrones, and brought even God himself from his high habitation, from excellent glory, from ineffable joys, to poverty and reproach, to sorrow and tribulation, and to the most inglorious death!

O heavy burden! under whose weight such multitudes of creatures groan, which made the mighty God, clothed with our flesh, to sweat great drops of blood, though sinners walk lightly on beneath the

mighty load. O dreadful plague! O formidable sickness! not to be chased away by a less costly medicine than the most precious blood of Christ, by whose stripes we are healed. O deadly poison! even when presented in a golden cup, and sweet unto the taste, it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder, and never fails to prove bitterness in the latter end.—Nor can it be expelled by any other way than lifting up the Son of man, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. O mighty debt, whose payments could impoverish him, whose is the silver and the gold; who, "though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich!" O ugly stain! O inveterate pollution! not to be washed away by all the rivers that run into the sea. In vain we take unto us nitre and much soap; in vain we use our most vigorous endeavors to purge away our blot. Sooner might the Ethiopian change his skin, and the leopard his spots. The only Fuller that is equal to this mighty work, is he who purges the conscience from dead works, to serve the living God.—The blood of the Lamb is the only purgatory that makes you whiter than the snow.

When, O when, shall I hate thee with a perfect hatred, thou worse than death? When shall I be afraid of thee alone, and be ashamed of thee alone? O thing exceeding sinful! When shall I be delivered from thy abhorred dominion? O when shall thy destructions have a perpetual end?



On man's extreme misery by sin.

WHO can refrain from tears, whose eye of reason hath snatched but a cursory glance of mankind's numerous woes? Who but he whose heart is made of stone, and is lost to every impression of benevolence? As the dancing spark flies upward, so man is born unto trouble. Unhappy creatures, that kept not your

primeval state! Full early you revolted from your Creator God, in whose smile alone your happiness might dwell. The sparkling crown of innocence is fallen from your head. Hence all these fatal evils of your race. Ah me! what ghastly spectres are these! See moon-struck madness replenishing the melancholy bedlam, and torturing despair, a terror to herself, and all around her. See there oppression with iron hands, and heart of steel; poverty with her hollow eyes, her tattered garments, and sordid habitation; and all the family of pain, who tear the pillow from beneath their head, while sleep affrighted flies from our eye-lids.—Shall I mention in the next place, drudgery with her grievous looks, toiling at the oar, or stooping under the burden? Alas! with what laborious efforts do mortals spend their vitals, to gain a wretched sustenance for themselves and their tender offspring, to be defended from the gnawings of hunger, and the power of chilling cold?

What creatures are not armed against thee, O man, who all espouse their Maker's quarrel? There are, whom the angels of darkness harass with dreadful temptations, and still more dreadful possessions.—The angels of light loathe and detest such polluted beings, and frequently have been the executioners of direful vengeance. I might relate the numerous ills to which we are exposed from the inhabitants of the air, the beasts of the earth, and even the fishes of the sea.—How hateful to men the holiest race of scaly serpents, hissing adders, ravenous lions, prowling wolves, hideous and weeping crockadiles? And even the puny race of locusts and caterpillars have scourged guilty nations for their crimes.

How frequently have fire and water, these serviceable elements, made horrid insurrections, disastrous to the human race? Populous cities, with g ilde palaces and lofty temples, have smoked fiery ruins; and, in old time, the dwellings of sinful men were swept away by a watery inundation.——In vain the shrieking wretches betook themselves for safety to the

lofty battlements of houses, the tops of highest trees, or even the summits of the aerial mountains. Hear how the earth groans under the burden of thy sins! Here she spreads a barren wilderness, and idle desert; there lifts a frightful ridge of rocks, whence in many places we look down with giddy horror. In some countries she belches fire and smoke from dreadful volcanoes, tremendous indeed to all who hear, but much more terrible to those who live in the neighboring city, or in the villages of the circumjacent plain. Be it so that these awful phenomena of nature, and others of like threatening aspect, bespeak not this our globe to be the habitation of an accursed race; what shall we say to useless choking weeds, and poisonous plants, of which she is a willing parent, whilst she refuses to produce the foodful grain, unless when much caressed and importuned? How frequently she disappoints our foud hopes, and baulks our expectations!

When she refuses to yield her increase, then it is we have cleanness of teeth in all our borders, while pale famine walks abroad with her evil arrows. The staff of bread is broken, and feeble man totters, and falls, and dies.—At other times she expands her jaws, and swallows up alive vast multitudes of rational beings. Earthquake! men tremble when thou art but named! Who can think of thee without horror? O what dire consternation in that dreadful moment!—Whither, ah! whither can we fly from the doleful calamity? Avert it, heaven. Execute not thy threatened vengeance upon these guilty lands, and our proud metropolis. If thou hast a mind to punish us, O visit with some milder rod, some gentler minister of wrath.

Not the earth alone, on which we tread, but the air in which we live, and move, and have our being, proves dreadful to our wretched race. Sometimes she summons her stormy winds, her roaring tempests, and bids them shake the walls of stone, and dash the wall-built vessel on the rock. Vain is the help of tough

cables and tenacious anchors. The mighty waters at once receive the valuable cargo, and the despairing mariners. How often is she infected with the wide-wasting pestilence? Then death's shafts fly thick, and the hungry grave rejoices at the uncommon fare.—Yet, ugly monster! she never says, it is enough.—But, with no greater calamity can you be visited, ye sons of men, than those which claim your own species for their original. Fell are the monsters of the Lybian deserts! but not to be compared with the abhorred productions of the human heart. Hence matchless killing envy, filthy slander; hence persecution with torturing engines, war with her odious din, and bloody garments. How can you have peace among yourselves, when warring with your God?

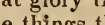
Nor is there any period of life wherein we are exempted from wo. Not even the smiling infant is secured against the most fatal disasters. The miseries of childhood are apparent. Affliction spares not the blooming youth, nor reverences the venerable old man. Even age itself, what is it? An incurable distemper, always terminating in death. See how the countenance is shriveled up with wrinkles, the shoulders stoop, the hands tremble, the strong men bow themselves, and they that look out of the windows are darkened!

Neither can any station or condition rescue from these incumbent miseries. The rich, the honorable, and they who swim in tides of pleasure, can bear witness. Why else would Ahab sicken for Naboth's vineyard, and Haman lay so sore to heart the refractory behavior of Mordecai? If treasured riches, if sensual delights, added even to knowledge and wisdom, could satisfy the heart, then might thou, Solomon, enjoyed a heaven upon earth, nor complained of vanity and vexation, nor that he who encreaseth knowledge, encreaseth sorrow. Alas! even our greatest comforts prove killing; and far from issuing in contentment, we still complain even in large abundance of worldly delights.

What shall we say then to these things? Shall wretched mortals abandon themselves to sullen sorrow, and hopeless desperation? Shall the world be turned into a Bochim? Is it a place where his mercies are clean gone, and where he will be favorable no more? Are there not many footsteps of the divine benignity, even in this our earthly mansion? Doubtless there are; for he hath not left himself without a witness, that goodness is essential to his nature; he bids the earth teem with plenty, and the clouds drop with vegetable fatness. There are pleasures of sight, of smell, of taste, peculiar to the various seasons of the revolving year. Many creatures are yet subservient to our interest, and all the elements are made to contribute for our welfare. Far be it from high-favored men, to despise the riches of the Almighty's goodness. But, O ye everlasting joys, which the glorious gospel reveals! what thoughtful being would not be discontented with such a world as this, without the consideration of you? The distant prospect of life and immortality is able, and that alone, to reconcile the heart to the visible economy of God. Even great and sore affliction is deemed but light and vain, because it lasts but for a moment. Eternity apart, the miseries of life would swallow up the joys. But now even these devourers are buried in the capacious womb of vast eternity.

Blessed be thy condescension, O patient Son of God, who disdained not to taste the bitter cup of grief; grief not thy own, but ours. And blessed be that wisdom to whose glorious contrivance we are indebted for the cup of consolation presented in the gospel, which we may drink, and remember our misery no more.—By various ways the sons of men hath tried to extricate themselves from the lamented consequents of their fall. Games and recreations, arts and sciences, yea, many false religions have been invented for this end. Miserable comforters are they all! Christianity, it is thine alone to chase our gloom of thought, and wipe away our tears; while by thee we are di-

rected to dart our thoughts beyond this transitory world, this inconsiderable speck of time, unto the eternal scene, which shall commence when the last trumpet shall be sounded; we no more repine at the appearance of wo, nor think "our light affliction worthy to be compared with that glory that is to be revealed; while we look not at the things that are seen; for the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal."



On the inevitable misery of the wicked.

BUT there shall be no reward to the evil man.—No reward, did I say? Nay, if God be just, then "he will render indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, to every soul of man that doth evil, without respect of persons." To him belongeth vengeance.—Though patience may delay, though clemency may mitigate, though mercy, grace, and wisdom, may transfer the punishment to the person of a Surety; yet still his wrath must be revealed against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men.

Doth not even nature herself teach us, that sin and punishment are most inviolably connected? For, even barbarians could infer, when they saw a viper fasten upon the hand of a person whom they knew not, after he had escaped a dismal shipwreck; "Certainly this man was a murderer; for vengeance suffereth him not to live." How often are the wicked consumed with fearful terrors, when they can be under no apprehension of punishment from men? For they know that it is "the judgment of God, that they who do such things are worthy of death." Whence are we struck with trembling at any uncommon appearances of nature? If a storm of thunder and lightning torments the air? If the sun labors in an eclipse? If a glaring comet waves his banner over the nations?—Whence the terror of apparitions? Whence the fore-

bodings of misery after death? Whence the prevailing opinion, even among the ancient Jews, that death was to be the consequence of an extraordinary appearance of the Deity? Is it not because we are insolvent debtors that we dread the face of our injured creditor? Is it not because we are traiterous rebels we abhor the presence of our offended sovereign?—Therefore, with Adam, we hide ourselves from the presence of the Lord. And with the widow of Zarephath, we are ready to think, that whatever is more than common, is a messenger of the Lord of hosts to slay us, and bring our sin to remembrance.

Oft times the guilty conscience will create unto itself imaginary horrors, and sinners are in great fears, where no fear is, while they are apt to say, with Cain, *Every one that meeteth me, will slay me.* What nations under heaven have not attested the truth of this, while they have appeased their gods with bloody expiatory sacrifices? And (horrid to relate!) their altars have reeked even with human gore: the fruit of the body has been given for the sin of the soul! Whether the dreadful custom may be derived from the mangled tradition of Abraham offering up Isaac; or, whether our adversary the devil would, by stirring them up to such abominations, insult over the guilt of their consciences, and blindness of their hearts, by aping the sacrifice of Christ, hereby intending to discredit the glorious method of salvation: one thing is certain, that mankind, degenerate as they were, did really judge, that an expiation was necessary to be made, and that *he will by no means clear the guilty.*

And however much their foolish heart was darkened, as to the manner of propitiating the Deity, yet certainly the necessity of it is one of the dictates of nature. For, could we suppose, that a sinning creature should escape the righteous judgment of God, and feel no effects of his displeasure; how could it appear that he were a God of purer eyes than to behold iniquity? Would there not be too much reason to say, "every one that doth evil is good in the sight of

the Lord, and he delighteth in them, and where is the God of judgment?" How could his lordship and dominion over the world be maintained, should he forbear to punish the violators of his law? Is it impossible he can be divested of his sovereign rule, or that his creatures can throw off all mortal dependence upon him that made them? So it is impossible but the order of punishment must succeed, when the order of obedience is disturbed: and they who burst the bands of the law, must of necessity be bound in the chords of affliction. *Consider this, and be afraid, ye that forget God.* While a method is not fallen upon to appease incensed justice, and separate sin from your souls; if God be the righteous judge of all the earth; if God be the Lord of the creatures; if God be blessed, (O tremble to think it!) you must be miserable. As the fire devours the chaff, as the flame consumes the stubble; so must you perish at his presence.

But let us hearken to the sacred oracles on this interesting subject. "Search ye out of the book of the Lord, and see that every disobedience receives a just recompence of reward." The flames of Sodom, the waters of Noah, the torments of hell, the sufferings of Christ, bear witness unto this. O sin, thou hast kindled a fire that will burn to the bottom of the mountains! "Behold, he will come with fire, and with his chariots, as a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebukes with flames of fire: for, by fire, and with his sword, will the Lord plead with all flesh; and the slain of the Lord shall be many." Nor can we reasonably blame the bowels of the Deity because he taketh vengeance; for, according to Moses, it is a branch of his goodness, that he *will by no means clear the guilty.* According to Joshua, it is because he is a *holy God* that he will not *forgive our transgressions.* According to David, it is because the *righteous Lord loveth righteousness*, that he will rain upon the wicked *snares, fire, and brimstone*, and a *burning tempest*, the portion of their cup.

But, especially, had it been an indifferent thing with God to punish or not to punish the guilty, who can persuade us that he who *afflicts not willingly* nor *grieves the children of men*, would take such pleasure in bruising his only begotten son, whom he loved?—Was he without necessity exposed to such direful sufferings? Nay: for *God hath set him forth to be a propitiation, to declare*—his love. True; but to declare also *his righteousness in the remission of sin, and that he may be just.*

Blessed be that matchless grace and wisdom, that has provided a lamb for a burnt sacrifice;—that has found a ransom;—that has opened a city of refuge;—that has reconciled mercy, and truth, and righteousness with peace. O that that gracious Redeemer, without whose kindly interposition we had better been crushed in the very bud of being, might forever live in our hearts, might forever be esteemed above all other beloveds, might forever be the reigning subject in our thoughts, both when we wake and when we sleep! "If we forget thee, O blessed Jesus, then let our right hand forget her cunning. If we do not remember thee, let our tongues cleave to the roof of our mouths; if we prefer not thee above our chief joy;" O! let us never drink that as water, which cost the effusion of thy blood! Let us never have that sweet in our mouth which tendered to thy lips the vinegar and gall! Let us never rejoice in that which made thee exceeding sorrowful! nor bless ourselves in that which subjected thee to the curse! nor live in that for which thou died!

On Christ's dying in the stead of sinners, to make full satisfaction for their transgressions.*

THAT Christ died for his people, not merely for their good, but in their room and place, is a fundamen-

*See note in page 25.

tal article of our holy religion, and a grand peculiarity of the gospel; though regarded by many as only a speculative point, and by many traduced as a senseless absurdity, inconsistent with reason, and the perfections of the Deity. And here I must confess, that if we were not to attend to the sacred oracles as our rule; if we were not solely conducted in our researches by the light of nature and reason, our cause is lost. For, though the doctrine itself is not contrary to sound reason, it is the mystery of his will, which is hid from the wise and prudent, and which would never have entered into our thoughts, if God had not been pleased to reveal it. Let us go to the law and testimony; and, according to the observation of a very eminent divine, the death of Christ is exhibited in three capital views; as a price, a punishment, and as a sacrifice. And it will, from every one of these, appear, with the brightest evidence, that the death of Christ was a true and proper satisfaction in the room of his elect people.

Let us begin with it as a *price*. Now, what is a price? A price is a valuable compensation of one thing for another. A slave is redeemed from captivity, a debtor from prison, when some gracious redeemer procures their liberty, by giving some equivalent to the person by whom they are detained. We are debtors; we cannot pay unto God what we are owing. We are captives, and we cannot hasten to be loosed.

NOTE.

* *The death of Christ includes not only his sufferings, but his obedience. The shedding of his precious blood was at once the grand instance of his suffering, and the finishing act of his obedience. In this view it is considered, and thus it is interpreted by his own ambassador, who, speaking of his divine Master, says,* "*he was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*" Phil. ii, 8. Hervey's Dial. vol. II. p. 47.

Jesus Christ is the merciful Redeemer, who pays the sum we were owing, and says to the prisoners, *Go forth.* Will we not believe an apostle when he tells us, *ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price?*—Would you know what this price is? Another apostle will tell; "ye are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ." Now, though it be true that there is a redemption by power mentioned in the scripture, yet, redemption by price is the only proper redemption; and we cannot reasonably doubt but redemption by price is the meaning of the most remarkable texts of scripture, where Christ is characterised by this lovely denomination. What hath he obtained for us by his death? *Eternal redemption*, Heb. ix. 12. What have we through his blood? *Redemption and forgiveness of sin*, Eph. i. 7. What is Christ made unto us of God? *Sanctification and redemption*, 1 Cor. i. 30. What did they look for that expected the coming of the Messias? *Redemption in Israel*, Luke ii. 28. Even Job could say, *I know that my Redeemer liveth*, chap. xix. 25. We sold ourselves for nought, and we are redeemed without money of our own. The redemption of the soul was too precious to be effected by our impoverished stock.—But we are not redeemed without money to the Lord Jesus, *who gave himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity.* The ransom was paid down, the price beyond all price; a sum too large for the arithmetic of angels to compute.—Let the adversaries bring forth their strong reasons. If, say they, the death of Christ was a proper price, it was paid to the devil, whose captives we were. No; it was paid to God, whose captives we were; the devil was only his slave, jailor, and executioner. But, say they, if it was paid to God, it was paid by Christ to himself. And, where is the absurdity here? It is true a man cannot satisfy himself as to a money-debt, by giving money to himself that another owes him; yet, as to a criminal debt, there is nothing to hinder a just judge, even among men, to satisfy his own law, by submitting to what it requires. Nor does this gospel doc-

trine calumniate the Deity, as though he were a greedy tyrant, that will let no prisoners go, unless he can get great riches for their ransom. For, our price did not enrich him, but only paved the way for our being released to the honor of his justice.

Next, let us consider it as a *punishment*. A punishment is never inflicted by a just governor, except upon transgressors of the law; for, "to punish the just is not good." It is for the punishment of evildoers that magistrates are set up by God. Now, if the death of Christ was a punishment, it must unavoidably follow, that it was vicarious. Why wouldst thou, O heavenly Father, command the sword of justice to awake and smite the man that is thy Fellow? Surely it was not for his own fault; for "he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." Even Pilate acquitted him, and Judas absolved him. Why then did the almighty Sovereign of heaven permit such an innocent person to be put to death? Why did not the thunders awake? Lo! here the mystery is unfolded: he died, "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. He was cut off, but not for himself; for the transgression of my people was he smitten."—Let insolent cavillers object, that it degrades our Messiah, to regard him in the light of an executed felon: the lower the humiliation, the deeper is the love.

Lastly, that Christ died in the room and stead of his people, appears from its being called a *sacrifice*. Who knows not that our Redeemer is often styled a high priest? His human nature was the victim, his divine nature the altar, his body was the tabernacle. Who knows not, that the legal high priests did bear the sins of the people?—And because they could not atone for the people, by laying down their own lives, they offered bullocks, goats, lambs, and sheep. Whatever absurd accounts our ancient and modern Socinians have invented of the meaning of sacrifices of expiation, most certainly the language of them was, O Lord, I have sinned; I deserve to die; but, I beseech thee, let thine anger fall on this my victim, or

on that which is signified by it; and be merciful to me a sinner.—Thus God was ceremonially appeased, sin was expiated, and the Israelite was forgiven.

The union betwixt Christ and believers.

THE suffering Redeemer had now resigned his breath, after he had implored the divine forgiveness to his bloody murderers, and with an amazing loud cry, commended his departing spirit into the hands of his heavenly Father, who shewed it the path of life. A scene it was, which nature trembled to behold. The sun called in his rays, and mourned in sackcloth. The temple rent her vail, to testify at once her indignation, and that the way into the holiest of all was now made manifest. And even the rocks, the flinty rocks, upbraided with the hardness of their hearts the unpitying tormentors of the Lord of glory. Lo! there he hangs a lifeless corpse! A wealthy disciple obtains a warrant to perform the last kindly offices. The mangled body is wrapped in fine linen, and decently interred. In vain you seal the stone, and appoint a watch: still these remains are the body of Christ, and the peculiar care of heaven, which shall not see corruption. For, the third day shall ye see him arising from the bed of death; and what is now sown in dishonor, shall be raised in glory.

So, just so, the elect, who are chosen in Christ from all everlasting, even while dead in trespasses and sins, and lying in the grave of the corrupt natural state, are regarded by God as the body to which he was federally united in the council of peace. Was it impossible for the fleshly part of the Redeemer to see putrefaction in the grave, and to remain under his gloomy power forever? Equally impossible it is those should pine away in their iniquities, who are Christ's dead men; whom he has loved with an everlasting love.

Within two days he shall revive them, the third day he shall raise them up, and they shall live in his sight. According to the gracious promise, by the mouth of the prophet Isaiah, they shall not always remain in the congregation of the dead. "For thus saith the Lord, thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust."

A federal union there is in scripture reckoning, between the Lord Jesus, and those who are predestinated unto life. An union which commences not only before they are born into the world of grace, but before they were born into the world of nature. Before they were born, did I say? Nay, it is an union ancient as eternity itself; and grace was given them in Christ before the world began. With him they were crucified; with him they died; with him they descended into the grave: when he rose from the dead, they also did arise; when he ascended on high, they also ascended, and sat down with him in heavenly places. Yet still this blessed connection with the glorious Surety is a secret reserved in the breast of God; and they are by nature the children of wrath, even as others, until, in the day of conversion, they are actually united unto Christ by a mystical implantation.

In the worlds of nature and art, there are found many conjunctions; and which of them is not summoned by the Spirit of God to shadow forth this supernatural one? As the body is joined to the garments which it wears, to the head with which it is adorned, to the soul wherewith it is animated; as the mother to the child conceived in the womb; as the root to the branches; as the foundation to the superstructure; as the husband to the wife; so is Christ unto believers. They have put him on as a garment; they are knit together, they are nourished, they increase by him as a head, with the increase of God.—He is their life; it is not they that live, but Christ liveth in them. He is formed in their hearts. In him

they are rooted as branches in the vine, built up as lively stones upon a living foundation. Great is the nearness of the husband and wife, when they are no more twain but one flesh; but still more close is this connection; for, "he that is joined to the Lord, is one spirit."

Does any one of these similitudes convey but an imperfect idea of this mysterious unity, let the remaining ones contribute their help to aid your apprehensions. But, after all, they fall infinitely short of the thing they are intended to adumbrate. And therefore the wisdom of God compares it to an union, by which indeed it is infinitely transcended. In behalf of his beloved people, he prays the Father, *that they may be one*, saith he, *in us, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee;* John xvii. 21.—It is true, they are not joined unto the Redeemer by such an essential conjunction as is betwixt the sacred persons of the Godhead; nor by such a personal union as is between the eternal Son and his temporal humanity. It is not an unition of persons in one nature, like the former; nor of natures in one person, like the latter; but an union of a multitude of persons, not merely unto the doctrine of Christ, not merely unto the grace of Christ, but the person of Christ, considered not as God only, not as man only, but as God-man.

They are indeed linked together by the bonds of government and subjection, and by the ties of strongest friendship; that, is of a political, and this, of a moral kind. But shall we say the mysterious expressions we mentioned above, denote no more but this? Believers are joined to Christ by the bands of government and friendship. Does the Spirit of God then wrap up the plainest things in the darkest phraseologies? Is this to the honor of the scriptures? No:—that be far from the Spirit of wisdom and revelation; the perfection of the sacred oracles. It is not the dark phrases, but the sublime and heavenly thing, of which the apostle of the Gentiles is discoursing, when he says, *this is a great mystery; I speak concerning Christ and the church.*

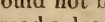
Christ Jesus and believers are the parties; the Spirit and faith are the bonds; the law and the gospel are the instruments; the sacraments of divine institution are the seals, in this mysterious coalition. Mysterious indeed, which shall not be thoroughly apprehended, but in the light of glory. For thus the promise runs: "In that day shall ye know that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; and I in you, and you in me."

A mystery this, worthy to be contemplated of angels and arch-angels. Angels see, but saints experience it. It is one of the deep things of God, which the natural man receiveth not; and even the spiritual man is unable to comprehend it. But shall it therefore be rejected as incredible, when it is only incomprehensible? Christians believe greater mysteries than this; and without all peradventure, the less is confirmed by the greater. And philosophers acknowledge the reality of unions, for which they cannot account.

But, O! thrice happy they who are thus joined unto the Lord, and found in Christ, not having their own righteousness! They are called by his name, they are partakers of his fulness, and in all their afflictions he is afflicted. Though he resides in heavenly places, and they are sojourners on the earth; yet are they blessed in him with all spiritual blessings. You trample upon the toe, the head cries out, *why persecutest thou me?* But when you clothe his naked, and feed his hungry members, he deems you did it to himself. *I was hungry, and ye gave me meat; naked, and ye clothed me.*

Let supercilious, puny mortals, regard with contempt, or cold indifference, the saints of the Most High; but, O! let my delights be with you, ye excellent of the earth. Christ is not ashamed to call you brethren; God is not ashamed to call himself your God. A more exalted honor this, than to wear an imperial crown, and fill the throne of the whole earth! —To you there is no condemnation, nor falling total-

ly away; you are the members of Christ, therefore he knows your wants; you are the body of Christ, therefore he will supply them. Christ is your head, he will cleanse your defilements; Christ is your head, he will cure your diseases. What though you be in poverty?—you are in Christ. What though you be in reproach?—you are in Christ. Let death divide your souls and bodies; let the grave calcine your bones; let the four winds war for your dust; your vital union with Christ shall still remain. When you shall render up the ghost, you die in the Lord; and when you descend into the peaceful grave, your dust shall sleep in Jesus. Can any force, can any fraud, find means to enter into the heaven of heavens; and pluck an eye, or tear a limb from the glorified humanity of the exalted Redeemer? And even in the days of his humiliation, the soldiers could not break his bones, because they saw he was already dead. For so it was foretold, in ancient prophecy, *a bone of him shall not be broken.* But ye are kept as the apple of his eye; and are the members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.



ON TRUSTING IN GOD.

HE that trusts in the Lord with all his heart, does not indeed expect, that God will do that for him which he has never promised; far less that he will be favorable unto him, in what is contrary to his revealed will. But, first, he sees that his matters are good and right; and then he commits the keeping of his soul unto the faithful Creator; who is a buckler to them alone that walk uprightly.

If he is called of God to any difficult duty, for which he finds himself unequal, he persuades himself that God will command his strength, and work in him both to will and to do of his good pleasure; and out of weakness he is made strong.

He will not indeed presume on the divine protection, when rushing headlong into dangers, evidently foreseen, without necessity; as though the Almighty were obliged to suspend for him the laws of nature, and be prodigal of his miraculous operations. For even the Son of God himself would not tempt his loving Father, by casting himself down from the pinnacle; though, as the bold impostor told him, the angels had in charge to keep him in all his ways. But let him hear the voice of God and conscience; *this is the way, walk ye in it;* though he should pass through fire and water, he laughs at fear; and is not greatly moved by the most ghastly appearances of danger.—Though war should rise against him; and death, with sable wings, should hover round his head; yet will he fear no evil. For "thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, O God! whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee."

The perfections of the Godhead are the chambers of safety wherein he hides himself. That everlasting strength, for which nothing is too difficult;—that matchless goodness that extends itself even to the birds of the air, and lilies of the field;—that perfect immutability that excludes all variableness and shadow of turning;—that inviolable veracity by which it is impossible for God to lie;—that exact omniscience from which no want can be hid;—that incomprehensible wisdom which can make all things work together for his own glory, and our good;—the promises of the word, and all the experiences of the saints; these are his sure foundations on which he builds his trust.

If he himself has found the eternal God his refuge, experience worketh hope. As he hath delivered, and doth deliver, he trusts in God, that he will yet deliver. If he has recourse to his own experiences, and finds no light from that quarter, he searches out of the book of the Lord, and finds, that never were the righteous forsaken. If friends proved faithless, or unable to afford him any relief in the day of calamity, enemies shall befriend. Even Philistines and Chal-

deans shall intreat him well in the evil day. Did all human relief fail, and vain was the help of man; then God has made a friendly covenant for him with the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fishes of the sea. Ravens shall feed him, bears shall avenge his quarrel, and monsters of the deep afford a safe retreat. Fishes have supplied his wants; and dogs have proved physicians to his sores.—If the animal creation failed, the dead and lifeless creatures have come into his interests. The roaring waves divide to give him passage; and for his sake the fierce element of fire forgets his burning power. If neither men, nor beasts, nor elements appeared to his aid; numbers of mighty angels encamp around, and deliver him. But chiefly God has been a never-failing refuge, when neither friends,—nor foes,—nor beasts,—nor elements,—nor angels,—nor any other creature have interposed for their safety. "Thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress; a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of terrible ones was a storm against the wall."

Whilst he, by this believing confidence, gives glory to God, a full reward is given by the God of Israel, under whose wings he trusts. No anxious cares about this world's good things; no dispiriting fears about its evil things, shall be able to disturb his repose. He is careful for nothing that can befal his mortal body, his civil reputation, or his worldly accommodations. Having devolved all his cares upon the great JEHOVAH, commended to him his present and his future interests, he lies down, and his sleep is sweet unto him. His flesh shall rest in hope, even in the clay-cold bed of the grave. His righteousness is brought forth as the light. Surely the Lord will make perfect what concerneth him. "O Lord God of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee!"

ON TRUSTING IN CHRIST.

NOR is it less our duty to trust in thee, O almighty Savior of sinners, who savest us not by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, nor by horses, nor by horsemen, nor by might and power; but by thy blood which thou shed, and by the Spirit which thou pourest down. "Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength." For he shall be enabled to discern all other grounds of trust to be but arms of flesh;—but lies and vanities;—but spider's webs;—but perishing gourds;—but foundations that shall be overthrown with a flood; whilst he that puts his trust in the Lord shall be safe, and shall inherit his holy mountain.

Though his distinguished privileges should be like those of Capernaum, that was exalted up into heaven, he confides not in the temple of the Lord, but in the Lord of the temple.—Though he could boast an illustrious descent from the venerable Abraham; or claim kindred, according to the flesh, with Jesus Christ himself; he would not on that account think himself entitled to the divine regard.—Though he should find much worldly substance; he "will not say to gold, thou art my hope; nor to fine gold, thou art my confidence;" as though the Almighty would esteem his riches, or as though they could be profitable in the day of his wrath.—Though he should equal Heman in the deepness of his exercise, and Paul in the abundance of revelation; he would not reckon it expedient for him to glory.—Though, for the cause of Christ, he should even pour his blood; yet by the blood of the Lamb would he overcome; yet in the blood of the Lamb, (and not his own) would he wash his robes, and make them white.—Though his gifts should be eminent, his knowledge clear and extensive: though in the sweetness of his natural temper he should be like a Moses; and a Paul in the blamelessness of his life, touching

the righteousness of the law; though his profession were ever so strict, and his reputation ever so fair:—in a word, though he should shed many tears, pour many prayers, endure many hardships, make many vows, form many resolutions, and exert the most vigorous endeavors in working out his own salvation: yet all these things he counts but loss and dung, that he may win Christ, and be found in him. Though the saving grace of God should be implanted in his heart, he is not strong in the grace, that is in himself, but in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. His justifying merit is the alone ground of his confidence for the pardon of his guilt; his sanctifying Spirit, for the vanquishing the power of his inbred corruption. All other confidences he rejects, because the Lord hath rejected them. No tempest shall be able to batter down his walls; his foundation never shall be razed; his confidence shall never be rooted out of his tabernacle, but shall have a great recompence of reward, O "blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh; but her leaf shall be green, and shall not wither in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit."

ON IMITATING CHRIST.

THE imitator of Jesus Christ is one, who, being interested in him as his propitiation, cannot but choose to follow him as his pattern: for he knows, that though it be not the only or principal end why the Son of God was manifested; it is, however, a very considerable part of his errand, in visiting these regions of mortality, to give us a fair transcript, and a living copy of all those graces and duties that are pleasing unto God, and that are commanded in the law. He re-

verences, indeed, the footsteps of the flock; and blesses God for the holy examples of living and dead saints; which are noble incentives to piety, and a devout conversation. But still he regards the holiest examples of living and dead saints, as but imperfect models of duty; some of their actions being evidently sinful, and others of them doubtful and suspicious.—Jesus Christ he considers as the only finished pattern of obedience; in whose presence Moses is not meek, Solomon is not wise, Job is not patient, David is not upright, Abraham is not strong in faith, Elijah is not zealous, and Paul, the laboring apostle, is not diligent. His fellow-saints, and those who have gone before him, may indeed surpass him in what he actually attains unto, but not in what he aims at. He knows, that the finer the copy is, the fairer will be the learner's hand; therefore he sets the Lord alway before him.—To follow the steps of Christ alone, is far more eligible, in his esteem, than to go in the way of the world, or follow the multitude to do evil. And how can it be otherwise, when he considers, that the example of Christ is the example of his best friend, his glorious head, his great Lord and master, his leader and commander, the shepherd and bishop of his soul, the captain of his salvation, and the author of his high and heavenly calling?

He reckons it a far more glorious and honorable attainment to resemble his blessed Savior in holiness, and obedience to the will of God, than though he could be like him in the power of working miracles; a power which has been, in some measure, imparted to the workers of iniquity.

These most invaluable books, the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, that contain the sacred memoirs of the life of Jesus, he prefers before all other biography. These venerable histories he peruses night and day; not merely with the eye of a critic, that he may understand their sense and discover their beauties; but, with the eye of a painter, who gazes at a fine picture, that he may imitate the artist's delicate designs, that he may go and do likewise.

In all places, companies, duties, and emergencies, he labors to consider with himself, how would my Lord and Savior, were he in my place, acquit himself on this occasion? Would he do this or that? Would he allow it to be done?

There are many actions of the man Christ Jesus which were performed by him, as a human creature, in conformity to the moral law, which are to be imitated in the letter of them. If he obeyed his parents, prayed to his God, forgave his enemies, paid tribute to Cæsar, despised no man for his poverty, esteemed no man for his wealth; if he pleased not himself, nor sought his own glory; if he was heavenly in his discourse, cheerful in his obedience, unwearied in his application to his work, and mortified to the world in the whole tenor of his conversation: these are branches of his behavior, in which the servant of Christ follows him in the most literal sense, though at a humble distance; not as Asahel followed Abner, but as Peter followed his Master, afar off. These duties are not only incumbent upon him by the authority of the precept, but are sanctified unto him, are rendered sweet and easy, by the example of the Lord.

But there are other actions of Christ, in which he acted as God: he fasted forty days, he judged the hearts of the Pharisees, he took the ass of another man to ride upon, as if it had been his own; he scourged the buyers and sellers out of the temple; he foretold future events, and performed a great number of miracles. To imitate these in the letter of them, the christian knows very well, is utterly impossible: and to attempt it absolutely unlawful. But, though the matter of them is only proposed to his faith, the spirit of them or the mind with which he did them, is also proposed to his imitation. His taking upon him the form of a servant, when he was in the form of God, and his giving himself a sacrifice unto God of a sweet-smelling savour; though for the matter of them, they are actions utterly incapable of imitation: yet,

even these high acts, in the true spirit of them, the christian will endeavor to transcribe, by a humble and condescending behavior, and by walking in love, as Christ also loved him.—As John the baptist did go before the Messiah in the spirit and power of Elias; though there was a great difference betwixt the individual actions of these two great men: so he goes in the power and spirit of Christ, notwithstanding the huge distance that must always be between the Savior and the saint.

He may, as his Lord and Master, be exposed to calumnies of every kind: but at last his righteousness is brought forth as the light; and even when he gains not the applause of the tongue, he wins the approbation of the heart. If any human thing could reclaim an ungodly sinner, it would be the conversation of him who imitates the life of Christ. Here even the carnal man beholds the reality of religion brought home to his very senses, and the power of his lusts is assaulted with holy violence. As Christ is the visible image of the invisible God; so is this man the visible image of Christ, whom the world seeth no more, because "the heavens must contain him until the time of the restitution of all things."

ON FAITH.

HAPPY the man who lives in mortal flesh a life of faith upon the Son of God; though he dwells not in the gilded palace, he has the Most High for his habitation. Though his food be homely, he fares deliciously every day upon the hidden manna. For, O that noble gift of God! he in whose heart she dwells, is at once possessed of riches, and honors, and pleasures. Let others curiously dispute where she resides, in what faculty, in the understanding or the will; be it my exalted privilege to have her formed in my soul. The mountains may depart; the hills may be remo-

ved ; the solid earth, with the surrounding heavens, may pass away : but her foundations are everlasting. Sooner shall chaos come again, and God deny himself ; sooner shall the natural and the moral world be tossed into confusion, than that should fail by which she is supported. Great is that revenue of glory she brings unto our God, whether she trembles at the threatening, or relies upon the promise, which he hath spoken in his holiness ; but most of all when her main object Christ is before her eyes, as the Saviour from sin and wrath. When angels circle the throne of God with heavenly anthems, and yield the most unspotted obedience to the divine law, they glorify their Maker.— But when by her the guilty self-condemned wretch, devolves upon the Lord the burden of innumerable sins, and trusts for pardon of them all, this is glory to God in the highest. Though each obediential act is for the praise of God, and glorifies some one perfection of his nature, it is hers to render him the glory of them all.

As reason is superior to sense, so faith has the pre-eminence over reason. Be reason reverenced in matters that fall within her sphere ; but when she ventures into deeps of God, the seas where faith has all the sovereignty, when acting like herself, she lowers her sails. As sense would seem to tell us many things which reason contradicts, so faith will rectify the fond mistakes of reason : nor ought she to be dissatisfied. Faith only shuts the eye of reason, not picks it out. Nor these alone submit themselves before this noble grace ; even others her fellow virtues do obeisance. Though, as a gracious quality, she stands upon a level with the rest ; yet, as an instrument, she far excels in glory. She cannot boast indeed of her intrinsic worth, but of the post of honor which she fills by heaven's appointment. She only is the general receiver of all the blessings of the gospel. By her we call heaven's rich unfathomable mines our own. Because she humbleth herself, therefore hath God highly exalted her, and given her a name above

every grace. Even charity herself is only greater in duration : for, she abideth when faith shall fail, as to its actings ; and die like Moses, in the mount. Such is her humble nature, that even the jealous God, who will not give his glory to another, even he is found to give his glory unto her. We are *saved by faith ;* we are *justified by faith.* She faithfully returns the glory to her object. He has regarded the low estate of his handmaid, because himself has said, *them that honor me, I will honor.*

Though weak in herself, she is strong in the Lord ; her very weakness is her strength. She overcomes the devil, and the world, and the flesh. She binds up the arm of vengeance, and wields the arm of Omnipotence. The creature is not able to resist her ; and the Creator will not. She says unto this mountain of difficulty, "be thou removed, and cast into the sea." She subdues kingdoms of lusts : quenches the violence of the fire of wrath; stops the mouth of the infernal lion ; and escapes the edge of the sword of angry justice. When other graces quit the field, her own arm brings salvation. What shall I say more ? *If thou canst believe, all things are possible.*

Such is her strength, no wonder she is as bold as a lion ; though timorous and distrustful of the creature. Confiding in the Lord, she is not afraid to venture into the holiest of all. She plays upon the hole of the asp, and thrusts her hand into the cocatrice's den. *O death, where is thy sting ?* she says with bold defiance. When presumptuous unbelievers are buried in the mighty waters, like the Egyptian host, she passes through the foaming waves triumphant. There is none like her in all the earth ; who is made without fear ?

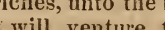
Though poor in herself, she makes many rich with the treasures of eternity. She is not afraid of the snow for her household, for all her household are clothed in the scarlet robes of everlasting righteousness.— Justly she is denominated *precious faith,* when she interests us in precious promises, and applies unto the conscience precious blood.

There are indeed who think her blind and headlong; yet is she a sharp sighted grace. She comprehends the love of Christ that passeth knowledge, doctrines which to the natural man are foolishness, and events that have no present existence, are realized by her. "She is the evidence of things not seen, the substance of things hoped for," though ever so remote in time or place. She is a kind of second sight, not merely to behold spectacles of horror, ghosts and apparitions; but the King in his beauty, the land that is afar off, the things that are not seen, that are eternal.

It is true, her strength is to sit still, to look on while the Lord himself doth wonderously. Like the lilies of the field, she toils not, neither does she spin. And certain bold blasphemers have talked of our most holy faith, as though she were no friend to works of righteousness. Impossible! absurd! for all good works, without exception, are her dear offspring, which issue from her pregnant womb. These are her children which praise her in the gates. And she may say in truth with the apostle of the gentiles, "I labored more abundantly than all the other graces. Do we make void the law through faith? God forbid: nay, we establish the law." The law as a covenant she makes not void: for she presents the perfect righteousness of Christ, which answers every legal charge. And though she strips the law, to all who have her, of the old covenant-form, she turns it to a rule of life, & supplies the believer with the most effectual motives to all holy obedience. No work of God can be acceptably performed, till once you have believed. This is his prime command, and your most necessary duty.—*For without faith it is impossible to please God*, by any doing, or by any suffering. By faith Abraham offered up Isaac his first born son; and by faith the children of Abraham put the knife unto the throat of their most favorite lusts.

But, ah! how few are there among the sons of men who can lay claim to this invaluable grace!—

Though all her ways are pleasantness and peace, great is the opposition, by all the powers of corrupt nature, unto this heavenly virtue. The bigotted papist will rather undergo the drudgery of dismal superstition. The blinded pagan will rather choose to imbrue his hands in the blood of his own offspring.—The perverse jew, descended from Abraham, only according to the flesh, will rather yield his servile neck to the old galling yoke of antiquated ceremonies, than be at all induced to submit unto the righteousness of faith. They know not, nor will understand the nature of this exalted grace. Though even in matters of this world, all know that trust is no uncommon thing. The husbandman, at the return of spring, is not afraid to sow, in hope, when he commits the foodful grain unto the furrows of the field: "for his God doth instruct to discretion." They who go down to the sea in ships, repose such confidence in their floating vessels, as not to be afraid to trust themselves, and all their worldly riches, unto the boisterous waves. Why is it that so few will venture their eternal all, and their temporal felicity, unto the faithful word of promise? The man who sows his grain in the furrow, is frequently disappointed of his hopes. And many a time the loaded vessels become a prey to the unpitying element of water. But, "he that believeth shall not be ashamed, world without end."



*On forgiveness of sin through faith in Christ's divine blood.**

WHEN the guilt of innumerable evils stares me in the face, and angry conscience rouses from her slum-

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* *By the blood of Christ is frequently signified in scripture, the whole merit of his life and death, of his actions and sufferings, of his trials and graces; which sa-*

ber, where shall I fly for refuge ? Where shall I hide my head ? How lay the grizly spectres ? Ye favorite lusts, ye pleasing comforts, ye amusing recreations, in vain ye lend your aid. Let Cain, with his hands reeking in blood, betake himself to building cities ; let Saul attempt to find relief from his unquiet mind in the charms of music, while David touched the pleasant harp ; let the drunkard seek for consolation in his flowing bowl, and jolly companions ; the sullen ghosts refuse still to depart, when God calls, as in a solemn day, his terrors round about. Even vows and resolutions, prayers and tears, costly sacrifices, and solemn promises of future amendment, cannot recal the departed peace. Let pagans, with horrid rites, seek reconciliation with their fancied gods, and peace unto their consciences ; let carnal Jews think to have matters adjusted by their ceremonial observances, being ignorant of the righteousness of God ; scourge yourselves to death, ye blinded papists, and waste your carcases to ghastly skeletons, by withholding sleep from your eyes, and nourishment from your mouths ; travel to the remotest climes in weary pilgrimages ; it is all in vain.—Fools that you are, to think you shall have peace, by walking after the imagination of your own hearts. " The way of peace you have not known ; there is no judgment in your goings."

For, unto whom should we go but unto thee, O thou bleeding Saviour ! By thy blood hast thou made peace betwixt an offended Deity and offending mortals. No cause of death was found in thee. For us thou drank the bitter cup. Far be it from us to substitute our pretended sincerity, our sorrowful repentance, or even the more noble grace of faith, in the room of thy satisfactory sufferings. O thou Prince of peace ! By

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tisfied God's justice, and magnified God's law ; which made propitiation for iniquity, and brought in an everlasting righteousness.

Hervey's Sermon on the means of safety.

thy seasonable interposition, his anger is turned away; and now it is a righteous thing with God abundantly to pardon.

Happy, thrice happy, they who come unto God by him, whose iniquity is pardoned, whose transgression is forgiven. Riches and honors, thrones, crowns, and sceptres, cannot greatly add unto their bliss; pain and poverty, ignominy and reproach, cannot greatly diminish their happiness. It is true, O ye favorites of heaven, the fact of sin cannot be taken away, the desert of sin cannot be removed; yea, even its power and dominion shall not be totally destroyed in your present state of imperfection; however, there is no condemnation to you that are in Christ Jesus. No condemnation for your inherent corruption; none for your actual transgressions; none for your past, none for your future provocations. Chastised you may be with the rod of a Father, but not with the wounds of an enemy. *It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth?* What though your sins are many? He multiplies to pardon. What though your afflictions are great?—There is no wrath in the portion of your cup. Though men should condemn you, God will not; though devils accuse you, they shall not prevail. "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that riseth in judgment against thee, thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord; and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord."

Fly, ye profane, who turn this grace of God into lasciviousness. Be awakened ye presumptuous, who fondly dream your sins are pardoned, because ye have forgotten them, or because ye have felt some pangs of conviction, or because judgment is not speedily executed against your evil works. How can ye be pardoned, who have such slight thoughts of the God who bestows, the Saviour who procures it, the gospel which reveals it? Ye that are ready to perish under the pressure of your iniquities, and ye that are of heavy heart, on account of your innumerable transgressions,

here is a strong cordial, a refreshful draught from the wells of salvation. O drink, and remember your misery no more. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."

Nor is it vain presumption in you to believe, that he in Christ is, at this present hour, pacified towards you for all that you have done. Though you have been wicked and unrighteous, though your sins have been of a crimson dye, scarlet-colored abominations, the blood of Christ can wash out the deadly tincture; and make you white as the finest wool, or virgin snow. Was it any difficulty for the Red-sea to cover with its waves the numerous host of Egypt, when Pharaoh, with his captains and common soldiers, chariots and horses, did sink to the bottom as a stone? No more for the ocean of unbounded love to subdue all your iniquities; not the common soldiers only of ordinary provocations, but the most grizly and gigantic sins. In the presence of his exalted Majesty, your persons are but like the small dust of the balance; which is not considerable enough to sway the scale, and which the gentlest breath can blow away. Just as insignificant are our sins, in presence of his pardoning mercy.

Nor is it with a grudge and reluctance the liberal God bestows this perfect gift. Once he delighted in wrath, when it pleased him to bruise his beloved Son. That was his act, his strange act; his work, his strange work. He has no pleasure in the death even of the guilty sinner as himself declares; why then in the death, the cruel death, of the innocent Immanuel? The reason, the amazing reason is, because he delighted in mercy; in mercy to the human race. Therefore it pleased the Father to bruise him.

Glorify God for this mercy, ye pardoned ones.—A distinguished blessing it is, which will not accent the song of angels, but of the redeemed from among the human race. Rejoice not that your wealth is increased, that your circumstances are prosperous, but

that your iniquity is pardoned. Fear the Lord and his goodness, and walk humbly with thy God.

Reject not the counsel of God against your own souls, you who have not yet fled for refuge unto this hope set before you, as you would not rob God of his glory, nor yourselves of peace. Will you neglect this great salvation? Will you say unto the Almighty, depart from us; thy gifts be to thyself? Cursed shall ye be of the Lord, whose glory it is to pass over a transgression. The Lord Jesus Christ shall subscribe thy condemnation; and all the holy angels shout their applause. Amen, says the church militant: Amen, the church triumphant. "In returning and rest should you been saved; in quietness and confidence should have been your rest: but you would not hear." Lo! there the men who made not the Lord their confidence; who robbed the Lord of his glory: and would not be beholden to him for the pardon of their iniquities. Behold the time of their visitation is come; and where shall they fly for help? If in this manner a man sin against the Lord, who shall intreat for him? They would not take hold of his strength; they would not make peace; they would not consider any of his ways. See now the red right arm of vengeance takes hold of the glittering sword of justice. A sword; a sword is furbished with the oil of mercy, that was despised & affronted. See how he cleaves their reins asunder, & breaketh them with breach upon breach. Merciful Lord! it is a fearful thing to fall into thy hands; when thou art angry, the nations shall not be able to abide thy indignation. Make us wise unto salvation, to know the things that belong to our peace; and to fly to our strong hold while we are the prisoners of hope.

On evangelical repentance for sin.

LET us first begin with the thoughts of his heart, whose repentance is of the gospel kind, and not to be

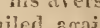
repented of. Of all evils, he is persuaded that sin is the greatest, and of all sinners he is disposed to think that himself is the chiefest. He has obtained a view of that abominable thing, which before he condemned only in words: and sees it, in the gospel-light, the heaviest of debts, the ugliest of stains, the weightiest of burdens, and the most deadly sting. Though no enormities of behaviour should tarnish his civil reputation among men, yet he sees that innumerable evils compass him about, that he is the man who has violated every precept of the law; the devil who has transgressed against a gracious God by a thousand provoking iniquities. Having descended into his own breast, and contracted a more thorough acquaintance with the plagues of his own heart, he thinks less favorably of himself than he can possibly do of others, or they of him. He blesses and adores that sparing goodness that bore with him so long, nor filled him with the fruit of his own ways. Even his most holy duties, which some would call his righteousness, these he discerns to labor under so many imperfections, as to deserve the epithet of *filthy rags*. Nor are these self-abasing thoughts the mere remonstrances of natural conscience, which pass away like the morning cloud, and early dew; or the dazzling flashes of the lightning, by which the benighted traveller is rather blinded than directed: far less must they be held the melancholy suggestions of wicked spirits, intending to exaggerate the guilt of his iniquities, and drive him to despair. But they are the fixed and sober sentiments of his soul; which the holy and blessed Spirit begets in his mind, when he strikes home the word of the law upon the conscience. But, chiefly, the persuasion of forgiveness with God operates on his heart with the most kindly influence. The knowledge of sin, which is by the law, may be productive of servile fear, and worldly sorrow; but it is the province of the gospel alone to paint it in such colors as to make him ashamed, yea, even confounded, because he does bear the reproach of his youth. O glorious grief! O noble

pain! He is scorched with the beams of goodness: and waters with his tears even the joyful pardon of his sins. Not so much for the punishment they bring upon his own nature, as for the indignity done to the divine. He looks on thee, whom he has pierced, O bleeding Propitiation! and mourns, not so much for himself, as for thee; as the tender hearted parent mourns, with unfeigned sorrow, when the eye-lids of an only son are closed in death, or the remains of a first-born are consigned over to the silent grave; or as the sorrowful Israelites, at Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddo, wept for the good Josiah, when snatched away by an untimely death, in the sins of the people; and whilst he mourns, he tastes more true refreshment than worldly joy can give.

When such are the inmost sentiments of his soul, no wonder that out of the abundance of his heart the most ample confessions of sin do flow from his tongue. Sometimes to men whom he may have scandalized; but always to God whom he has mainly offended.—Far from covering his transgression, as Adam, he knows not where to find expressions black enough to set forth the extreme odiousness of his guilt. The powers of language fail him; and, with the most expressive silence, he lays his hand upon his mouth, his mouth in the dust, as being unable to declare either the vastness of the multitude of his iniquities, or the grievousness of their aggravation.

To the words of his mouth correspond the actions of his life, and the resolutions of his heart, now rent from sin, as well as for it: though once it was dear to him as the apple of his eye. Begone, deceitful lusts, he says; too long you have prevailed against me by your bewitching influence. Farewell, ye gilded snares, ye soul-destroyers, ye murderers of my God; dyed crimson with his blood. Welcome, thou glorious liberty, that frees me from the bondage of corruption. Now, every the smallest degree of moral evil shows vile on his account; he abstains from every appearance of it; and carefully avoids the ave-

nues of temptation. He does not merely relinquish one sin, that with the greater freedom he may indulge another, to which he is equally addicted. For sin, as such, is the object of his aversion. But chiefly, if any iniquity has prevailed against him more than another, if any sin there be that easily besets him; against this he levels his opposition, and cheerfully foregoes it. As the captive exile hastens to be loosed, and with a joyful heart forsakes his dungeon; so he abandons, with unreluctant mind, what formerly he loved.



On hungering and thirsting for Righteousness.

HE that hungers and thirsts for righteousness is a happy person; who being convinced of the excellency, suitableness, and absolute necessity, both of a justifying righteousness before God, and an edifying righteousness before men, feels, in his own heart, a sense of its want, and a desire of supply.

Though, in comparison of the wicked, who are full of all unrighteousness, he is filled already with all goodness; yet, when he compares his own attainments in religion, with the superior attainments of other saints, and especially with the just demands of the holy law, he looks upon himself as more brutish than any man; and that he has not the knowledge of the holy. Once, indeed, before the commandment came, he was pure in his own eyes; and as insensible of the universal pollution of his heart and life, as a beastly drunkard of his spots, though his face and garments are all besmeared with mire and clay. But when the fumes of liquor are dispelled, he awakes as out of a sleep; discerns himself to be a monster of pollution; and his own clothes do abhor him. He now perceives that the former good opinion he had of himself, was owing to nothing else but gross inattention to the quality of his own heart, and impotence of

thought. "As when a hungry man dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and, behold, he is faint, and his soul hath appetite." *Woes me*, he cries, *I am undone: I am a man of unclean lips; and, wherewith shall I come before the Lord?*

As hunger has reconciled men to the most incredible hardships; and for a drink of water kingdoms have been given away: (for hunger and thirst are vital appetites, which, if they are not supplied, will bring inevitable death:) so is this spiritual and holy appetite supreme, prevalent, and triumphant over all other desires. What is gold to him that is perishing for hunger? What is silver to him that is expiring with thirst? And what are thy enjoyments, O vain world, to this hungry and thirsty creature? The persecuted hart doth not more eagerly pant for the water brooks; nor didst thou, O David, more ardently long for the water of the well of Bethlehem, than the hungry and thirsty christian for his Savior's justifying righteousness, and sanctifying Spirit. He contents not himself with the hypocritical wish of Balaam, to die the death of the righteous: nor with the lazy desires of the yawning sluggard, whose hands refuse to labor: but in the sweat of his brow, and exercise of christian diligence, does he eat his spiritual bread.—Where the carcase is there does he go, with willing steps, to the ordinances of Christ; or rather to Christ himself in them, in whom all fulness dwells.

When it is his meat and drink to do the will of God, how little he envies you of your dainties, that are the workers of iniquity! His hungering and his thirsting is better than their feasting and carousing. O blessed hunger! O desirable thirst! of which to die were a happiness to be envied. But he will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish. *Bread shall be given them, and water shall be sure.* For thus saith the voice of inspiration, "the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead

them unto living fountains of waters." But the wicked "shall wander up and down for meat, and grudge if they be not satisfied."

ON PURITY OF HEART.

PURITY of heart, is that holy disposition of the soul whereby the christian, whose conscience is sprinkled with the clean water of Christ's atoning blood from the guilt of his iniquities, is inclined to hate and depart from the pollution of all sin in general, and in particular from the pollution of fleshly lusts.

First, let us describe this holy disposition, as opposed to the predominant power of sin in general.—The *pure in heart* is a person who cannot satisfy himself with a ceremonial purity, like that of the ancient Pharisees, which consisted only in *putting away the filth of the flesh;* nor with a federal purity, which lies in church-membership; nor with a civil purity, which is no more but a freedom from scandalous sins; and may be entirely owing to a virtuous education, and to restraining common grace. But the holy Spirit of God has created in him a clean heart, and renewed a right spirit within him. He has seen the loathsome nature of that abominable thing which God's soul hates; of which the vomit of a dog, the poison of a serpent, and the putrefaction of a grave, are but faint emblems. He has seen that all the faculties of his soul and body, all the periods of his life, and all his thoughts, his words, his actions, are so deeply stained with this moral contagion, that the pure eyes of God cannot behold him: yea, he loathes himself in his own sight. He has seen, that this inbred corruption is so deeply ingrained in his nature, that all his own endeavors to wash out the deadly stain, would be as vain, as ineffectual, as to attempt, with common water, to wash out the scarlet dye, or the crimson tincture, from those garments that have thoroughly

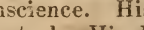
drunk in these vivid colors; or, as the Ethiopian should think, by this feeble means, to change his hue, or the Leopard his spots. He has seen, that Jesus Christ, by his word, by his blood, and by his Spirit, is the only fountain opened for sin, and for uncleanness. He that came by water and blood, has, by his word and Spirit, begotten in his heart a purifying faith, and a purifying hope; and made him, as the King's daughter, all glorious within. It is true, he is not yet without all spots or wrinkles; but only without the spots which are not the spots of God's children. As a fair day may have some clouds; a fair face may have some freckles; and a good field of corn may have some weeds; so the pure in heart may have some blemishes and imperfections. But as, by actual attainment, he is purged from the reigning pollution of sin; so by ardent desire, and serious endeavors, he aspires after the perfection of pure and undefiled religion.—He cannot boast that he has already attained it. Ah, no! but he wishes for it, he prays for it, and he labors after it.

But in a special manner, the pure in heart has, in some good measure, gained the mastery over those vile affections, and sensual indulgences of the flesh, of which it is a shame even to speak, and hardly safe even to reprove.—He remembers, that the pure eyes of God are always upon him, that the pure Spirit of God inhabits the temple of his body; that he is redeemed with the precious blood of a holy and undefiled Redeemer; and that he is the expectant of an incorruptible, undefiled inheritance. He cleanses his way, by taking heed thereto, according to the pure word of God.

He hates the thoughts of impurity. If they are darted into his mind, he disallows them, he groans under them, and suffers them not to lodge within him.—He hates the words of impurity; the mire and dirt of filthiness, and foolish talking; which is as sure a token of an impure heart, as smoke rushing from the chimney is an indication of fire on the hearth. He

hates the deeds of impurity, hates them not only when perpetrated by others, but if himself has been formerly chargeable with them. He reflects not upon his past follies with gloriation, or with indifference and cold remorse; but with unfeigned sorrow and deep humiliation. He hates the occasions of impurity, and labors to avoid them. Conscious of the infirmity of his flesh, and the treachery of his heart, he endeavors to keep at a distance from the incentives to sensuality, makes a covenant with his eyes, and ventures not even to the utmost verge of his christian liberty.

His mind being first pure, is then peaceable; and he enjoys a holy serenity, which the impure sensualist can have no idea of. The doctrines of religion are plain and clear to his pure mind; he holds the mystery of faith in a pure conscience. His prayer being pure, is fervent and effectual. His hearing the word is profitable, because he lays aside all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness. All things are pure unto him, because he is pure himself; when to the defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure. Would you know the sum of his happiness?—You have it all declared in one word, by the teacher who came from God, to which nothing can be added, and after which we need say no more, *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*



On holiness, its nature, excellency, and necessity.

O DIVINE holiness! or, shall we call thee by the name of goodness, or righteousness, or uprightness, with what praises shall we extol thee! Thou art the brightest ornament of the universe; more beauteous than the stars of light, or than the roses that straw the foot-steps of spring. The sun himself can boast no glory in thy presence.

Thou art the darling attribute of the Deity; the brightest pearl of Jehovah's crown. Without thee an

Ichabod were written on every other perfection—Adieu to his wisdom; farewell to his blessedness; the absolute perfection of his nature is no more. Thou art that beauty of the Lord, which, above all, the saints of the Most High are desirous of beholding.—In no perfection he more rejoices. By this he swears. with thee the angels swell their notes; when, with covered feet, because of shame; and faces vailed, because of reverence, they surround his throne. *Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts*, they cry, *the whole earth is full of his glory.* Omniscience is his piercing eye, omnipotence his powerful arm, and mercy is compared to his yearning bowels; but holiness, is like the face and visage of the Godhead.

Consult we his sacred oracles, what attribute is more conspicuous in every description of the Almighty? Read we the volumes of creation, he is holy in all his works; the volumes of providence, he is righteous in all his ways, of mercy and judgment.—Search and see, if there are not very distinguishing marks of the divine regard to holiness, in every providential way. "Say ye to the righteous, it shall be well with him: but wo to the wicked, it shall be ill with him." Witness ye angels of darkness, and ye damned spirits attest this truth: "The righteous Lord loveth righteousness;" which God hath written to your dreadful experience in fiery flames. O earth, wherefore dost thou groan, but because thou art the habitation of the ungodly? And wherefore did the fiery deluge destroy your pleasant dwellings, ye cities of the plain. Ye justified believers, whose iniquities are pardoned, whose transgression is forgiven, your Surety felt the effects of that hatred of sin which you should have experienced. Not all the vials of his vengeance poured on the heads of sinful men and angels, can half so loud proclaim the holiness of God, as the sufferings of the innocent and lovely Jesus; who therefore is represented, by an inspired writer, when testifying before-hand of the sufferings of Christ, to turn his meditation upon the holiness of him that inhabits the praises of Israel,

when grappling with the dreadful vengeance due to our iniquities; "my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me?" Am I not the son of thy love? have I not done always the things that pleased thee! Why dost thou hide thy face? Why dost thou count me for an enemy, and deal with me as I were an egregious transgressor? But what do I say? I am the surety of lost sinners, by my Father's commission, by my own consent. My sufferings are just; are necessary, from the holiness of thy nature: and for this amazing transaction, thou shalt rejoice in the praises of Israel to all everlasting.

As every disobedience receives a just recompence of reward; so his countenance doth behold the upright; he will bless the righteous, and compass them with his favor as with a shield. O blessed Jesus, "thou loved righteousness and hated iniquity, and God, even thy God, did for this cause anoint thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." And what are all the blessings of the followers of the Lamb, from the smallest crumb, to the ponderous crown of glory, but the reward of holiness; the reward of grace to their implanted, of debt to their imputed righteousness?—Yea, even in the place of punishment, where he will be favorable no more, the kind regards of God to goodness and morality will be demonstrated. Those who, though far from righteousness, were not so vicious as others, shall wear a lighter chain than their fellows, who have been guilty of more atrocious crimes.

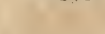
Ye sons of men, how long will you love vanity? How long will ye turn this glory into shame? Lovely perfection, how much art thou despised in the world. How rarely to be found in the living; whether we search for thee in city or in country, in the lofty palace, or in the humble cottage! How small the number of thy votaries! This man affects to be learned, that to be polite, and another to be witty: but few to be holy in all manner of conversation. Yet are they

pleasures pure, and without alloy. "Thy ways are pleasantness, and all thy paths are peace." How greatly they reproach thee, who draw thy picture in robes of melancholly, and looks of dark disquietude? Whether thou leadest thy favorites by the still waters of meditation, or bringest them to the house of prayer, or makest them lie down in the green pastures of ordinances; thy joys are joys indeed, which nothing earthly gives, or can destroy. Joys that will abide the test; nor flush the cheek of shame, nor render pale with guilt under thy kindly influence, what pleasing exercise is afforded to every rational power! In those happy moments, the soul, and all that is in us, is stirred up to magnify and bless his holy name, and all our bones to say, who is like unto thee? Nor can the countenance dissemble the heart-felt satisfaction.—— As the blaze of crackling thorns differs from the light of the day, sent from the sun's bright orb, so differ worldly pleasures from divine. These leave behind no stings of fierce repentance; can greatly triumph over death, and ask the grave, *where is thy victory?*

When thou withdrawest thy footsteps, the world is out of joint, and all its foundations are out of course. Angels are turned into devils, and heaven is turned into hell. For the retrieving of thy injured honor, the Son of God came down from his exalted throne; and, in the likeness of sinful flesh, stained the cross with his blood. For the advancement of thy interest, the word of God was written, and the exceeding great and precious promises are left unto us, that by these, being made partakers of the divine nature, we may cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. And that our souls may be adorned with thy glorious beauty, the Holy Ghost descends into our hearts.

By thee the righteous is more excellent than his neighbor; and the beggar with whom thou dwellest, more honorable than the king upon the throne.—— When the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the inhabitants of the earth shall die, thou passeth o-

ver into eternity, where God hath prepared for thee a glorious habitation. When time, and fair creation, are perhaps forgot, thou shalt beam forth in amiable effulgence, and become an eternal excellency.



ON PEACE OF CONSCIENCE.

THE happy soul, in whose heart this peace of God hath erected her throne, has firmly resolved with Job, that holy sufferer, that his heart shall not reproach him, with any approven guile, so long as he lives. He goes not about to patch up a fatal peace betwixt his conscience and his lusts; (a very common, dreadful mistake;) but if iniquity be in his hand, he puts it far away. He loves the divine law with the most ardent affection;—hearkens unto its commandments;—walks according to its unerring rule;—and walking in his uprightness, he enters into peace —— Being pleasingly conscious of the integrity of his heart, he has this inward testimony for his rejoicing, though he should hear the slanders of many. His conscience, like the wisdom that comes down from above, is first pure, then peaceable. For, if even the imperfect morality of the Gentiles was attended with much serenity and peace; much more shall righteousness and peace kiss each other in his renewed and spiritual mind; whose conscience is purged from dead works, to serve the living God.

But is his own defective righteousness the only rock on which he builds his peace? Then it were of all things the most precarious and uncertain. Alas! he cannot but be conscious, how small a claim he has to the character of innocence; and how he richly deserves, that the Almighty should write bitter things against him. His conscience is not seared as with a hot iron; but is endued with the most lively feeling of sin, and its desert. Full often he has the sentence of death in himself; and war ariseth against him.——

What does he, but betake himself unto that blood of sprinkling that speaketh better, and more peaceful things than that of Abel. When thus his heart is spoken to, in these most gentle accents, he knows that ravishing delight which an apostle stiles, *the answer of a good conscience.* He beholds the crucified Redeemer, as making peace by the blood of his cross, when the chastisement of our peace was upon him. Blessed with this noble view, he sits down with great delight under the shadow of his righteousness imputed: the place where he makes his flocks to rest at noon.—— And on the dove-like wings of faith, he flies far away from the windy storm and tempest of an enraged conscience: and finds a quiet sanctuary, and safe retreat in the clifts of the rock of ages.

O happy man, whose heart is thus sprinkled from an evil conscience! From what a dreadful inmate is he delivered! infinitely worse than a contentious woman in a wide house. Whilst those miserable wretches, that are haunted by this most awful fury, may fitly be compared, even in their jovial hours, and best estate, to those stately persons, adorned in the front with all the decorations of the palace. You go in, and behold the abodes of misery, and the dismal dungeons of chained malefactors. He whose conscience thus speaks peace, has something within that renders him superior to all adversity; that charms all fear and sorrow. Even his cottage outvies the palace. His coarse attire outshines embroidered purple. An house full of sacrifices, where strife of conscience is, may not compare with his most homely food, though it should be no better than a dinner of green herbs. To him the sun shines with a more pleasing light, the birds sing with more melodious notes. Also he lies down and his sleep shall be sweet. He is not afraid of terror by night; of the pestilence, that walks in darkness; or of destruction, that wasteth at noon-day. Though he, like good Josiah, should fall by the stroke of hostile sword in the battle; yet still his latter end is peace. Even the decisive hour of judgment needs

not appal his heart; because he shall be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless.

ON JOY IN THE HOLY GHOST.

THIS excellent fruit of the Spirit may be viewed, either as that habitual cheerfulness of temper, which the sincere christian, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, studies to maintain upon all occasions; or, it may be considered as importing in it those ravishing sallies of pleasure and delight, which an apostle styles, *joy unspeakable, and full of glory*; which are only indulged in some happy moments, and on special occasions. Let us begin with the first.

It is true, his heart is contrite; and rivers of waters have been known to run down his eyes: in so much, that superficial spectators may take him for a man of sorrows; a gloomy, melancholly creature.—But could they look into his heart, they would find it full of the oil of gladness; even when his eyes are full of the tears of sorrow. The smile of God from without, of conscience from within, cannot fail to inspire him with such cheering tranquility, as could not possibly result merely from the most excellent temperature of body, or the most easy circumstances of this world. He thankfully receives the gifts of providence; tastes in them that the Lord is good; but chiefly he rejoices in the word of the truth of the gospel; and that his name is written in heaven; that God is his Father, Christ his Savior, and heaven his inheritance. Be it so, that sometimes, through the agency of wicked and melancholly spirits without, and the too great prevalence of unbelief within, he gives too much way to a desponding frame; he very well knows, that it is neither acceptable to God, glorifying to Christ, pleasing to the Spirit, honoring to the gospel, edifying to his neighbor, or beneficial to his own soul. Ask you the cordials that cheer his drooping

spirits? He meditates on God, and rejoices under the shadow of his wings. He reads his bible, and finds it to the joy of his heart. He mortifies every known sin. He pours out unto God the sorrows of his heart. His countenance is no more sad. For God is favorable unto him, and he will see his face with joy.

Such is the habitual serenity of mind he studies to maintain. Such are the means by which it is promoted. But in some blessed periods of his life; some happy days which the Lord has made; his joy, like a river swelled by impetuous rains, bursts all its banks, and carries all before it; at once the joys, at once the sorrows of the world. When he obtains the most comfortable intimations of the divine favor; of his interest in the Redeemer; and of his title to the heavenly inheritance; O then how his heart exults! how his countenance looks cheerful! how the voice of melody is heard in his tabernacle! Now every object is fit to fill his mind with highest rapture. Every perfection of the divine nature; every purpose of his will; every sentence of his word; every operation of his hand; every privilege of his covenant, whether in hand or hope, is a well of salvation, out of which he draws water with joy. The birds mend their notes, the sun his beams, the outgoings of the morning and evening are made more joyful. All sorrow is turned into joy before him. Every desert rejoices. Every wilderness blossoms as the rose. Every mountain of discouragement skips like a calf: Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn. Every cloud is stamped with a rainbow. Death loses his dart; the grave lays aside her gloom; and hell her chosen terrors.

Great is the joy of the bridegroom, when he is put in possession of his fair one; of the mother, when her pangs are over, and a man child is born into the world; of the husbandman, when the labors of the year are finished, and his barns filled with plenty; of the soldier when a happy victory puts an end to the fatigues of a tedious campaign. But what is the joy of the bridegroom? What is the joy of the child-bea-

ring woman ? What is the joy of the harvest ? And what is the joy of them that find great spoil ? What are any, what are all these joys, to the joy of him that rejoices in the Lord, and is glad in the God of his salvation ? For who can tell what is included in the epithet of it given by a blessed apostle ? " unspeakable and full of glory."—If such O Lord, are the first fruits, what must be the harvest of that light which is sown for the righteous, and gladness which is sown for the upright in heart ? If in this vale of tears, thy favorite ones so greatly rejoice: who can conceive what is prepared for them, in that state when they shall come into thy beatific presence, where there is fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore ?

ON PLEASURE.

NOR is the christian's claim to pleasure less apparent. For, first, he only knows to taste the sweetness of his lawful comforts ; and to enjoy those satisfactions that are common to his neighbor and himself. Who is it that makes the best of the world? The man of pleasure, who wallows in sensuality ? Alas ! he does not use the world, but abuses it. Fond as he seems, he but condemns his joys to death. His head is sick ; his heart is faint. Is it any wonder his flesh abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat ? Poor man ! he pines even in the midst of plenty. For tho' his nerves should be braced with strength, and health should wanton in his veins ; yet is his soul but sickly and consumptive. Hence weariness of time ; hence impatience of thought ; hence listless inability ; hence variable inconstancy, dark cares, and heaving sighs, fetched from the bottom of the heart. Though all surrounding objects should wear a face of pleasure, and seem fit to inspire every joy into the heart ; it is all in vain he desires to have, but he cannot obtain. He obtains, but his hopes are frustrated. Real enjoy-

ment he is a stranger unto. For he tastes not that God is good, in his earthly delights: and finds them but empty husks :—not so he that enjoys God in his inferior enjoyments. To him the spring wears a more beauteous face, the sun shines with a more pleasing light, the tulip assumes a deeper dye, and the rose a more fragrant smell. I make no doubt but the poor beggar Lazarus in the parable, who lay at the gate of the proud and wealthy sinner, (whose name is buried in oblivion,) might taste more exquisite delight, in his scanty crumbs, and in healing tongues of the dogs, than the unpitying miser, in all his delicious fare.

But there are pleasures appropriated to the true christian; joys which no stranger intermeddles with, in the exercise of pure and undefiled religion, which is not only a heightener of our delights, but is itself the greatest of any. Even as the sun imparts a brightness to every other object, and is himself the brightest of all. Whether he contemplates the delightful truths and ravishing mysteries of the gospel; the banquet of the mind, sweeter than all honey :—or practises spiritual duties towards his neighbor, or his God; when he prays with fervent supplication, or praises with joyful lips, or hears in his lovely tabernacles what God the Lord will say, or relieves the indigent for his Redeemer's sake, and comforts the distressed :—or exercises christian graces; be it faith, that is attended with joy unspeakable ; or love, that is its own reward, and the fulfilling of the law ; or hope, that anticipates the joys above, in blessful expectation, the surest anchor of the soul :—or mortifies fleshly lusts :—or resists temptations, triumphing over them with christian magnanimity :—or endures afflictions, with a becoming patience and cheerful resignation :—he tastes more solid pleasures than ever the sensualist could boast. Pleasures that are true in fruition, fully answering the most sanguine expectation. Pleasures, whose repetition does not cloy, and their continuance is not clogged with satiety. Pleasures, whose review fills not the cheek with blushing,

being honorable and glorious as the immortal soul, and pure as the joys of angels. Pleasures, whose consequences are not dangerous—to the body, by wasting its beauty, or preying on its health;—to the reputation, by fixing upon it an indellible stain;—to the estate, by making a shipwreck of it in the horrid gulf of prodigality. Especially not dangerous to the soul, by darkening the mind, fattening the heart, searing the conscience, and exposing to eternal vengeance.—Pleasures, whose duration is not short; that can live in the winter of adversity, illuminate the valley of death, and pass into eternity.

He that is acquainted with them, may leave unto the guilty adulterer his impure thoughts, his wanton looks, and his abominable works; at which the midnight veils her face, and the morning blushes.—May leave unto the beastly drunkard his flowing bowl, his sparkling wine, his wo and sorrow, his babbling, his redness of eyes, his wounds without cause.—May leave unto the cursed swearer his bloody oaths; which neither gratify the sense, nor afford the least equivalent to countervail the damnation of the soul.—May leave to all the sons of sensuality, who count it pleasure to riot in the day time, their consumed flesh, their sunk reputation, their beggared fortune, their darkened understanding, their seared conscience.—Seared, did I say? See there that miserable wretch, extended on the bed of death, who lived in pleasure on the earth, and lulled his conscience asleep by a thousand opiates: but now, refreshed with her long slumber, she awakes; and, as a giant refreshed with wine, she cries, she roars, she lifts up her voice like a trumpet. The astonished soul hears and trembles.—While sin and sickness, a dreadful pair, join their forces, assaulting at once his body and soul; where, O where shall he flee for help? He perceives his dreadful mistake, but cannot deliver his own soul. In all the agony of hopeless despair, he resigns his vital breath, and dies without wisdom.

If another of these brethren in iniquity remains, even to the last, a stranger to remorse; yet poor is the alleviation of his misery that he never lifts up his eyes, till he is in hell, being in torments. Ah, then! what avails him those fleeting joys of sense, which, though of short continuance, must now be expiated with everlasting pain!

ON AFFLICTION AND CONSOLATION.

MANY are the afflictions of the righteous, and griefs on every side. Hear how an eminent apostle cries, *wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?* And another extraordinary saint, *I am the man that have seen affliction.* Into what deeps they are often plunged by sin, that worst of evils?—Shall I speak of the sin that easily besets them; their predominant corruption, which can no more be vanquished, than the Israelites could drive out the Canaanites, dreadful with chariots of iron! What sighs it fetches from the bottom of their heart! Not to mention the trouble occasioned by scandalous outbreakings; which waste the conscience, and might be distressful even to an unrenewed mind, from which the saints themselves are not exempted; there are provocations, which others think of trifling nature, that wear a grisly aspect in the eyes of the tender-hearted christian. When manifestations are abused, opportunities neglected, admonitions despised, convictions stifled, mercies and judgments not improved, how do they walk mournfully before the Lord of hosts! It is true, the law cannot condemn them any more; yet still it can convince and reprove. When Moses was old and stricken in years, his eye waxed not dim, his force was not abated. His law, though old, loses nothing of its severity. Sometimes they go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy of their salvation; and the Comforter that should relieve their souls is far away.

How frequently they are under the frowns of Providence! and though nothing seems to befal them, but what is common to men, the wormwood and the gall of their affliction is not obvious unto the eye of the world. Perhaps they are living too much under the power of some particular corruption; or some past iniquity is presented to them anew in all its horrid aggravations. Their flesh trembleth because of him, and they are afraid of his judgments. Comest thou peaceably, O Lord, in this thy visitation? *Art thou come to bring my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?* said the widow of Zarephath. *We are verily guilty concerning our brother*, said the distressed patriarchs. Nor is their adversary the devil for ordinary idle on such occasions of temptation. Intangled in the wilderness, like Israel; the devil, like Pharaoh, resolves to pursue them, and to revenge himself upon them.—But who can enumerate all their sorrows?

In such circumstances of distress, what healing hand shall pour the balm of peace? To comfort the heart is more than to make a world, said the holy and tempted Luther. Consolation is a commodity of heaven, not to be imported but from the distant country of Immanuel. It is God alone, the God of peace, to whom almighty power belongeth, that can comfort the soul. He it is whom an inspired writer styles, *the God of all consolations*, and *the God who comforteth them that are cast down.* The Father is he who loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation. The Son is the consolation of Israel; the Prince of peace; and the true Noah, who comforts us concerning the work of our hands. For this end he became a man of sorrows, and the chastisement of our peace was upon him. But eminently the Holy Ghost is the comforter, who, like the dove of Noah, flies with the olive branch of peace, to assure us the winter is past, and the rain is over and gone. Ministers are indeed the helpers of your joy; but it is God who wipes off all tears from off all faces.

Whatsoever was written aforetime, was written for our instruction, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. For this the Old, and for this the New Testament was written, that like two breasts of consolation, they might be sucked by the humble and contrite ones. But you are unable to lay hold upon a promise; lo! there is an attribute of God, an office of Christ, endeavor from thence to derive your consolation.

O ye heirs of the promise! what strong consolation is allotted for you by your heavenly Father!—What divine peace; what unspeakable joy; what full assurance may you attain! Even in your godly sorrow, you taste most sweet refreshment, while you can say of laughter, *it is mad.* Rivers of waters did run down the eyes of the sweet singer of Israel; and the spirit of mourning is the spirit of consolation also.—While here, you tread the vale of tears; but with your rods, you have the hidden manna, which the world knoweth not of. Ye cannot indeed be assured of a perpetual triumph. Yet may your peace stand firm with God, while you have none from Satan, and in the world tribulation. But, O ye children of the King! why should you be sad from day to day? Will the King of heaven be pleased with you to sit in sackcloth in his gate? Is he an austere master, who grudges at your welfare? Your Head is now a man of joy as once he was a man of sorrows; and shall not ye rejoice with him, who are the body of Christ, and members in particular? Grieve not the holy Spirit by your dejected sorrow, who is the oil of gladness, and he who seals you to the day of redemption. Give not place to the devil, that melancholy spirit, who being himself condemned to feed on dust, sore envies you your hidden manna; for we are not ignorant of his devices. What flaming christians might you be, who are now like the smoking flax? What lofty cedars, who now only resemble the bruised reed, because you are not careful to serve the Lord with gladness? for the joy of the Lord is your strength. *Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous; and again, I say, rejoice.*

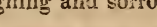
Ye afflicted, tossed with tempests, and not comforted, that walk in darkness, and have no light; consider how the husbandman, when he commits to the furrows of the field his grain, the hopes of the ensuing year; he waiteth long, and hath great patience for it, till he receive the early and the latter rain. So, just so, *light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.*

Some comfort themselves with their lusts; some with their worldly possessions; the more refined moralists with their duties. But, O ye sons of men, how long will ye love vanities? How soon will your springs be dried up, that are not supplied from the Fountain of living waters? As the flower of the grass, your comforts shall perish; and as the gourd of Jonah shall they fade away, in the time of your greatest need. Especially ye who think to spin out of your bowels a robe of righteousness, to screen you from the angry vengeance of God, and pacify your consciences with duties of your own; but despise the everlasting righteousness of the Redeemer; know that your hope shall be like the spider's web. Whereas the real christian, like the lilies of the field, he toils not, he spins not; yet far outshines Solomon in all his glory: far excels the busy legalist, when vested with his most pompous performances.

Wo to you, rich men, who trust in your hoarded heaps: for ye have received your consolation. All ye that rejoice in iniquity, let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Alas! your fleshly mirth will never bid you smile at death, nor turn your eye undaunted on the grave. And what will you do in the awful judgment, when God will laugh at your calamity; and the merciful Mediator afford you no relief? "Because, when I called, ye refused; and when I stretched out my hands, ye would not regard." Wherewith shall we comfort you, who are strangers to the consolation of Israel? This is the children's bread, and dogs must not partake.—A precious oil it is, no vessel but the contrite heart

can hold. We will not put this new wine into old bottles, but into new bottles, that both may be preserved.

When others take up the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ; O heavenly word! be thou my consolation. And though weeping may endure for a night; yet with the rising day, my joy returns. A joy the world gives not, nor takes away. When every pleasurable enjoyment besides shall languish and expire; this passes over into eternity, greatly triumphant over death and the grave. No more shall the countenance be sad, nor the eye dim with tears, when the ransomed of the Lord shall obtain joy and gladness, and sighing and sorrowing shall flee away.



On looking at the things that are not seen.

HE that looks at the things that are not seen, is a person who is endowed with a blessed and holy second sight, by which he is distinguished from other men: and sees, not mournful objects, as coffins and corpses; but such objects as are most cheering and delightful. The eyes of his understanding are enlightened by the Holy Ghost, to know the things that the natural man perceiveth not; the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. Though the good and the bad things of this vain world are always pressing on his senses, he is not chiefly influenced by them, as though they were the principal things. For the things above, and the things that are eternal, he judges to be no less real for their being invisible, and distant; and unspeakably the most important of all other things. He firmly believes, frequently thinks of, highly esteems, ardently desires, earnestly expects, and diligently labors after the enjoyment of them.—He bestows the cream of his thoughts in meditating upon them; and talks about them, not by constraint,

when he is not able to avoid the discourse, but naturally, and with a ready mind.

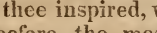
Some have thought him incapable of paying a sufficient attention to the necessary affairs of the world; as though one could not be fervent in spirit, without being slothful in business. But this is a vile slander. For, moderate industry is not a diversion from serious religion, but a singular help unto it: and the spiritual man, who holds the plough, or handles the axe, is, even in these common actions, more holy than the carnal man in his most solemn devotions.

He esteems a man much more because he is gracious, than because he is rich: and can never be induced to think, that proud sinners are happy, though they be elevated to the very summit of fortune. He would much rather choose to see his children deeply tinctured with the principles of true religion, than put in a condition to make a figure in this world. If he is in adversity, he derives not his comfort from earthly enjoyments, but eternal things; these are the hills to which he lifts his eyes, and from whence cometh his aid. If he is in prosperity, his earthly blessings are not the chief source of his joy and happiness! but in this he rejoices, that his name is written in heaven.

As he who ascends a high mountain, and from its top surveys the plains below, will think large fields but inconsiderable spots of land; so he who is set on these high places of eternity, and converses much with everlasting things, will regard, in a very diminutive light, the most important businesses of this transitory life. His mind acquires a sublime turn, and an elevated way of thinking, not to be easily taken with slight and trifling vanities.

By this blessed temper of mind, he is habitually disposed to perform spiritual duties; the frown is struck from the brow of death; his mind is strongly fortified against afflictions of every sort; and the edge of all temptations is most effectually blunted. Having obtained a view of that ineffably glorious prize of the high calling of God, he cannot possibly think any

pains too great to reach it. For this he can instantly serve God day and night. For this he can both labor and suffer reproach; take joyfully the spoiling of his goods; and sometimes even resign his breath in cruel flames. In vain does this present world spread her blandishments, and arm her face with frowns, to shake his steady purpose, who looks not at the things that are seen. What though the advantages of the world are present, and the advantages of religion are, in great measure, future; yet this wise and enlightened soul is at no loss which he should prefer. For, an eternal advantage, that will certainly come, is far to be preferred to a present one, that is of a short duration.—O faith, it is thine to realize and render present the things that are invisible to the corporeal eye! whether by reason of the nature of the things themselves, or by reason of their distance from us in time and place. By thee inspired, we can choose the sharpest afflictions before the most poignant pleasures; and esteem the most grievous reproaches, greater riches than the peculiar treasure of most wealthy kings.



ON CHRISTIAN HOPE.

LET us first attend unto those glorious objects at which she throws a wishful eye. These are not the fading honors; the transitory pleasures; or the uncertain riches of this world; but what infinitely excels them all, the things that are not seen, that are eternal. All that is contained in the vast mines of the promise, and in the bowels of the Redeemer's righteousness, which is like the great mountains; all that is comprehended under that most emphatical word SALVATION; final perseverance in grace here, and everlasting joys hereafter: are the blessings she teaches the christian to wait for. Though surrounded with formidable enemies, he is persuaded they shall not se-

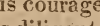
parate him from the love of Christ; and checks every distrustful thought. *Hope thou in God, my soul*, he says; *for I shall yet praise him.* If he takes a solitary walk in the church-yard, and views the silent graves, and mouldering bones; and considering his latter end, recollects how soon even his bones shall be dry, and for his part he shall be cut off: though headlong sense, and unenlightened reason, would suggest that man lieth down, and awaketh not again; though there is hope of a tree when it is cut down, he sees with joyful heart the prisoners of the earth emerging from their long confinement; and with joyful lips, he utters that most blissfull expectation; "thou wilt shew the path of life; in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand are pleasures for ever more."

Whilst he thus anticipates the joys above, his towering hopes are not supported by the sand. For God, and Christ, and every smiling promise, is his foundation. But chiefly, he is begotten again to this lively hope by thy resurrection, blessed Jesus. Thou art the rock on which he casts this anchor. And shall I call the faithful promises of the word, the cables that secure it? He shuns alike the abhorred gulf of despair; and the dangerous rock of presumption, infamous for shipwrecks. And by the gentle breathings of the heavenly wind, he is wafted at length into the fair havens of life and immortality.

What storms of adversity will he not defy, having this hope as an anchor of the soul? What fight of afflictions can he not endure, defended by this impenetrable helmet? whilst he poises the exceeding great and eternal weight of glory, against his light and momentary sufferings; against the spoiling of his goods, the better and enduring substance? If, for the hope of Israel, he is bound in chains, he glories in his fetters. Amid the ocean of eternal delights, sunk are the sorrows of the world; as in a sea of honey, a drop of vinegar is swallowed up and lost.

Animated by this same grace, he stirs up himself in every duty; and is not slothful in the business of his salvation. Whilst he hopes for thy salvation, O God, he does thy commandments. The bringing in of this best hope, strengthens his weak hands, and confirms his feeble knees.

How greatly he disdains to wallow in the puddle of sin! The darts of temptation fall ineffectual to the ground. In danger he is courageous; in sorrow he is moderate; in duty he is diligent; in tribulation he is patient; and even in death he smiles.



On the vain hopes of the hypocrite.

O THE vain and presumptuous hopes of sinners! You inherit the kingdom of heaven! You ascend to the hill of the Lord! You enter into the heavenly Canaan, and inherit his holy mountain! Who are unrighteous:—who are of an Egyptian nature, hankering after the onions and the garlic;—whose hands are not clean;—whose hearts are not pure;—who are alienated from the divine life:—who are drenched in sensuality;—who are estranged from the womb;—who say to the Almighty, depart from us;—whose carnal minds are enmity against God;—never formed for himself;—never made meet to be partakers of the undefiled inheritance;—never wrought for this self-same thing. Go seek a Mahometan paradise.——Christianity affords you no ground of hope. These pure regions of blessedness will eternally exclude you from their blessed abodes. Ye grovelling sons of earth, who never deemed yourselves strangers and pilgrims here; who embrace the dunghill of this world as your portion; how can the eternal Majesty but be ashamed to call himself your God? How can his heart be towards you? How can he make you cleave unto himself, as the girdle to the loins of a man? Go reconcile light with darkness. Bid fire and water meet in mutu-

al embraces. Then may righteousness and unrighteousness have fellowship together. Then may Christ and Belial agree. Then may evil dwell with God, and the foolish stand in his presence.

Make the absurd and impossible supposition, that the eternal Sovereign should reverse his high decree; —should bely his faithful word, rescind his threatening;—or, which is all one thing, should set open unto you the door of paradise, and admit you into that place of blessedness; yet where could you fly from the guilt of your consciences? where from the carnality of your hearts?

Where from the guilt of your consciences? If you ascend to heaven, lo! it is there; as well as tho' you made your bed in hell. How couldst thou hold up thy ashamed countenance towards his awful face?—Would not his pure eyes flash confusion upon you, and strike you through with a dart, when you touched this mountain of his holiness?

But though thy conscience, O wicked man, were supposed to be as secure then, as now it is; still happiness is far removed from thee. For, who will reconcile thy carnal heart to the spirituality of heavenly joys?

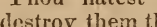
O ye delightful mansions of the blessed, how would your charms be lost on him, whose soul within him, were full of sin, the abomination that maketh desolate!

What consolation could he find in the society of the heavenly inhabitants: there are the holy angels. There are the spirits of the just, escaped from a sinful and vain world. There are the general assembly and church of the first-born. You never loved them here. You despised and hated them, when their holiness was but imperfect. You hated and despised them for the sake of their holiness. How can you take pleasure in their company, when they are perfectly like HIM?

Nor would the employment of the redeemed conduce one whit more to thy happiness, O unsanctified

soul! How couldst thou dwell with ever-new delight in the contemplation of that God, who was not in all thy thoughts ?—Of that Redeemer, who was despised and rejected by thee ?—Of these awful mysteries, which were never revealed unto thee in their native sweetness and glory ? How couldst thou join in the song of salvation, when the voice of melody was never heard in thy dwelling ; and praise in thy lips was never comely ?

Be merciful, O God, to miserable sinners.—— Rouse them from their slumber. Awaken them from their delirious dreams of happiness hereafter, without a present participation of thy divine nature. O gracious God, enlighten their eyes; convince them of their fond delusion, before thou vindicate thy own holiness and truth with fiery indignation. For, " thou art not a God that hast pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with thee ; the foolish shall not stand in thy sight. Thou hatest all workers of iniquity. Thou wilt destroy them that speak leasing. Thou, Lord, will abhor the bloody and deceitful man."



The character of a hypocrite.

HE is a pretender to those good qualifications of which he is really destitute, and a dissembler of those vices which he secretly practises. He is that in the church, which a knave is in the state. The one is not fit for civil society ; nor the other for christian communion. Were he to appear in his real colors, men would clap their hands at him, and hiss him out of his place. Therefore he paints his face, like Jezebel, with a varnish of goodly words, of sanctified looks, of actions seemingly benevolent and devout. He prays with great fluency of expression ; you would think him an angel for fervency and rapture ; but it is only in the presence of others. And though his

words are flaming, his heart is ice. He gives alms indeed, but must always take witnesses upon it. He is very punctual in going to church, where he seats himself in some remarkable corner, in order to attract all eyes upon himself. He seems to be all attention and composure: he lifts up his hands and eyes in a religious manner; or covers his face, or heaves a sigh, or sends forth a groan. O how mightily he is impressed with the sermon, if you believe his face; while, in the meanwhile, he is indulging his lusts, and his heart going out after his coveteousness!

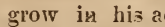
When he fasts he assumes a sorrowful air, and a disfigured face; and is grieved for sin as much as the bulrush when it hangs the head. When he is in religious company, he talks of his experience, the plagues of his heart, and complains of the great decay of religion in the day.—He is a most uncharitable censurer of others, while he practises far greater villanies himself.

All his religion, at least the greatest part of it, is left behind him in the temple, or in the street; for he neither carries it to his family, nor to his closet.—He is like the rainbow, whose glorious colors are reflected from a dark vapor, only when the sun shines. Notwithstanding his ostentation, he hates the light; and refuses to come into it except when his mask is on.—He cannot endure a minister, who rakes into his conscience; nor a christian friend, who gives him faithful admonition.—When he is reproved for any miscarriage, he says to the reprover, it is none of your business; meddle with your own matters. Were it not for his eager desire of applause from men, and the roaring of his angry conscience, he would bid adieu to all the duties of religion, whether private or public.

His most admired and pompous services can find no acceptance with God; and his most fervent devotions are no more regarded, than if they were the howlings of a dog.—What is all his religion, but like the kiss of Judas, or the bowing of the knee by the crucis

fiers of the Lord of glory? He makes God an idol; and considers the creature like a deity, whom he worships and serves more than the Creator. He is like a grave, which may be covered by a white sepulchral stone of polished marble, and engraven with some lying panegyric for an epitaph; but within a ghastly corpse presents itself to your eye, or noisome stench offends the nostril.

The longer you grow in his acquaintance, your respect for him will lessen; and at length, perhaps, will turn to a just hatred and aversion. For he is sometimes discerned and despised by men, but always by God.



The character of a sincere christian.

HE is one who needs not affect to appear in a character foreign to himself; nor to conceal that character which really agrees to him. He studies to approve himself to God, and does not value himself upon the applause of men. Fame and reputation he will not court, but will deserve them. He will not hunt after them, but they will follow him through the deepest shades. His real glory is not obvious to any eye, but the penetrating eye of God, who delights in him, approves him, and commends him. When he prays, he pours out his heart; when he praises, he makes melody in his heart unto the Lord. And his heart is bigger than his words. He is not an enemy to public religion; but secret devotion is an essential part of his happiness. He not only mourns over these sins which himself has committed, as Ahab did; but he laments for the sins of others, of which he is personally innocent; like Christ, who wept over the sins of Jerusalem, though himself knew no sin. He indeed regards every the smallest precept of the law; but when he tithes mint, anise and cummin, he neglects not the weightier matters. He is not for dividing religion,

like the pretended mother of the child, who thereby evidenced she had no interest in the babe. Though he has the remainders of sin in him, hypocrisy not excepted, he has not a heart and a heart, nor is he a monster with a double mind. His religion is not the fulsome compliments of a well bred gentleman, who is your humble servant, glad of your welfare, and is extremely sorry for your slightest inconvenience; but like the tender affection of an ingenuous friend.

As the beauty of Absalom surpassed the daubings of Jezebel; so does the holiness of the sincere christian excel the painting of the hypocrite. He is not like a smoky chimney, with a marble frontispiece; nor like a rotten grave, with a marble monument; but like a mountain replete with precious ore, while perhaps, the surface is barren and unsightly. He does not want to bring down the word of God to his private inclinations; but is desirous of bringing his private inclinations to be judged by the law and the testimony. He is not ashamed to own, that he was once in an error; nor afraid to know the worst about himself; but, on the contrary, it is the language of his heart, *what I know not, teach thou me.*

Though he is far from ostentation on the one hand, and prudent enough not to blaze abroad his secret faults on the other; yet he loves to come to the light, and needs not be ashamed, though all the world were a sun. Though he should not, with Balaam, build seven altars, and offer up a bullock and a ram on every one; but, like Abraham, content himself with one altar, and a single victim; yet is his sacrifice accepted. His turtle-doves, and young pigeons, are no less grateful than thousands of rams. Silk and purple, and even goats hair, for the service of his sanctuary, are not despised of the Lord, when his circumstances cannot afford precious stones and gold.—His inward groans, his secret sighs, are a powerful rhetoric, effectual and fervent. He puts their tears in a bottle; and a cup of cold water, given to a thirsty disciple, shall not lose its reward. His rejoicing is the testi-

mony of his conscience, when he hears the scorning of the people. Death, with all his grisly features, cannot stare him out of countenance : and he needs not be afraid of the awful judgment. Though like Josiah, he should die in battle; yet he comes to his grave in peace.

ON CHRISTIAN PRUDENCE.

THERE is a prudence which is so essential to the being of a christian, that it is but another name for that faith by which he lives. He that is wise unto salvation ; he that knows thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent ; he that is instructed in the kingdom of heaven, to understand the truths he should believe, the duties he should practise, and the happiness he should pursue ; he—he is a prudent man, though he should be neither a wise economist in matters of this world, a plodding statesman, nor a cunning artificer ; for his God doth instruct him to discretion; and though a fool, in his own and others opinion, he errs not in the way of holiness.

But there is a prudence of a much narrower kind ; which, if it be not essential, is highly ornamental to the christian, in the whole tenor of his life.—— By this he does not so much avoid immoralities, as improprieties of behavior ; which, though they should not make him guilty in the eye of God, would, notwithstanding, render him contemptible among men.— In him the wisdom of the serpent is happily married with the simplicity of the dove ; whilst he defends himself from the injuries of the world, without incurring the guilt of being himself injurious.

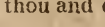
There is not perhaps any one description that comprehends more of his real character, than this, that *his heart discerns both time and judgment.* It is a maxim worthy to drop from the pen of the wisest of all men, " that for every thing there is a season, and

a time for every purpose under heaven." This excellent precept he well understands, as knowing that, let an action be ever so good, if it is misplaced, and thrown out of its due order, it gathers an awkwardness, and exposes to contempt.

He knows when to be serious, and when to be cheerful;—when to be zealous, and when to be moderate;—when to be deliberate, and when to be hasty;—when to be singular, and when to be conformed;—when to speak, and when to refrain from speaking;—when to reprove, and when to commend;—when to give, and when to withhold;—and never can, with a good grace, become the object of contempt and derision.

For, by this prudent timing of every word, and action, he appears to every impartial spectator serious, but not dumpish;—cheerful, yet not frothy:—zealous, yet not fiery;—moderate, but not lax:—deliberate, but not lazy;—active, but not rash;—singular, but not nice;—courteous, but not cringing;—noble, but not proud;—frugal, but not covetous;—devout, but not superstitious;—resigned, but not negligent;—fixed, but not dogmatical;—liberal, but not prodigal. He speaks, but he is not talkative. He keeps silence, but he is not sullen. He reproves, but he breaks not the head. He commends, but he puffs not up. His words are few, but they are as goads, and as nails fastened in a sure place. Sometimes, indeed, he may be betrayed into an improper action, when he trusts too much to his own understanding, or gives the reins to his unruly passions; than which there are no greater adversaries to prudence of every kind. But he improves even by his blunders, whilst with shame he recollects them, and resolves against the like failures in time coming. He searches the scriptures, which can give even to the young man knowledge and discretion. He mortifies his lusts, and moderates his passions. He maintains a life of communion with God. Therefore shall he guide his affairs with discretion unto the end: therefore shall he deal prudent-

ly ; he shall be extolled, and be very high. Good men shall rejoice to see none occasion of stumbling in him ; and they that desire occasion shall be ashamed, because it is cut off. Go thou and do likewise.



ON CHRISTIAN DILIGENCE.

THE diligent christian is a person who looks upon time as the most invaluable of all treasures, and upon the salvation of his soul, as the most interesting business of life. He assigns not the dregs of his time to the exercise of devotion, while the flower of it is dedicated unto the pursuit of worldly employments ; but he serves God with the best he can afford. He does not say unto the duties of religion, as the partial christians of the apostle James said to the poor man in vile raiment, when he came into their assembly, stand ye there, or, sit here, under my footstool ; while the duties of his civil calling are invited, with the man that wears the gold ring, and gay clothing, to sit in a good place. He seeks first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness ; and other things can only claim a secondary care. Like Solomon, he first builds the house of God, and then his own house. As the shekel of the sanctuary was double to the common shekel ; so, in the matters of eternity, he doubles the diligence that he uses in the matters of time. Religion is not his by-work, nor a matter of mere amusement, which he may, or may not attend unto, as he pleases. He knows that in all labor there is profit ; and that neither the blessings of providence, nor grace, will fall into the mouth of the yawning sluggard.

Dost thou not see, O my soul ! with what incessant toil the children of men acquire their worldly riches ? what dangers they defy ? what difficulties they surmount ? with what laborious efforts they hew out to themselves broken cisterns that can hold no water ? They put forth their hand upon the rock, and

overturn the very mountains. They are not afraid of killing damps, nor overflowing floods, that their eye may see every precious thing. And shall I not much more give diligence to obtain the prize of my high calling, which cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, the precious onyx, or the sapphire? How is he filled with conscious shame at such a thought! that worldly vanities appear with more attractive charms in the eyes of worldly men, than the things above in his eyes; and should inspire them with greater ardor to obtain them!—But especially, when he considers the shame, the pain, the sorrow, and the unknown agonies of the Redeemer, to compass our salvation; he can no more regard it as a matter of indifferency, that cost the Savior so dear. Did he think my salvation worthy of so much blood? and shall I think it worthy of no more but a few languid endeavors, slothful wishes, lazy desires? He looks upon no time as incapable of religious improvement. Even the seasons of worldly avocations are sometimes blessed seasons of intercourse with heaven. As the image of Cesar was enstamped upon the smallest coin, as well as the greatest; so the beauty of the Lord his God is stamped upon the minutest actions of life, and establishes every work of his hand.

Holiness, like a beautiful and shining varnish, spread over the colorings of a picture, imparts a heavenly lustre to his whole conversation. Instead of contriving excuses to blunt the edge of the precept, and still the clamors of his own conscience, when called to any necessary duty, he opens his mouth, and pants for God's commandments. He leaps upon the mountains, and skips over the hills of difficulty. He esteems every day lost in which he has done nothing for the glory of God, the edification of his neighbor, or his own salvation. The time which is employed by others in vain jangling, and the canvassing of idle controversies, he bestows upon the mortifying of his earthly affections, and holding fellowship with God.—When engaged in prayer, or any holy duty, he puts a

holy constraint upon the backward flesh; he rallies his wandering thoughts, awakens his drowsy powers; and takes, as it were by violence the kingdom of heaven. He considers no attainment of religion as fit to be rested in; and, in the matters of salvation, he makes exception to the rule, *be content with such things as you have.*

When old age shall clothe his head in snow, and furrow his face with wrinkles, the retrospect of his past life will not resemble a barren and unsightly desert, but a cultivated garden. He is a credit to the religion he professes; and in some good measure, by his edifying life, and confirming conversation, supplies the want of miracles. But though he works out his own salvation with fear and trembling, it is not by his own strength; nor does he look upon his diligence, however great, as meritorious of eternal life: for, as Christ hath wrought all his works for him; so it is God that worketh in him both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

ON SLOTHFULNESS,

Or, the christian stirred up to diligence and activity.

OPEN thy drowsy eyes, thou yawning sluggard, spring from thy lazy couch, on which thou turnest, like the creaking door upon the hinges. Is eternity nothing? Are heavenly joys of such a trifling nature; are hellish torments so easy to be endured; that faint endeavors, languid resolutions, empty desires, are a sufficient method to lay hold upon the one, and to avoid the other?

See with what unwearied diligence the children of this world prosecute their temporary interests.—They rise up early; they sit up late; they eat the bread of sorrow. For what? To acquire either the necessaries, or the superfluities of this present transitory life: whether their taste be riches, or honor, or

pleasure. What hardships will the seafaring man refuse to undergo, upon the howling waste of waters, animated with the prospect of heaping up silver as the dust? They are not deterred from their steady purpose, though you should represent unto them, in liveliest images, the chosen terrors of the great deep; though you should remind them of the roaring tempests, the treacherous rock, or latent quicksands, dreadful to ships, they are not discouraged. They despise the southern heat, and the northern cold.—They regard not the labors of the day, nor the watchings of the night.

Shall we mention, next, the incredible fatigues of the campaign, while the soldier pursues his way to fame and glory, through troops of hostile spears, regardless of the fierce countenances of the enemy, the flashing of the swords, and the thunder of the roaring engines, which spread desolation all before them?—With what amazing activity; with what intense application, are the intrigues of statesmen planned and executed, while they seek for glory, honor, and immortality? Alas! shall these be wiser in their generation, in matters of time, than the professed children of light in matters of eternity?

But dart your eyes down to the centre, to those accursed spirits who dwell in darkness, and are punished with an everlasting destruction, (for even an enemy may thus befriend us with instruction,) with what vigilance they work in the children of disobedience! with what diligence they exert themselves in dishonoring of God, in destruction of men, while they traverse the earth in quest of mischief, as the hungry lion paces the desert round and round, if haply he can find a beast of chase whom he may devour!

Throw next your eyes toward these happy regions where angels reside, and where the spirits of the just made perfect eternally reap the fruits of their Redeemer's purchase. With what alacrity they do his will! Swift as the lightning's glimpse they run; they fly. Hear how they swell the note in the trium-

phant song of Moses and the Lamb! How nimbly they touch the vocal strings! Both day and night they persevere in their exalted exercise, while they serve him, with utmost ardor, in the temple of the skies.

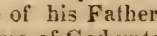
But though the rational creation were dumb, the inanimate creation would cry out against the slothful christian. The golden sun rejoices as a strong man to run a race, and calls you to run the race that is set. The silver moon witnesses against you in the heavens, as she walks in brightness amidst the sparkling stars. All the rivers run into the sea, which constantly either ebbs or flows, but never stagnates in lazy slumbers, never fails to wash the shore with his returning tide.

The God whom we serve is the living God. Away then with this deadness and formality. "Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Creator of all the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary," in constantly upholding, by his all-powerful word, this universal frame of nature? The reins of government, whether in the natural or moral world, he never drops from his hand; but, by his powerful energy, directs their various motions, in such mysterious sort as his eternal wisdom did contrive. Shall man, that noble creature, the peculiar glory of whose nature is to wear the divine resemblance, to be the very image of his Maker, shall he so far degenerate from his all-perfect pattern, as to give up himself to a lazy torpor, and shameful inactivity?

All beings in the circle of existence, from the high Creator unto the meanest creature, with one harmonious voice, awake thee from thy slumber. Go to the ant, the little, the despicable, and yet laborious ant; consider her ways, O thou sluggard! her painful, prudent ways; consider of them and be wise.

Ye have the prophets and the apostles of the Lord for your ensamples. The noble company of martyrs, and all the sanctified ones who have gone

before you, who have finished their course, who have fought the good fight, who have kept the faith; and now, through faith and patience, inherit the promises. But a greater than any saint or apostle, prophet or martyr, is here. For, consider the apostle and high priest of your profession, Christ Jesus; who not only inculcated by his doctrine an holy fervor and alacrity in matters of eternity, but exemplified it in his life.—Arduous was his work, and difficult was his undertaking; yet he did not fail, nor was discouraged, till he could say, *it is finished.* Had he been stothful, then wo had been to us, here and hereafter. He went about doing good in the days of his humiliation. He suffered no day to pass, in which he did not accomplish some part of the work which the Father gave him to do. Retired upon the solitary mountain, he prayed whole nights away. How fervently he addressed the throne of his Father! How pathetically he declared the name of God unto his brethren, while the listening crowds were lost in deep attention!



ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF TIME.

O TIME, how short is thy continuance! how uncertain thy stay!

Indeed, if we compare thee with the transitory fashions of this world, thy face is full of wrinkles, and thou art the oldest of things; yet art thou but an infant in comparison of eternity past; yet art thou but a moment in comparison of eternity to come. Not many thousand years ago, the voice of the Almighty gave thee birth, when he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.—Yet a little while, the voice of the arch-angel, and the last trumpet's sound shall give thee death, and thou shalt be no more.—But, O how scanty is the share we have even in thy short duration! To us thou dwindlest down to threescore years and ten; nor can we assure ourselves even of this little span.

While we, poor dreaming mortals, supinely yawn on our beds of sloth, forgetful of the difficult and necessary work of our salvation; thou holdest on thy unrelenting career, swifter than the weaver's shuttle, the nimble arrow, or the eagle that hasteth to her prey.

None ever heard the tread of thy nimble feet, nor the sounding of thy wings. Though men have given thee a tongue, and thou speakest not once or twice, but twenty times in a day; yet man perceiveth it not. We never remember, that the striking of the clock is the knell of our departed hours; and we say, with the sluggard, "yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep."

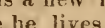
Could we recal thy steps, could we retrieve thy loss, perhaps our folly might admit some shadow of excuse. If our work might be accomplished with the slightest application; and if we were not at all accountable for the improvement we make of this most precious talent, then might our shameful prodigality be a more pardonable error. But since all those hopes are the most foolish and chimerical which can possibly enter into human breasts, to what shall we ascribe our listless languor, but to the most desperate infatuation and stupidity?

Happy the man who has a heart given him to use this price put into his hand to get wisdom; and who is skilled in the holy merchandise of redeeming the time! There are two maxims to which, in the course of his life, he stedfastly adheres.

The *first* is, that no space of time is to be left wholly blank and void, but every part of it ought to be filled up with doing good. He considers his time as an estate, or tract of ground, that ought to be diligently cultivated, or manured; and no parcel of it, though ever so barren, incapable of some improvement. He allows to the innocent demands of nature, for sleep and recreation, no more than is necessary, to recruit its languishing powers. Every day he estimates as lost, which has not produced some action;

that imports him as a rational immortal creature, tending to promote either the glory of God, the good of his neighbor, or the salvation of his own soul. He does not content himself in being diligent merely in the business of his civil calling, but to his power he does good unto all men; if the ignorant are to be instructed:—if the unruly are to be warned;—if the weak are to be supported;—if the disconsolate are to be comforted;—if the needy are to be relieved;—if innocence is to be vindicated from unjust aspersions;—if mistaken prejudices are to be removed;—and angry passions soothed. But chiefly acts of devotion; hearing or reading the word, pouring out his heart in prayer to a reconciled God:—these are his favorite employments, and the portions of time employed in them, the golden spots of his existence. A day in his courts, he esteems as better than a thousand.

The *second* is, that no opportunity of time be suffered to slip. As "to every thing there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven:" these opportunities he lays hold upon, as the calls of providence to do good, which will be quickly over and gone. In a word, he is hasty in beginning, and vigorous in pursuing every good work, and every laudable enterprise, but chiefly the work of his salvation. Every day he considers as a new life. He cares not so much how long time he lives in the world, as how well he employs it; as well knowing, that it is a prelude either to a joyful or disconsolate eternity.



The superior and distinguishing advantages of the christian in this life.

IT is true, there are beasts which excel us in bulk of stature, in perfection of sense, in vigor of nerves, in swiftness of their motion. The inhabitants of air are accommodated with wings; of water, with fins.—What then! are we not still the emperors of

the world? Yes, we are. Reason asserts our superiority; and reduces the most fierce, the most unwieldly, the most untractable of the brutal kind, under our yoke. By reason we put bits in the horse's mouth; tame the elephant, conquer the lion. Birds and fishes are catched in their own elements, and served up to our tables. This heavenly gift maintains our glorious prerogative. We ascend where they dare not soar, and trace the paths of the stars. Nor are the goods of fortune, glory, learning, much unlike the qualifications of the irrational kind, when compared with the superior excellencies of true wisdom, goodness, and religion. Be it so; the christian is not versant in mathematics, in history, in systems of philosophy; not a logician, not an orator. He never stormed a town, nor gained a victory. He has not what men call riches and honors. His clothes are not besmeared with gold. He plows not half a country with his oxen. He is not addressed with the high and sounding titles of your lordship, and your grace. He lives remote from courts and palaces, and is not surrounded with a numerous train of servants. The circle of his acquaintance is small. He lives not in the annals of time. He is not talked of among distant nations. But when he dies, he is forgotten.—— Yet let him not envy the great, the wealthy, the renowned; for, if true riches, if glorious honors, if refined pleasures can make him blessed, he is a happy man. He is not learned: but he is wise in what imports him most to know, as an immortal creature, wise unto salvation.—Behold his knowledge! for as the twinkling stars of night are eclipsed by the glorious star of day; so is the wisdom of the world, by that which cometh from above. He is not powerful: but he hath taken the kingdom of heaven by violence, laid hold on eternal life, and subdued his earthly affections. Behold the wonders of his might! He is not wealthy: but he is rich in faith, rich in hope: contentment is his natural wealth. He complains not of unsatisfied desires.—Behold his riches! He is not honorable:

but God is his father, Christ his brother, angels his servants, righteousness is his garment, holiness his ornament, the cross is his coat of arms, heaven is his inheritance, christian is his stile.—Behold his dignity! He is not renowned: but God commends him, angels applaud him. His glory is not bounded by the stars, nor ended by the conflagration. Behold his fame! In bondage, he is free; in poverty he is rich; in obscurity he is illustrious.—Happy man! enjoy thyself in the possession of true felicity; while others hunt after the shadow, and weary themselves in vain.

On the certainty of the christian's perseverance in his happy state.

"FEAR not, thou worm Jacob; I will help thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer, the holy One of Israel." O heavenly soul, who art redeemed not with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ; who are sanctified of God the Father; whose faith however weak, is yet unfeigned; know, to thy unspeakable comfort, no more thou shalt become a child of wrath, or slave of sin. No, sooner shall the mountains depart, being torn from their deep foundations; and the perpetual hills shall sooner be removed; sooner shall the sun, the glorious parent of the day; the moon, the silver regent of the night; be extinguished in their habitation, and stars rush from the darkened sky.

Your adversaries are many; your strength is small; your fears are multiplied; yet shall the principle of life, the habit of grace, the seed of God, remain. He whom you love, whom you fear, whom you serve, is able, is willing, to keep you from falling.—He who has begun the good work in you, will maintain, will increase, will accomplish the life of grace, and death of sin. Infeebled you may be, like a brui-

sed reed; a smoaking flax; a withered tree, whose fruits and leaves are nippen by surly winter; but you shall not be destroyed. Rejoice not against them, ye enemies of their salvation; triumph not over them, ye powers of darkness; for though they fall, they shall arise again.

Question not his power. Thus saith the faithful and true Witness, *my father is greater than all; and none is able*, whether by power or guile, *to pluck them out of my father's hand*, John x, 29. Is any thing too hard for the Lord, who spoke into existence this solid earth, and yonder glorious orbs?—who holds them in the hollow of his hand? How many are the wonders he has done, both in the heights above, and deeps beneath! but has he produced, and shall he be unable to preserve the vital principle, though like a living spark amidst the ocean of corruption?

Doubt not his will more than his power. It is the will of God your sanctification. For, lo! a Trinity of persons are in concert, as to produce, so to maintain thy grace.

If there be any immutability of thy purpose; if any stability of thy covenant; if any veracity of thy promise, O eternal Father! we shall not die, but live. From the beginning hast thou chosen them to salvation; and it is not possible they should be deceived, even by those impostors who do great signs and wonders, Matthew xxiv, 24. Once hast thou sworn by thy holiness; thou wilt not lie unto the mystical David, that he shall see his seed, and that they shall be established before thee. Thou wilt not retake thy gift of thine eternal Son; for thou art not a man that thou should repent. But, in what smiling promises hast thou plighted thy veracity, and declared the perpetuity of thy counsel? "I will be to them a God: I will give them one heart and way to fear me all the days of their life; and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; and I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart from me for ever,

Jer. xxxii, 38. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills shall be removed, but my loving kindness shall not depart from thee, and the covenant of my peace shall not be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee, Isa. liv, 10.

And shouldst not thou, O blessed Jesus! preserve with the most inviolable regard the gift of thy heavenly Father? Too dear they cost thee, O suffering Son of God! to suffer any, the least believer, to fall away and perish. For them thou left the skies; for them didst weep, and sweat great drops of blood, and groan, and die. And shall they not persevere unto the end? Yes: if prayers, if intercessions can ought avail. *Holy Father, keep them through thine own name.* Thus he addressed the glorious throne, while yet a sojourner of earth. Nor is he now unmindful of his brethren in the realms on high; for, while he breathed terrestrial air, he promised his drooping friends, "I will pray the Father, and he shall send you another Comforter, and he shall abide with you for ever." See him surrounded with prostrate seraphim! What joy and gladness in his countenance! what heaven in his eyes! Mark how the keys of hell and death depend upon his girdle! "Fear not, my beloved people, because I live ye shall live also. I am he which liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore; and I have the keys of hell and death;" to lock the prison doors upon these ugly monsters. O blessed Redeemer! if we, being enemies, were reconciled to God, our incensed Creator, by thy death; much more being reconciled, shall we be saved from falling away by thy life.

Nor dost thou, almighty Spirit, less insure our final perseverance; who dwellest in our souls, and makest our bodies thy living temple; who abidest in us a well of living water, springing up into everlasting life. Thou art the abiding unction, the incorruptible seed of God, the joyful earnest of the heavenly inheritance. By thee are we sealed unto the day of redemption; who shall dare to break up these living epistles,

and deface the sacred characters of thy law, which thou hast written in our hearts ?

On assurance of present and future happiness.

THE assured christian is a rare and happy person, whose conscience bears him witness in the Holy Ghost, that his faith is unfeigned ; his love sincere ; his fear filial ; his repentance evangelical. And being pleasingly conscious of those prints of divine grace in his own heart, which are the fruits of past election, and the buds of future glory, firmly concludes that he is in a state of favor with God, and an heir of the heavenly inheritance. He does not at all pretend unto extraordinary revelations ; but comparing the frame of his own soul with the characters of the children of God, he is persuaded, both from the outward declarations of the word, and the inward testimony of the Spirit, that he dwelt upon the heart of a loving God from everlasting ; and that every gracious promise shall be his inheritance at the last. For, by the mouth of these two witnesses, the Spirit and the word, he is established in the truth of this delightful persuasion. Therefore he knows, that it is no enthusiastic dream, or diabolical suggestion : but a sober certainty of walking bliss. It is true indeed he may not on all occasions be able to maintain such an exalted frame as this. Through temptation, desertion, the prevalence of corruption, he may walk in darkness, and have no light. But while he trusts in the name of the Lord, and stays himself on his God, the clouds are scattered, and his former assurance returns to him again with brighter evidence ; as clear shining after the rain, or blooming health after a fit of sickness.

But, O the blissful serenity of his soul, when drinking in the cheerful rays of the Almighty's countenance. He is calm as the evening of the summer ; and peaceful as the shades of the night. The sun

puts on a better beam, and every creature rejoices around him. He eats his bread with joy, and drinks his wine with a merry heart. The lying vanities of the world are totally neglected. An empire, in his balance, weighs a grain. The darkest night of affliction is illuminated by the sparklings of this white stone. For he is persuaded, that the afflictions of this present life, cannot disannul the everlasting love of God: as the law, which was four hundred years after, could not disannul the promise, before confirmed of God in Christ—Sometimes he has devoured torments, and come with an appetite into the flames. When the water-pots have been filled to the brim, the waters of affliction have been turned into the wine of consolation. He has played upon the hole of the asp, and put his hand into the den of the cockatrice. *O death*, he says, *where is thy sting?* There is none like him in all the earth, who is made without fear.—He is the chief of the ways of God; the noblest work of the Almighty. With what alacrity he runs the way of God's commandments! How sin is imbittered to his soul! How duties are sweetened! Not all the terrors of Sinai; the lightnings that flashed; the thunders that roared; when God came from Teman, and the holy One from mount Paran, could have such a powerful influence to molify the heart, as one drop of this dew that descendeth upon the mountains of Zion. How he twines about a precept! How he longs for a duty! How he catches an opportunity! And fearful of offending, he works out his own salvation with fear and trembling. How can he live in sin, when he is dead unto it? How can he walk in darkness when he has fellowship with God? How can he hanker after the husks of the swine, when feeding on the childrens' bread? or desire the onions and the garlic of Egypt, when eating the hidden manna, and gathering the clusters of Canaan?

Ye children of this world, whose little souls are captivated with low and perishable vanities; what can you produce equal unto this glorious prerogative?

We may apply what was said in another case by Gideon ; " is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim, better than the vintage of Abiezer ?"

ON DEATH.

O DEATH, how dismal thy appearance ! how grisly are thy features, to those whose thoughts cannot overlook this present transitory scene of things ? who have not learned to expatiate in the unknown regions of eternity, and know not where they shall fix their everlasting abode ! How dost thou rend the man in twain, bursting the silver cord which knit the soul & body into one ! From what dost thou snatch us away ? To what regions dost thou convey us ? Through what dark paths wilt thou conduct us from this world to the next ?—These all conspire to heighten thy terror, and make thy gloom more dreadful.

Thou rifiest the treasures of the anxious miser, and sulliest all the honors of the proud. At thy command the drunkard makes haste to finish his debauch, and the delicious epicure becomes the sweet repast of worms and reptiles. How wilt thou quench each burning lust in thy cold icy arms, O king of terrors !—The man of letters forgets his favorite books, which now in vain adorn the shelves covered with dust.—The sceptred hand now drops the reins of government. The stately rooms of the palace no more behold their honored lord. *Thou changest our countenance, and sendest us away.* No more shall we behold our joyous home ; our pleasing and affectionate relations ; nor the cheerful face of the day ; nor the delightful variations of the seasons. By thee, for ought we know, the stars are blown out as to us, the sun and moon are extinguished in their habitation.

And whither, O whither wilt thou carry us, when we renounce our correspondence with the sun ?——

When our dull body drops into the grave, and rots away unseen, where wilt thou send our trembling souls? What sights shall we see? What sounds shall we hear? With whom can we converse? Alas! it is a state of which we are ignorant; a world of spirits and disembodied beings, with whom we have no familiarity here.

How dark is the transition! how dreary is the path that leads us through thy deep and shady vale, O death! To whom have thy gates been opened?—Who knows thy secret chambers? No mortal e'er returned to tell us what thou art.

Yet must we tread the dismal road: nor are our steps to be recalled when fairly entered on it. No man hath power to retain the breath of his nostrils; neither hath he power in the day of wrath. How universal is thy dominion! how cruel is thy appetite, which never says it is enough! Long hast thou spread desolation through the universe: not among beasts and plants alone, but also among man's imperial race, in every period of time. Void of compassion for the smiling infant; the blooming youth; the venerable sage; thou blendest them in undistinguished ruin.—Thou regardest not the forces of strength; the charms of beauty; nor golden bribes of riches. Thou pourest contempt upon princes, in whom we cannot therefore safely trust; and upon all the sons of men, in whom there is no stay, because they are born to die.

"What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death?" We need not search for thee in the plains of battle; in the rocks and billows of the ocean; nor on the loaded table of luxury and intemperance.—Numberless accidents, and ghastly bands of pale diseases, surround us in terrible array. But accidents apart, and pale diseases set aside, old age soon cuts the thread of life and hastens thy approach. Threescore and ten, or fourscore revolving winters, may perhaps be numbered by us. Alas! how soon is this period exhausted! How exceeding diminutive it shews in reason's eye! and in the eye of him who is just now

to render up the ghost! As the shuttle sweeps over the loom in the twinkling of an eye; as the post, who carrying some message of importance, dispatched away, gains upon the road, and takes no time to view the adjacent country; as the ship which has the wind in her wings, skims over the watery plain; and as the fleet eagle, who spies out his prey from on high, descends with headlong precipitation; so flies our momentary duration.

Yet boast not of thy victories over the human race, thou unrelenting tyrant! There are who can behold thee with a smile, and laugh at the shaking of thy spear. Jesus the loving Savior, received into his soul the fatal sting, and wrought out all thy deadly venom. In vain you thought to hold him under thy gloomy dominion: for, "though he was dead, yet he is alive again, and liveth evermore." He entered thy dreary gates, and tasted of thy bitter cup for every elect man. Why should we fear to taste thee, or tread thy dreary vale, when the Breaker is gone up before us; who leads the blind in a way they know not, and in paths they have not known.

Repine at death? Why should the mournful prisoner take in bad part the kindly office that unties his fetters, and overturns the walls of his dungeon? Why should the child repine to burst the narrow confinement of the womb, and salute the rejoicing light of day! Ought not the weary pilgrim to bless the day which returns him to his father's house? and the espoused bride to rejoice in the hour when she is presented to her faithful bridegroom without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing?

Though thy pains, O death, were as terrible as a timorous imagination paints them, (which yet they cannot be, when the sensation is gone;) yet should we soon forget our miseries, by reason of those transporting scenes which shall straightway unfold unto our view.

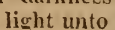
How soundly shall our dust sleep in the peaceful grave, thy dark and solitary mansion!, where we shall

not be pained with the gnawing of the worm; nor offended by the nauseous stench; nor wearied with dismal solitude; nor frighted with the surrounding darkness. These are the terrors of the living, not the dead.

It is true, the pleasant enjoyments of time are ours no more. But neither are the sins nor the sorrows. We bid farewell to the streams; but we bathe in the fountain of felicity. We shall no more behold the ways of men, nor see the glory of the Lord in the land of the living: yet shall we come to God, the judge of all; to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant; and to the innumerable company of angels, and spirits of just men made perfect.

Whither canst thou carry us, O death, from the presence of that God, whose loving-kindness is better than life? When, with thy trident, thou shalt break the pitcher of this mortal frame; the deathless soul is not like water spilt upon the ground; for the pitcher being broken at the fountain, it runs to its original, and can be gathered up again.

Hail, happy day, that destroyest the last enemy, in which the sleeping bones shall hear the call, and reunite into a system! How shall the reproach of the grave be wiped away, when that which was sown in dishonor and shameful putrefaction, shall be raised in glory? Then, O death, we shall no more be subject to thy power; when we shall call eternal life and immortality our own. "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; for though I fall by thy hand, I shall arise again; and when I sit in darkness in the grave, even then the Lord will be a light unto me."



ON THE RESURRECTION.

SHALL death always triumph over the human race, and hold these prisoners of the tomb in everlasting chains? Will the Lord forever despise the work

of his hands? nor ever repair these heaven-labored frames of flesh? Shall these holy hands, that are devoutly lifted up to heaven; those knees, that often were bended in humble supplication before the throne; those tongues, that talked of his wonderful works, and uttered his praises; and all the other instruments of righteousness, forever lie in rubbish? Shall the expectation of the poor always fail? Have the martyrs bled in vain, who were tortured, not accepting deliverance? Faithful is he who hath promised, who also will do it. It is the work of death to part the body from the soul; and then the grave eats up our flesh, and even gnaws our bones. Yet shall your works be destroyed, ye frightful monsters; bone shall come to his bone, dust to his dust; and every parted soul reenter its ancient habitation.

If it is marvellous in your eyes, should it be marvellous in his eyes, whose understanding is infinite, whose power is not to be conceived? Lift up your eyes on high, who hath created all these God-like luminaries, and marshals all their host? Behold, he formed the eye, and bored the ear, and fashioned all your members. By whom is his arm shortened, that he is not able to restore his workmanship when gone to dissolution? We understand not the powers of angels; we are struck with admiration at the curious arts, and witty inventions of puny mortals; and wonder how it is possible for them to give being to such elaborate productions. The art of the painter is deservedly amazing to those who are not formed by nature with such mysterious skill. How is the poor Indian amazed at the moving machines of watches and clocks, which are easily formed by European artists! With what inimitable art the skilful musician swells his notes, and sweeps the vocal strings! Are the ways of men above our shallow reach; and shall the ways of God be fully understood, seeing they are higher than our ways, as the heavens are higher than the earth?

When the mystery of God shall be finished, and the pregnant decree shall have travailed with her last birth, the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God. Behold, consider, and admire; the man of sorrows, who was crucified, dead, and buried, is the God who quickens the dead. Even those are made alive by him, who embrued their hands in his blood, who pierced his hands and his feet.—"To this end he both died, rose, and revived, that he might be the Lord of the quick and the dead."

O shrill-voiced trump of God, (whatever thou art,) how shalt thou wound the rest of many generations! The king shall hear thee beneath the vaulted marble, and shall come forth without his crown; and the peasant, who sleeps beneath the grassy turf, shall arise at thy command. Ocean shall hear and tremble in his deepest caverns; and render up his dead, which long did float upon its surface, and weltered in the winds, and at last were devoured by the finny inhabitants of the floods.

Populous assembly! not one missing of past, present, and future generations. Neither can they die any more. For, O thou last enemy! destructions are come to a perpetual end. Though you have razed cities, and their memorial is perished with them, now, in your turn, you shall be swallowed up in victory.—How glad would the ungodly be to find thee, when pulled out like sheep for the slaughter! they shall lift up, in that awful hour, a cry after thee, far more doleful than what was heard in Egypt, in the night fatal to their first-born. Gladly would they search for thee in the bottom of the ocean; or penetrate into the centre, through the interposing rocks, to find thee. But thou shalt flee from them, and leave them to eat the fruit of their ways.

Think on this dismal tragedy, ye dead in trespasses and sins. Yet are ye prisoners of hope.—Christ is the resurrection and the life. Believe on him; and though ye be dead, then shall you live.—

Repent and be converted every one of you, that your sins may be blotted out, and not found, when they shall be sought for, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.

Times of refreshing indeed to all the followers of the Lamb! Then shall his going forth be prepared as the morning, after a melancholy night of blackness, and darkness, and tempest; or, as the beauteous spring, when she comes after a surly winter, to strow the earth with flowers, and clothe the naked trees in green attire. "Awake, and sing," shall he say, "ye that dwell in dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast forth her dead, and shall no more cover her slain."

Then shall those who, perhaps, expired in mutual wounds, join hand in hand, and mutually partake in the redeemer's purchase. There Mephibosheths are not lame; nor Leahs tender-eyed; nor shall Timothy be any more subject to his often infirmities. For He shall change our vile body, and make it like that glorious one which he himself doth wear. Farewell to pining sickness. Adieu ye ghastly band of pale diseases, distempers lingering and acute, hunger, thirst, and weariness. No more, O balmy sleep! shall we need thy welcome refreshment, when that which is *sown in dishonor, shall be raised in glory.*

Great is your gain, ye saints, when ye exchange time for eternity! Nor is it only gain to your undying souls, but even to your putrefying clay; which, with inconceivable improvement, shall be restored you again. Nor is it a doubtful event. Ye dead men of the Lord, together with his dead body shall you arise. For you he visited the gloomy mansion of the grave. Your redeemer has warmed your clay-cold bed, and left a most delightful odor in the noisome sepulchre. He who brought Israel out of Egypt, and Jonah out of the belly of the fish, and Daniel from the den of lions, will surely bring you from the grave; for the temples of the Holy Ghost will not always lie in rubbish, nor the members of the body of Christ for

ever be forgotten in the pit of corruption. The Lord Jesus Christ he is the head, the living head; and ye are the members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. He is the first-fruits, and ye are the full harvest. He is the first-begotten from the dead, and ye, as the younger brethren, shall be begotten in your season. And with your clay, your characters shall rise, and your righteousness shall go forth as the light. For, by the resurrection from the dead, ye shall, like Christ, be declared the sons of God with power.

ON THE RESURRECTION AND JUDGMENT.

THERE is a time, (who knows how near?) when, according to the tenor of the sacred oracles, the mystery of God shall be finished, the Lord himself shall descend with a shout; the dead shall be raised; the living shall be changed; the world shall be judged.—Whatever great or dreadful has been achieved under the sun, falls infinitely short of the transactions of this awful day. Mercifully has our gracious God suppressed this day and hour in darkness, that we may never intermit our watch. O did we make this wise improvement of it!

Methinks the awful period is arrived. The drousy world is lost in security: little dreaming of an extinguished sun, or falling stars. Some will be buying and selling in the market; some will be debauching in the tavern; some will be planting trees; some will be building houses; some will be marrying, and giving in marriage; when, lo! the dreadful sound of a trumpet, blown by a strong lunged angel, (perhaps the same that was once heard on Sinai, waxing louder and louder,) shall wound the ear of nature, proclaiming the approach of the judge, that an end, an end is come, and the fashion of this world passeth away.

Behold, he cometh with clouds! innumerable angels attend his approach, and pour around his chariot; his

radiant face eclipses the lustre of the sun; beneath him a great throne, white as the snow, and fiery as the flame.—Is this he who was born in Bethlehem, and groaned on Calvary? whom ye insulted, O malicious Jews, bending your knees before him in solemn mockery? Say now, mistaken Caiaphus, whether did he or thou blaspheme?

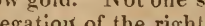
Long had the prisoners of the grave slept in darkness; but now they awake out of their iron sleep, they shake off the slumber of a thousand ages. Now monuments render back their dust, church yards and burial grounds pant and heave. Even palaces will then be found to have been but upper chambers to a tomb. And the ocean itself will seem to have been paved with human skulls.—Strange to behold! the fragments of bodies will fly through the air, to obey the signal of the trumpet, and join their fellow members, however distant. Ask not, ye profane, how can it be? For, who hath shortened his arm? He who knit your bodies together at the first, can reunite your scattered dust, though the four winds were warring for it. Three days did the prophet Jonah suffer a living death in the belly of a fish; but when the third morning gilded the mountains, and played upon the billows, the obedient monster returned his sacred guest untouched upon the safe shore. So, at the appointed season, the grave, at the command of God, shall cast forth her dead, and the earth shall no more cover her slain.

Meantime, the living shall undergo a change equivalent unto death, and this mortal shall put on immortality. This is a great mystery. Here let us leave it under a veil, and proceed to take a view of that most populous assembly, where Adam shall salute his youngest son. The billows are not so numerous that break upon the shore, nor the stars that glitter in the firmament. The edict of the almighty King shall sweep an area for this vast congregation. Here all civil distinctions are buried. The mighty Cæsar stands upon a level with the meanest of the throng.—

No respect is paid to him that wore imperial purple. Here the great heroes of antiquity shall stand unmarked and unadored.

See there on the left hand of the judge, that direful croud, pale with horror and amazement! how their eyeballs roll in wild affright! what despair is in every gesture!—Most gladly would they bless the grave to cover them; the flames to wrap them; the rocks to hide them; or the seas to sweep them from the presence of him that sits upon the throne.

But mark on the right hand that triumphant assembly, who face the thunders with dauntless magnanimity! when the stars are falling, their thoughts are fixed: when the earth is quaking, their hearts are unappalled. They view with calm serenity, the yawning gulf, the glorious judge; and hail the happy morning of the resurrection. Are these the forms that mouldered in the dust! What rosy youth smiles in their countenances! Once did they lie among the pots of sin and misery; but now they are made as a dove, whose wings are covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold. Not one sinner shall stand in this vast congregation of the righteous.



ON THE MISERY OF THE DAMNED.

CANST thou descend, O my soul! with awful step into the doleful regions of damnation?—Let thy heart meditate terror. The more shall thy fears be alarmed to fly from the wrath to come in this thy day of merciful visitation: the more shall thy gratitude be awakened to thy loving Savior, who redeems thy life from destruction, and who says unto thee, *Fear not, I have the keys of hell and of death.* But have the doors of the shadow of death been opened unto us? Who can presume to give the geography of this dismal territory, or confidently say in what place of this large universe eternal justice has ordained this doleful dun-

geon? Whether it shall be in the centre of the earth, or in some blazing comet, or far beyond the limits of this lightsome world, where chaos and eternal darkness reign—HE only knows, before whom hell and destruction hath no covering. No thoughts can reach, no words can paint the horrors of this dreary region, where the miserable inhabitants drink of the wrath of the Almighty, and know by dreadful experience what is the power of his anger. Waving the metaphorical descriptions of darkness, worms, and fire; there dwells the most restless and unsatisfied desire; the most overwhelming shame; the most horrible fear; the most dismal sorrow; the most tormenting envy; the most unrelenting hardness of heart; and the most racking despair.

They hunger, but there is no food to relieve their appetite; they thirst, but there is no refreshing fountain, nor even a cooling drop. Should sensual appetites remain, they never can be gratified. As heathen poets sung of Tantalus, burning with thirst and hunger; gladly would he snatch at the delicious apples hanging over his head, or steal a cooling draught of water that came up to his chin: but no sooner did he make the fruitless attempt, than the apples fled from his grasp, and the waters from his taste. So shall they "snatch on the right hand, and be hungry; and they shall eat on the left, and shall not be satisfied; they shall eat every man the flesh of his own arm."

How will the impropriety of their past conduct expose them to the bitter taunts of insulting devils, and to the painful upbraidings of their own hearts!—Fools that we were, for one morsel of meat to sell our heavenly birthright! for such transitory delights; for such little sips of polluted joys, to awaken these everlasting flames?

What fearfulness and trembling shall come upon them, when they behold the angry face of God clad with an everlasting frown! Who can behold it, and not be sore amazed! Even the Son of God did sweat

great drops of blood when he beheld it. How then shall these feeble creatures endure!

Lo! heaven shuts its everlasting doors upon them, while their minds are haunted with the ghastly apparitions of their departed joys. How keen must be the sorrow! how cutting the anguish of such a thought! I have eternally lost the incomparable happiness of yonder blessed abodes. Where are ye now my pleasing comforts! How have you fled away as a vision of the night.

Nor will it be a small part of their misery, to envy the prosperity of the righteous, when they shall seize their heavenly thrones, and tune their harps to strains of highest rapture. When "their horn shall be exalted with honor, the wicked shall see it, and be grieved: he shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away."

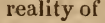
O shocking to think! they will eternally hate the eternal Excellency, because they are hated of him.—No more shall the divine Spirit excite the faintest motion in their minds towards God, or holiness. The iron sinew of their stubborn will, will grow more hard by these fierce flames. They may indeed repent, but their repentance worketh death.

Here hope supports under the greatest pressures; but there that anchor shall be broken. Here the sons of sorrow will sometimes sink in soft repose; the couch will ease their complaint; and kind officious friends will fall on various methods to blunt the edge of the sharpest pain. Even the tortured wretch, though dying hard and slow, may comfort himself with this, that his torments will shortly come to an end.—But these can hope for no respite, nor period of their woes.

How would it stamp a bow in their cloud, to think there were an end! but in vain, should they shed an ocean of tears, and stretch out their suppliant hands. Death will flee from them, consigning them to flat despair. Have pity upon them, O ye their friends. Will no affectionate relation shed a compassionate tear?—

Alas! the father will not pity his children, and the mother will have no compassion on the son of her womb, for they sing hallelujah, when the smoke of their torment ascendeth for ever and ever.

Surely *such are the dwellings of the wicked: and this is the place of him that knoweth not God.* O my soul! envy not their momentary happiness, *come not into their secret, be not united unto their assembly.*—— How much better is it for thee to strive to enter in at the strait gate, with these happy few that find it, than to go with the multitude in the broad way that leadeth unto destruction? Canst thou fly too fast from hell and damnation? Canst thou be too careful to avoid those paths, which, though strewed with roses, lead down to the chambers of death? Whether is it better thy flesh should murmur, or thy soul should perish? O that knowing these terrors of the Lord, our whole life might be one constant flight from the wrath that is to come! How miserable are they who will not be persuaded of the reality of everlasting torments, by all the threatenings of the word, when it is declared by the faithful and true witness, "if they will not believe Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one should arise from the dead."



ON THE HAPPINESS OF HEAVEN.

GLORIOUS things are spoken of thee, O city of God! and of those happy beings who walk thy golden streets, and dwell in thy ivory palaces.—They are all of them kings and priests unto God.

Hail, ye highly favored of the Lord, ye nations of them that are saved! Now have ye received power over the nations of numerous corruptions, and rule them with a rod of iron.—A crown not of flowers, which fade, not of gold, which is also a corruptible thing; but of glory, or righteousness, of life, shall flourish on your heads. The throne of Christ himself

receives you. Eternal shall be your triumph, ye happy victors, who have more than conquered.—— Therefore are ye arrayed in white robes, with palms in your hands, and songs of salvation in your mouths.

The Lord is your inheritance, ye royal priesthood. By Jesus Christ your altar, shall you offer up the sacrifices of praise continually. You shall go no more out from the heavenly temple, as did the legal priests below; for he shall make you as the pillars of Jachin and Boaz in the temple of your God.—In what flowery paths, by what living waters, shall the Lamb in the midst of the throne conduct you, ye flock of his pasture, for whom your good Shepherd did give his very life! Under what verdant shades shall you repose, where the sun shall not light on you, nor any heat! O happy rest from sin and sorrow into which ye have entered, ye people of God! No more shall ye weary yourselves in the greatness of your way.—Your understanding shall rest in the contemplation of truth; your wills in the fruition of good. Every wish is crowned, every desire is gratified by God himself, your exceeding great reward. Plentiful feast to which ye are invited, where ye feed upon the hidden manna, and taste that the Lord is good. No more shall pale famine approach your blessed abodes, who are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb. O blissful vision to which you are admitted! No more ye see through a glass darkly. Not the back parts only, but the face and similitude of the Lord shall you behold.—All ye beholding, with open face, this glory of the Lord, shall be satisfied and sanctified at once. With joy, and in righteousness, shall you see his face.—— But, O thou exceeding great and eternal weight of glory! Eye hath not seen thee, ear hath not heard thee, heart hath not conceived. What tongue, what pen of angels can describe thee? Therefore by such variety of metaphors art thou shadowed out in the book of God.

O heavenly Father! give me the light of the knowledge of thy glory. Irradiate my mind, O di-

vine Spirit! that in thy light I may know what is the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.

As delicious meat unto the taste; as fragrant perfume unto the smell; as melodious accents to the ear; as delightful colors to the eye; so is the knowledge of wisdom unto the soul. But, *where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding?* In vain you search for it in these dull regions. Here, with laborious assiduity, we dig for her as for hid treasures. When found, by many a painful effort, how far from satisfactory? Neither do we find that knowledge is productive of holiness in heart and life. How many, like that prodigious image which Daniel beheld in the visions of the night, have added feet of sordid clay to heads of purest gold? But in that happy country, the night of intellectual darkness no more attends her dusky shade. The tree of knowledge is the tree of life in the celestial paradise. Then each mysterious doctrine in religion shines brighter than the light, and full day pours on all the paths of heaven.—How are the channels of the deep waters discovered, through which the Almighty held his darksome way?

Sin too is banished from those bright abodes; for the people that dwell there shall be all righteous. No more shall the body of sin, and power of indwelling corruption, fetch the deep groan from the bottom of the heart. That root of bitterness which hereabouts was left, with bands of iron and brass, is quite extirpated. No more shall Jacob and Esau struggle in the womb of the sanctified ones; nor the law in the members war against the law of the mind. It is true the militant graces shall resign, when every enemy lies prostrate on the field. Victorious faith and hope now enter into rest. But charity never faileth. Charity, which is the fulfilling of the law, shall burn in purest flames for ever and ever. Happy, thrice happy they who have attained this holy perfection. Your harps shall be always tuned, and your garments always white. Now are ye eased of your greatest burden, and rescued from the hands of your deadliest foe. No more

shall wandering thoughts annoy your heart nor idle words flow from your tongue. While we, alas! must sore complain of vanity, perverseness, and disorder in mind, will, and affection.

Neither shall there be any more pain; for sorrow shall be turned into joy. O ye that rejoice in God above all, and in Christ Jesus, with joy unspeakable, though now you see him not; how shall you be comforted, when you shall behold his face in righteousness, wearing sweet smiles! Will it not be good for you to be with him who died for you? with him where he is, that you may behold his glory? Then shall you see those hands and feet that were pierced; that side which was wounded; that head which wore the thorny crown. Is this the man who groaned and died on Calvary for me? who descended into the grave for me? Yes; this is the man, the God-man, Jesus, the same to-day, yesterday, and for ever. No flight of years shall dissolve the mysterious union of his humanity with the divine person of the eternal Son.

All their springs of consolation are derived from this fountain of living waters; yet are there other considerations in which they shall rejoice, though with inferior delight. Then shall they come to you, ye innumerable company of angels; nor be startled at familiar interviews with you, though disembodied creatures, as they were in their mortal state. Here you were the spectators of their conflicts, and the guardians of their virtue; then shall ye be the associates of their bliss.

O comfortable society! Then, too, shall we come to the general assembly and church of the first-born. Those who lived in distant periods of the world shall meet in one congregation. The inhabitants of distant regions shall be there; those who dwelt in Britain and Judea. O large communion! which no distance of time, no length of sea and land can confine: no animosty shall corrupt, world without end. There our grand parents eat the tree of life, no flaming sword

forbidding all access. The patriarchs shall wander no more as pilgrims and strangers, having found the country they desired. There shall we see the venerable saint, whose faith enabled him to obey, without reluctance, the most difficult precept that ever was given; and him whose invincible patience triumphed over the greatest load of calamities. There shall we see the prophets who foretold, and the apostles who published the power and coming of his Majesty; and all the goodly company, who loved not their lives unto the death, but rendered their lives, by cruel tortures, for the love of the truth. How frequently is that complaint of the prophet to be taken up in these regions of sorrow, "wo is me! for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, and there is no cluster to eat; the good man is perished out of the land!" But no sinner shall be there, no deceitful hypocrite in all the fair association.

Nor will they be insensible of joy from the glories of that delightful place where they shall dwell. O the novelty, the beauty, the grandeur of the heaven of heavens, the house not made with hands, the city that hath foundations infinitely surpassing the temple of Solomon, and the city of David! Beautiful was the earthly paradise, and beautiful the earthly Canaan; yea, beautiful is this habitable earth, where many of the enemies of God reside. What then must be the heavenly paradise, the heavenly Canaan, which God hath prepared for them that love him!

And, O with what fair bodies shall they be clothed, who have put on immortality! "The inhabitant of that land shall not say, I am sick;" but his countenance shall smile with rosy celestial youth for evermore.

The hell they have avoided will accent their songs of salvation; and the world they have escaped will serve as a foil to the bliss. Thus it enhanced the miraculous deliverances of the Israelites, to see from the safe shore the wretched Egyptians tumbling in the ocean; and as the waste and howling wilder-

ness gave additional charms to the land that flowed with milk and honey.

Nor will you be inactive through long eternity.—You rest not day nor night; yet shall you be strangers to weariness and fatigue. To praise him shall be your element; to teach the arches of your lofty palaces to resound with the name of him you loved will be your delightful employment, while ages roll away.

For, O eternity! eternity! it is thine to crown the joys above. Thou art the knot which bindest the bundle of life together. Without the thought of thee, dim sadness would not spare the faces of the blessed, their songs would be marred with dreadful discordance, and all the blissful bowers would lose their charms.

On the manifestation of the Son of God in human flesh.

THE seventy weeks of Daniel were now elapsed; and they who looked for salvation in Israel, were wrapt in silent expectation of the Messiah coming in the name of the Lord to save them. Long had the Gentile nations walked in their own ways, and the Jews practised the ceremonies of Moses. But neither could the precepts of the philosopher retrieve the ruins of our fall, nor could the carnal ordinances of the law make them perfect, who had recourse unto them, as touching the conscience. For as yet the daily oblation had not ceased; nor the temple smoked in ruin, into which the messenger of the covenant, according to the ancient prediction, was suddenly to come.—The sceptre of David was now sunk into the hatchet of a carpenter, and his tabernacle was fallen down.—Tiberius swayed the sceptre of Rome; Herod was king in Judea; John the baptist had been six months in the womb, who was to be the harbinger of his coming; and a profound peace reigned over the world,

as a presage of his birth, whose name is called, *the Prince of Peace.* When the almighty King, who is ever mindful of his covenant, dispatches from the blessed abodes, lo the angel Gabriel, (none of the least of the heavenly throng, and not now first employed in embassies of love to man,) to salute the blessed virgin, the mother of our Lord. The obedient angel flies, and punctually discharges his commission. But, O ye papists, though he honors her as a saint, he worships her not as a goddess. A new thing indeed it was in the earth, that a virgin should conceive; but by no means impossible unto the Holy Ghost to bring about by his over-shadowing power. If once a woman was formed out of the substance of a man, why should not that same divine power be fully able to produce a man out of the substance of a woman? May we not humbly judge that it came from Him who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working, that for the general honor of our nature, the Savior did spring from that feeble sex which was first in the transgression? For, "as the woman is of the man, even so also the man is by the woman; but all things are of God." O condescending Savior, blessed, beyond all peradventure, was the womb that bare thee, and those paps that gave thee suck; nor is it easy to conceive how a sinful woman could be more highly honored, than to carry thee in her womb, unless by having thee formed in her heart.

Here let us forego all idle speculations, about what other methods are possible to God, by which to send forth his Son into our lower world; and let us rather be willing to discern the characters of wisdom that are evidently instamped upon this dispensation, such as it is. For had a body been prepared him of nothing, of the dust of the ground, or of some heavenly materials, he would not have been of the same flesh and blood with those he intended to redeem. Or had it been produced in the ordinary method of human generation, he would have been involved in the same guilt of Adam's originating sin with the rest of mankind,

whom he represented in the first broken covenant.—As in the former case his relation to us would (for what appears) have been too remote; so in the latter, he would (in all appearance) have been too like us; not only in qualities of our nature, but in the guilt of our persons. But now he is born of a woman, and therefore of our bone, and of our flesh. And because his mother is a virgin, we easily understand how he is holy, undefiled, and separated from sinners.—But here a difficulty arises to our thoughts; for, if she is a virgin that shall be with child by the Holy Ghost, who shall preserve her character from the unjust aspersions of the world? It is far more fitting, that her holy child Jesus shall confirm the truth of his divine extraction, by the tenor of his deportment, when adult, than that she shall be the assertor of it. Therefore she is betrothed unto a husband, who is at once the witness and the guardian of her virginity.

But leaving the sacred embryo to be curiously wrought in the lower parts of the earth by the fingers of the Almighty, let us next see in what manner the heavenly infant was ushered into the light, "for thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though little among the thousands of Judah," according to the prophets, "shalt give birth to the Ruler of Israel." But though the blessed virgin can trace her genealogy from David, and from Abraham, she is a resident of Nazareth, from whence no prophet was expected to arise. How then shall the prediction be accomplished? The emperor of Rome issues a royal edict, that all his large dominion shall be taxed. He meant to fill his coffers with money; but a greater sovereign than he intended the fulfilling of his promises. While every man repairs to his city to be taxed, in obedience to the imperial mandate, Joseph his father, as was supposed, repairs among the rest to Bethlehem, the city of his family, being of the house and lineage of David. And now he is arrived with Mary, his espoused wife; who being near the time of her delivery, had been directed by providence, or special instinct, to accompany her

husband on this occasion. No costly palace receives our wearied travellers. A common inn is the place of his nativity. Perhaps a silent intimation, that he himself should be a common Savior. Nor even in the inn could a commodious apartment be spared to the Lord of heaven and earth. Ye men of Bethlehem, what a guest did you exclude! The coarse accommodation of the manger was all his mother could obtain for her tender infant. Lo! there HE lies wrapt in swaddling clothes, whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain. He is associated with the herds in the stall, whom all angels adore! For this is HE; believe it, ye children of men, whose name is Immanuel, which by interpretation is, God with us! This is HE, who from all everlasting was the brightness of his Father's glory, the express image of his person, who rejoiced always before him, and was daily his delight. This is HE, who was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God; but for our salvation he is clothed in flesh and blood, and now becomes a helpless feeble infant!—O ye beautiful scenes of the creation, thou glorious sun; thou silver moon; and all ye glittering stars, in you the invisible things of God are clearly seen; but now you are eclipsed by the more excellent glory, God manifested in the flesh. Come hither, ye that thirst for curious knowledge, and lose yourselves in thankful admiration. For the person of the eternal Word, by whom all things were made, is found in the likeness of man, is become as our brother that sucked the breasts of our mother.—Not that he stripped himself of any divine perfection, or ceased to be what he was; but by a most ineffable act of condescension and power, he has veiled the glory of his divinity, and become what he was not, by assuming a portion of our humanity to subsist in his own personality. O mysterious infant, the glory of our race, who art not ashamed to call us *brethren!*—now, thou art fully able to give our ransom unto God, and the redemption of our souls, though precious, shall not cease for ever.

What charming melody is that breaking the silence of the night, and tasting strong of heaven? It is a multitude of the heavenly host praising God in strains of highest rapture. O shepherds! blessed were your ears, to hear such early tidings of a Savior born in the city of David. Though your heads were wet with dew, and your locks with the drops of the night; yet none of the princes of this world could boast of such an honor. But, lo! three eastern sages, conducted by a wonderous star, or glittering meteor, come from a far country, to seek and worship the princely babe of Bethlehem. They are not scandalized at the inglorious figure the infant king did cast; but perceiving the rays of Deity, even through the veil of flesh, (such is the power of faith,) they not only offer unto him costly presents, but address him with divine honors. A sad presage, ye children of the kingdom, that "many shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the south, and from the north, and shall sit down with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob, in the kingdom of God, when you yourselves shall be cast out." In vain does the besotted tyrant of Judea think to reverse the high decrees of heaven, by issuing out a bloody mandate to murder the tender innocents. While their infant blood defiles the streets of Bethlehem, Egypt herself shall be a sanctuary to the young Prince of Peace.—Be comforted, ye mothers, whose lovely babes have perished in so good a cause, and received such an early crown. In a little time the cruel murderer shall feel the weight of so many just curses upon his guilty head; and the Messias shall reign in spite of his infuriate and feeble rage.

We cannot reasonably doubt, but the young Redeemer gave early proofs of his divine original. It was no doubt, a very pleasing employment to the highly favored parents, to rear up this tender plant by a thousand endearing offices; to mark the first buddings of his genius more than mortal; and to observe the blossoms of every heavenly grace that adorned his

holy soul. But as it hath seemed good to the wisdom of the Holy Ghost, to be very sparing in the history of his private life, after he had called his son out of Egypt, we must be content to remain in ignorance of what is not revealed. Yet, as a specimen of the rest, one remarkable occurrence is transmitted down to our knowledge, concerning the holy child Jesus. He had numbered but twelve revolving years, when, accompanying his religious parents to the solemn festival of the passover, young as he was, he could maintain a dispute even with the doctors in the temple.—His parents, not suspecting where he was, seek him with sorrowful hearts, and the third day restores him to their longing eyes. Wist ye not that he had the business of his heavenly Father to look after, and that he needs not your parental care! For, though his parents should both forsake him, the Lord will take him up.—Ye learned doctors, little thought you, that the amazing child, who talked with you to the great admiration of every beholder, was he, of whom the prophet says, "to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, and the mighty God."

For the space of thirty years he lurked in obscurity in the contemptible village of Nazareth. Who would have suspected that the son of the carpenter was himself the everlasting Father; and the Creator of all the ends of the earth? But now the time is come when he shews himself unto Israel. What venerable person is he, who, like the ancient Elias, wears a hairy garment; and in the villages of the wilderness, preaches the doctrine of repentance; talks of the kingdom of heaven being at hand; of the axe to the root; the fan to the wheat; and the chaff to the fire? It is the forerunner of Christ, "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord." See how the multitudes flock after him, to his baptism! even Christ himself condescends to be baptised of him. The hoary Baptist wonders that the Master should come to the servant; who was not

worthy to perform the meanest office to such an exalted Dignitary. But *thus it became him to fulfil all righteouness.*—Once he was circumcised; to sanctify the church that then was; to honor the divine ordinances; and to testify that he was a debtor to do the whole law. And now he is baptised; to sanctify the church that is to be; and to confirm his faith by this expressive sign, in the promise of his everlasting Father. For, though he needed not the washing of regeneration, (as we;) yet, when he descended into the baptismal waters, it signified the large effusion of the Spirit upon his sacred humanity, to qualify him fully for his high and saving work. And may we not also think, that when he ascended from this consecrated stream, into which he went down with willing steps, he was then assured, that in like manner he should lift up his head above the waters of adversity, and emerge victorious from under the billows of his Father's wrath? O Jordan, it was a strange thing that befel thee, when thy waters drove back their course at the presence of God, and when Elijah smote them with his mantle; but much more strange is this, that he who poured them out into thy bed, and made the dry land, and the fountains of waters, is now washed in thy hallowed wave; while from on high the heavens are opened; a voice is heard from the excellent glory; and the Holy Ghost, in the likeness of a dove, descends upon him.

Now, let us follow the illustrious Redeemer from the banks of Jordan unto the solitary wilderness, where Moses the giver, and Elias the restorer of the law, fasted forty days; and where the ancient Israelites provoked him forty years. There, too, the great fulfiller of the law, during the space of forty days, abstains from food, being supported by a divine power, and fed with holy contemplation. But afterwards he feels the gnawing power of hunger; to expiate the luxury of Adam in the garden of paradise, and to demonstrate the truth of his humanity. When, lo! the subtle enemy is permitted to assault his virtue by

sundry ensnaring artifices. But all his efforts are baffled by this Captain of our salvation.—Think it not strange, O humble soul, if this malicious spirit shall tempt, with restless importunity, even to the most atrocious crimes; and shall abuse even the sacred oracles to this vile purpose. He came unto the glorious head, in all points tempted like as we are. But being resisted by the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, he betakes himself to shameful flight.

Let us now proceed to trace the most interesting steps of our Redeemer's life, when he dwelt among us in our flesh. And shall we first listen unto him as a teacher come from God? With what inimitable authority! with what irresistible wisdom, impartial freedom, undaunted boldness, unwearied diligence, burning zeal! with what homely plainness, condescending humility, tender compassion, amiable meekness, long-suffering patience, divine delight, did he preach righteousness in the great congregation! How eloquent! How pathetic! How mighty in the scriptures!—But who can enumerate all the wonderful works which, by his own power, and for the manifestation of his own glory, he effected? The raging element of water he stills with a powerful word, and walks upon its rolling surges. Trees withered at his rebuke; fishes have paid him tribute. How often did he give sight to the blind; hearing to the deaf; speech to the dumb; strength to the weak; health to the diseased; purity to the defiled? Even strong death could not retain his prisoners, when he gave the high command. Never were words so gracious as those he spake. Never were works so glorious as those he did.

Perhaps it might be enquired, in what palaces he dwelt? what riches he possessed? what princes was he acquainted with? But though he calls the silver and the gold his own, if he pays tribute, a fish supplies him with money; if he rides, he must borrow an ass. He built the sky, and had not where to lay his head. He prepares the corn, and was fed at the table

of others. O poverty! how dost thou expose to contempt even the greatest wisdom, and most solid virtue, in this degenerate world! But though he was rich, for our sakes he became poor; and by his poverty, we shall be enriched.

The faithless and perverse generation among whom he conversed, not content with rejecting his heavenly doctrines, blaspheming his miracles, and staining his moral character with the most odious imputations, arrived at that enormous pitch of wickedness, as on many occasions to thirst for his blood.—— Sometimes they take up stones to cast at him, as an abominable wretch unworthy to breathe the vital air; and sometimes they lead him to the brow of an hill, with an impious intention to cast him down; tho' in the village where he was born; and though a while before, they wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth.

Nor was the conclusion of the scene unlike its beginning. Even to the last we find him a man of sorrows. Is it nothing to you, O ye children of men? Much every way. For, by his bloody sweat you are purged; by his condemnation you are absolved; by his bonds you are loosed; by his death you are quickened; and by his stripes you are healed. Nor must we regard the last dismal sufferings of the Redeemer, in the light of an affecting tragedy, but of an evangelical history.

Already he had made his triumphant, though lowly entrance into Jerusalem, riding upon an ass!— amid the acclamations of the populace, in accomplishment of an ancient prediction. His eye had melted in tender compassion over the bloody city. He had eat the last passover, and instituted the new solemnity of the supper. Many excellent discourses he had made to his sorrowful disciples; and, by the significant ceremony of washing their feet, he strongly inculcated, how by love we should serve one another in all humility.—But as once we saw him in the wilderness, let us now attend him into that garden of Geth-

semane, the scene of his dreadful agony; where he trode the wine-press alone; or, rather was trodden in the wine-press of his Father's wrath; where he was in all the mysteries of woe; where he beheld the angry face of God; and felt the sting of death, long sharpened (if we may use the expression) upon the stony tables of the law, infixed into his very soul. See how he lies all prostrate on the ground, and pressed out of measure! with an invisible load, till large red drops of blood issue from every opened pore! What words were these, O Savior, that dropped from thy lips in this sore and bloody conflict, when, in the most fervent manner, thou didst deprecate the bitter cup?—Was it the prospect of thy cruel death? Was it the terror of thy crucifixion, that made thee stand aghast, and to shrink back with shuddering horror? O no.—Thy martyrs have rejoiced even in the sternest tribulations, have bid defiance to all the variety of torture, and resolutely met the king of terrors in his most formidable armor. For they beheld the face of God clad with sweet smiles, while their afflictions did abound. But thine it was to know the power of God's anger; according to his fear, so is his wrath. It was the burden of our guilt; and it was the lively sense of the Almighty's indignation, that filled thee with such amazing anguish; and extorted from thy human nature, confession of distress, in tears and groans, and prayers to him that was able to save thee from death.

But he survives the bloody sweat, being strengthened by an angel, and supported by his own divinity: when, lo! the perfidious traitor comes and dares approach to salute with a treacherous kiss, those lips that knew no guile. For the wretched gain of thirty pieces of silver, the price of a slave, when pushed by an ox that he died, (a goodly price that he was prized at by them!) did this miserable sinner betray his Lord and master. O cursed lust of gold! to what enormous crimes canst thou urge on the human mind! —But who are these he brings along with him? Romans and Jews sent from the high priests. "Why do

the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing, to plot against the Lord, and his anointed ?" Against whom do they come thus equiped with swords and staves ?—But what is this ?—They go backward, and fall to the ground !—Understand, ye wicked, that he is able to slay you with the breath of his mouth, and cast you down beyond the possibility of arising. But his hour is now come.—Take him—and lead him away.—Let the disciples retire at the permission of their Lord.—And thou, Peter, put up thy sword—leave vengeance unto God.

The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord is taken in their pits. He is bound like a malefactor, who proclaims liberty to the captives. Easily could he act the Sampson upon this occasion. But the justice of his Father forbids it; and the cords of his own love, stronger than all fetters, hold him fast.—— Where do they lead him but to the high priest, as a lamb to the slaughter ?

In vain does the conscience of Pilate remonstrate the innocency of the Pannel. In vain does the wife of Pilate dissuade from sanguinary methods, and tell about her ominous dream the preceding night. The silly judge, intimidated by the threats, and dunned by the clamor of the mob, delivers Jesus unto their will, and releases unto them the murderer whom they prefered.—What barbarous indignities were done unto him both before and after he received his sentence, may justly raise our wonder, while they excite our detestation. Lo ! he is exceedingly filled with contempt, being forced to wear the ludicrous ensigns of majesty. His crown is a wreath of thorns. His sceptre, a reed. The judge of Israel is smitten with a rod reproachfully. He hides not his face from shame and spitting. They rest not here; for his back is prepared for the tearing scourge. In these circumstances of disgrace, he is denied by his only apostle who had the courage to follow him. O Peter, hear you not the witnesses accusing him falsely ? Is this your kindness to your friend ? Where now is your confi-

dent boasting? But so it was foretold by Christ; and for this let us pass the time of our sojourning here in fear.

Ah! how have we made him to serve with our iniquities! For panting, and spent with toil, and covered with blood and sweat, he bears his cross, "his visage is marred more than any man's, and his form more than the sons of men." And now he is arrived at the appointed place for consummating the melancholy scene. His garments are parted. The assembly of the wicked enclose him round. They pierce his hands and feet. See how he hangs suspended on the racking cross, betwixt the heavens and the earth!

No fountain relieves his parching thirst! No angel strengthens him from heaven! No Peter draws a sword in his quarrel! His inexpressible torments are not able to command one tear from the unpitying spectators, who shake the head at him in cruel scorn, wrest his words, and mock his prayers!—Even the sun withdraws his light! O golden ruler of the day, didst thou fly the pain of thy Maker? Or, was it incensed justice, that arrested thy beams from giving light unto the suffering Surety? But, more horrid was the darkness of his soul, when thou, O heavenly Father, withheld the pleasing beams of thy countenance. *Persecuted, but not forsaken*, may be the motto of the suffering saint, but not of the suffering Savior.—Even in this hour and power of darkness, he casts not his confidence away; but, having commended his mother to a beloved apostle, and his spirit unto his beloved Father, he bows the head, and renders up the ghost.—The earth quakes. The dead arise. The temple rends her vail. Then were ye spoiled, O principalities and powers. Then justice was satisfied; the law was magnified. The mighty works which had employed the thoughts of God from all everlasting, and which shall be the subject of the most delightful contemplation to all the redeemed company, world without end, did then receive its consummation.

O that this dying love of God might dwell for ever in our thoughts; constrain us to every duty, and deter us from every sin! Must the Son of God expiate, with such direful sufferings, sin, not his own? What then must they endure for their own sins, who refuse to learn, from this amazing example, the infinite evil of that abominable thing?

Great was thy victory, O death, when even the Son of God slept in the chambers of the tomb, a prisoner of darkness; a pale and ghastly corpse. But wo unto us, if the gospel history had left him in the silent grave. Then had the expectation of the poor perished; then had his promise failed for ever; then had we been still in our sins, unpurged, unpardoned.

But the third day beheld him emerging from the darksome grave. In vain they set a watch, and seal the stone. It is not possible he can be held. The wounds of his body are miraculously healed; the separated spirit is reunited by a divine power, before he saw corruption; and he arises as a man refreshed with sleep, springs from his bed, when the morning shines with purple radiance. No more shall infirmity clog thy flesh; or sorrow cloud thy brow, O risen Savior. No more shall death reduce thee under his gloomy power. Thy warfare is now accomplished, and thou hast received of the Lord's hand double for all our sins.

O earth, why didst thou quake? and what disturbed your repose, ye sleeping bones? It was at the presence of the God of Jacob, who lately was crucified in weakness; but now he is raised in power.—— The earth casts forth her dead. Sleep on, ye remaining prisoners of the dust; a time, a time will come, when ye too shall awake and sing, and ascend to meet him in the air. Ye living saints rejoice that death is swallowed up in victory. The grave, that hungry monster, catching the bait of his humanity, was not aware of the hook of his divinity, and swallowed its own destruction. Now, may we rest in full assurance,

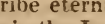
that all our debt is paid, when, by the order of the Creditor, the Surety is taken from prison and from judgment. For, lo! a shining minister, whose countenance is as lightning, and his raiment white as snow, descends to roll away the stone from the holy sepulchre! For fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. No doubt he was fully able to have removed the stone, who had power to lay down his life, and had power to take it up again. For even the pillars of heaven tremble, and are astonished at his reproof. But it was the will of the eternal Father, that these excellent and glorious creatures round his throne, should put this token of respect upon their Lord and ours, even in his lowest humiliation. Hail happy day, on which a more glorious work was finished, than when he planted the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth! May that sweet day of sacred rest be the joy of our souls! Then may we often join with God and angels, in remembering this most illustrious work, A FINISHED REDEMPTION.

The victory is complete; what remains but the Victor shall triumph? The atoning sacrifice is offered; what remains but that the high priest shall enter within the vail? Forty days he converses with his disciples, instructing them, in the nature of his kingdom, by his heavenly discourses; and confirming them in the certainty of his resurrection, by his frequent appearances. Then does he lead them out as far as Bethany, and the mount of Olives. By that way he once came to his ignominious cross, and by that way he returns to his glorious crown. And how did he employ the last parting moments, but in blessing his beloved apostles; and assuring them of his being ever present with them in the discharge of their office, even when they should see him again no more?

Could we have stood among that favored few, who witnessed this glorious transaction, then would we have seen him slowly ascending from the earth; not snatched as Elijah in a whirlwind; till an obedient cloud receives him from the sight of the astonished

gazers, who had already seen enough to satisfy their faith. "Be lifted up ye everlasting doors of paradise, that the king of glory may come in." Listen to the triumphant shout wherewith the blessed assembly hailed his arrival. Observe the trophies of his victory; the blunted sting of death, and the keys of hell and the grave. Great was the pomp thou Sinai didst behold, when the holy One descended on thy top, and out of his right hand went a fiery law; but greater doubtless was the pomp, when he ascended on high, leading captivity captive, after he had magnified the law, and made it honorable.

Now, reign for ever, blessed Lord Jesus, upon thy heavenly throne. For ever shall a crown of glory encircle thy radiant head. No more shalt thou complain of a sorrowful soul, or a forsaking God.—— With what infinite satisfaction shalt thou for ever revolve thy past agonies, and see the travail of thy soul! Obedient angels cast their crowns before thee! With thee shall the church militant swell their song even in this vale of tears. And unto thee shall the triumphant church ascribe eternal praise, saying, with a loud voice, "worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." To join the songs on high, may we also in thy due time be brought! Amen.



ON CHRIST LAID IN THE GRAVE.

IS this the place? Is this the gloom? How dismal the situation! how ghastly the appearance! See there his face defiled with deadly paleness! his eyes closed in death! His body, covered with hideous wounds, and scars of ignominy, lies stiff and motionless, wrapped in a mournful shroud! O how unlike the place, the state from whence thou didst descend! And was it then for this thou left the skies? Is this that

glorious person by whom the worlds were made? who hung the starry globes on high? gave rays unto the sun, and brightness to the moon? He thunders with the voice of his excellency; frighting the nations with the tremendous roar. Lo! silence broods around him, deep as the night, or summer's noon-tide air. Ah! where is thy glory fled? Where are those bright ministers who have in charge to be thy constant attendants, in all thy ways to keep thee? those who proclaimed thy birth; hymned thy arrival on this earth, and who, with kindly services, refreshed thy wearied virtue, in the day of thy temptation in the wilderness? Why have you abandoned your Lord in such disgrace? Why do you not brighten this dismal place with your celestial splendor, that it may look somewhat like the tomb of such a person? But, what are ye? Such a mysterious event the sun could not behold, had not the sovereign MIND, who rules on high, consented.—But why, O heavenly Father, wouldst thou forsake the darling of thy bosom, who always did the things which pleased thee? as was by thee declared, when, from the opening cloud, thou sent the heavenly Dove, who rested on his head when he ascended from the baptismal waters. The hoary baptist marvelled; and every beholder was lost in admiration. A voice sounded from the excellent glory; a voice which was afterwards repeated: "this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Forbear, vain mortal, to tax the divine procedure. You see the Surety, who just now paid the debt of mankind. You behold the slaughtered victim, the sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour. Though here the earthly part of his humanity is humbled for a time; yet shortly, very shortly, you may, with raptured eyes, behold him emerging from these darksome shades much like the vigorous sun. But know, that thine iniquity did bring him to the dust of death, and plunged him in these depths of ignominy.

Ah! cursed monster sin, what hast thou done? I formerly heard thou cast the angels from their bright

abodes to coasts of dark destruction: and man was driven by thee from paradise, and all its flowery pleasures. By your means the race of men were buried in a watery grave. You called for fire and brimstone, to lay in ashes the proud towers and tents of wickedness and lust in Sodom's evil day. Thine is the pestilence: the bed of languishing is thine, and every sickness: you opened the pit of corruption, and furnished with deadly arrows, the inexhausted quiver of the king of terrors. Were not these achievements sufficient to glut thy rage? With these, audacious monster, thou might have been content. How dared you attack the Son of God, and kill the prince of life? But know for this, thou thyself shalt die. Thyself shalt be condemned. Lo! in that grave I see thee laid, and gradually shalt thou consume away, till even the hard and solid bones shall be reduced to dust, without a vestige remaining.

ON CHRIST RISING OUT OF THE GRAVE.

I WILL not anxiously enquire, who shall roll me away the stone; or waft me over the seas, to view the local spot where the dead Redeemer was laid a breathless corpse. This I leave to you, sons of delusion; who, destitute of true devotion, trudge many a needless step. But let me find the holy sepulchre in the field of meditation; and on the feet of love, and with the eye of faith, let me approach and view the place where thou, O Lord, didst lie.

When he beheld the grave of Lazarus, he wept. Shall I not drop a tear, when, Oh! it was mine iniquity that brought him to the dust of death, and closed his eyes in cruel slumbers? But, wherefore weep?—Why not rejoice also? O death, where is thy prisoner? He is not here, but he is risen; for the third morn beheld him despise the grave.

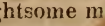
He rose, he rose; he burst the bars of death,
And with him all our triumph o'er the tomb.

What an agreeable perfume is exhaled from this delightful place! Here is no noisome grave; for, no sepulchral stench offends the nostrils. The sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour hath left a most inviting odor, which restoreth my soul again.

But hath he left those garments, this linen pure and white; emblem of his unspotted righteousness; to me and all his followers? Like the divine Elijah, who left this mortal stage, nor felt the stroke of death; (a privilege which, for our sakes, was not indulged to a far greater than he.) Lo! there a napkin to wipe all tears from off all faces. Lo! garments of salvation, and linen pure and white, are ready at your hand. Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.

My languid spirits revive: I feel a lively vigor diffuse itself over all my powers. What wonder that such quickening influence proceeds from thy sepulchre, Lord of life; when even a prophet's sleeping bones touched into life a stiffened corpse. So sacred story tells. Here let me come and bring my lifeless heart, when deadness seizes my soul; here let me enter; here let me dwell.

My lusts be buried here; for ever lie entombed my fears. O death! where is thy sting? Where is thy victory, boasting grave? I no more consider thee as a gloomy dungeon. Now thou art a quiet sanctuary; a downy bed; a lightsome mansion; and a peaceful haven in order to receive the weary wanderer, long lost upon this troublous ocean of anxious cares and tribulations.



ON CHRIST COMPARED TO THE SUN.

SEE there the glorious ruler of the day; who rejoices as a strong man to run a race! How universal in his influence! how rapid and how constant is his motion! that heavenly lamp has blazed for multitudes of ages in the blue vault of the firmament. Empires

have arisen and decayed; populous cities have been laid in ashes, without any trace now remaining of their ancient dignity and grandeur. All these revolutions have been beheld by this bright eye of the world, without any visible diminution, or material alteration. The selfsame sun now cheers us with his beams that arose upon former generations; and will administer the same consolation unto others, when we shall be laid in the dust. Whether shall we most admire the beauty or the usefulness of this resplendant luminary? Not a more beauteous creature did ever drop from the creating hands of the Almighty. To this bright orb we are indebted for cheerful light and genial warmth.

Without his powerful aid, we should for ever mourn under the frown of hideous darkness; and pine away under the piercing rage of winter. The rivers would be hardened into ice; and the mountains covered with eternal snow. Who could live in his cold? Were it not for his beneficial influence, our eyes would not be charmed with sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose: our nostrils would not be saluted with the sweets of the garden; our taste would not be regaled with the fruits of the autumn, and golden treasures of the harvest. It is this which makes the melancholy desert to rejoice; the fields to smile; the little hills to sing. When he rejoices in his east, how do the cheerful birds hail his arrival! and even the clouds of melancholy are dispelled from the human mind. Fair in himself, he beautifies all nature's works. He paints the flowers of the spring; he clothes in sunny robes the rose and the lily; he tips with gold the morning and the evening clouds; and in the day of rain, the bright etherial bow derives from him that inimitable brightness which charms the eye of gazing multitudes.

Fair looks the sun, and fair the morning-ray; but not to be compared with the beauty of the Lord; which above all things the sanctified soul is desirous of beholding. O thou who wast dead, and art alive again; who livest for ever; thou brightest Sun of righteousness, that shinedst in the firmament of the church

from the most early ages; that existedst before the day-spring knew his place; and thou wilt be unto thy people for an everlasting light; who shall declare thy matchless beauty; thy dazzling splendor; thy universal influence! When we essay to lift our weak and sickly eyes to thee, we are not able to take a steady view of the incomprehensible glory of thy mysterious person; for thou dwellest in the darkness of too much light. By thee is life and immortality brought to light; and, were it not for thy directive ray, who should guide our feet in the way of peace? We no more need to wander in uncertainty; nor is the grave a frightful prospect unto dying mortals. In thy light, O let me walk; and in thy light work out my own salvation. O warm my cold affections, and melt my frozen heart with thy all-powerful beams. Enkindle such a flame as many waters cannot quench.—In vain, ye gospel-ministers, ye stars in the firmament of the church; in vain ye shed your feeble rays, when he, the Fountain of your day, refuses to arise. Ye twinkling sparks of worldly comforts, you cannot drive away the night of melancholy from our dejected spirits; but when he scatters his rays, and shews his face, O how the shadows fly away!

Then cheerfulness and joy return unto the soul, and the voice of melody is heard in the tabernacles of the righteous. "The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come." But when he hides away his face, ah! what withering of the soul! Then, ye trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified, resign your blooming pride; and your branches are not loaded, as usual, with the fruits of righteousness.

When clouds and darkness are round about us, in the dark day of tribulation and affliction, what direful gloom would overspread our souls, but that this kindly Sun of righteousness stamps on our blackest clouds a glorious brightness. It is the bow in the cloud, which makes our darkness smile.

Dreadful was that eclipse which thou didst labor under, O thou Light of the world, when offering up thyself through the eternal Spirit. From the hiding of the Father's face, from the frown of his angry countenance, wast thou shorn of thy rays. Arraigned before an earthly tribunal, condemned with injustice, wounded with ignominious scourges, and piercing thorns, and crucified with unutterable agony, I see thee descending into the grave. The rocks, the flinty rocks, had compassion upon thy piteous sufferings; nor could the sun conceal his indignation; for in that hour and power of darkness, he laid aside his bridegroom attire, and clothed himself in sackcloth. Red and bloody was thy setting, in the evening of thy mortal life; but glorious was thy rising in the morning of thy resurrection.

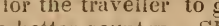
For us, not for thyself, thou wast eclipsed in such bloody sufferings, that we might not for ever dwell in the dark regions of the shadow of death. Shine thou for ever blessed Jesus, in the firmament of the church, and in the firmament of my soul. Who shall pluck thee from thy sphere, or arrest thee in thy progress? Not all the powers of hell, nor the united force of inward lusts, and strong corruptions. Arise upon the darkened nations with healing in thy wings; and chace away ignorance and delusion, by the brightness of thy coming.

Blessed are those happy people on whom thou spreadest thy cheerful light; who triumph in thy beams, and solace themselves under thy genial warmth. But, ah! how many times thy rays are intercepted by the moon of a present world interposing itself betwixt thee and us! How frequently the cares; how frefrequently the comforts of this life lie too near my heart, and shew big in my eye, and hide thy cheerful face from my soul! How often have the clouds of prevailing iniquity, and reiterated provocations, covered the face of my mind, and blotted out the day! O scatter thy victorious rays abroad, and chase them from thy sky! Blot out as a cloud my transgressions;

and as a thick cloud my sins, by the rays of thy justifying righteousness and sanctifying influences.

Bless the Lord, ye highly favored, who bask in his rays, and walk in the light of his countenance.—"God is the Lord, which hath shewed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords unto the horns of the altar."—For, "through the tender mercies of God, the day-spring from on high hath visited us." Walk in the light while you have it; and remember the days of darkness; you know not but they shall be many.

O ye that slumber upon your beds; and waste your golden season of grace in indolent repose! awake; arise; go forth: and behold him coming forth of his chamber as a bridegroom. The darkness is past; the shadows are fled; the wild beasts have now retired to their dens; the birds of paradise rejoice; and the voice of gladness is heard in Immanuel's land. Now is the time for the traveller to glory, to pursue his journey to the better country. Shortly the night cometh wherein no man can work or walk; a night that will not know the dawning of the day. "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead; and Christ shall give thee light."



On Christ's comparing himself to the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the vallies, Song ii, 1.

"LET another praise thee, and not thine own lips," is a maxim that includes not within its verge him who is Immanuel, and infinitely exalted above the rank of mortals. In him self-commendation is both graceful and useful. O fairer than the sons of men! so transcendant is thy excellency: so exalted is thy dignity; thy perfection is so boundless; thy beauty so matchless, so unparalelled, so elevated to the highest degree; that words cannot express, thoughts cannot reach thy glory. Thou only knowest what ful-

ness thou containe of grace and truth. No swelling pride, or over-valuation of thyself, are lodged, or could lodge in thy sacred breast. Thou only canst with safety, with modesty, with decency, commend thy worthy Self. O may I catch the flame thy words would enkindle, and the opening of thy lips would inspire in my soul!

Of all the flowers that imbibe the dew, and expand their leaves to the morning ray, the rose and the lily are the most goodly and delightful. These charming sisters are signalized, both for their beauty and their fragrance. Well may the lovely Jesus be resembled to these blooming ornaments of the garden.

View him in his person. The lily of his divinity is wedded to the rose of his humanity. In presence of his divinity, the full blown lily, when bathed in the evening or morning dew, can boast no perfection. For even the sun is ashamed, and the moon confounded, when he unveils his glorious brightness. In presence of his humanity, the sweet and blushing rose loses her lustre. Beauteous was his soul, and beauteous his body. As to the former, it was adorned with all the beauties of holiness; and as to the latter, doubtless it shines with comely grace. Tho' in the days of deep humiliation, his face was furrowed with sadness, his visage marred more than any man's, and his form more than the sons of men, now joy brightens his countenance, and smiles for ever in his eyes.

View him in his mediation. As he is the representative of sinners unto God, he is the rose of Sharon in his bloody satisfaction; the lily of the vallies, in his immaculate obedience. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel? What, unworthy cause hath defiled with blood thy majestic looks, and stained all thy raiment, O thou rose of Sharon? "I have trodden the wine-press alone; and of the people there was none with me." The sword of my Father's indignation hath awaked against me, the man who am

his fellow. Therefore am I red in mine apparel, and my garments like one that treadeth out the wine-press. Canst thou spy any flaw, any the smallest deformity in the lily of the vallies? No more in the obedience of the Son of God. Though he, by divine imputation, was made sin for us, and even by human reputation, was an egregious transgressor, yet was he, holy, harmless, and undefiled. Undefiled in his nature, by inherent corruption, and undefiled in his life, by actual transgression.—View him in his mediation, as he is the representative of God unto sinners. In the clemency of his government, he is like the gentle lily; in the severity of his administration, like the inflamed prickly rose. In the threatenings of his holy law, he is fiery as the rose: in the promise of the gospel, he wears the lily's winning aspect. If we are not attracted by his smiles, we shall be appalled by his frown, when he arms his angry countenance with terror.

How reviving, how exhilirating, the fragrance that is exhaled from this plant of renown, which restoreth the soul again! When we obtain a smell of this heaven-planted flower, the heart is glad, the tongue rejoices, the sun puts on a brighter beam, and every thing which we behold assumes a brighter aspect.

No roses could equal those of Sharon; no lilies like the lilies of the vallies. What grows in an irriguous soil, such as the low grounds usually prove, by reason of the numerous rills which descend from the neighboring mountains, must be of more exquisite kind, than the produce of the high and parched lands. —In all things blessed Jesus, thou must have the preeminence. If thou art a rose, thou art the rose of Sharon. If thou art a lily, thou art the lily of the vallies.

ON WALKING IN THE SPIRIT.

THE walker in the Spirit, is a person whose goodness and devotion come not by fits and starts, and on some rare occasions; but are habitually prevalent in the tenor of his life. It is true, like the whole spiritual creation, he groans under the bondage of corruption; yea, the more spiritual he is, the more carnal he sees himself to be; like that most holy apostle, whose mourning complaints are yet sounding in our ears: "The law is spiritual; and the commandment holy, just, and good: but I am carnal and sold under sin." But a spiritual frame is his element; & with careful assiduity, he cherishes those good impressions that may be made upon his heart by the Holy Ghost; of which he judges by their conformity to the divine law. To the guidance and impulse of that holy invisible Agent, he endeavors to surrender himself in every action of his life. That he may not quench this holy fire, he crushes in the bud the rising thought of sin; dashes against the stones the infant temptations; avoids the snares of evil company; the practising of known sin; the indulging of unlawful pleasures; and anxious cankering cares about the things of the earth. He is ever studying to picture out in his life some spiritual grace.—Spiritual truths are the most savory of all others unto his taste; for the blessed Comforter, according to the promise of Christ, takes the things of Christ; shews them unto him; and leads him into all truth. These are the light of his eyes; the joy of his heart; more tasteful and delicious than honey from the comb.—Spiritual blessings he esteems the most superlative and excellent. He judges not after the flesh, setting an high estimate on those things that make the fairest shew in the eyes of natural men, who cannot receive things of the Spirit of God; but spiritual riches, honors, pleasures, spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus; these are the better

things for which he pants, and wherein he greatly rejoices.—Spiritual thoughts are the native produce of his mind, arising from his heart as water from a living spring. As it is natural for a mother, to think of her sucking child; for the merchant, to think of his merchandise; for the scholar, to think of that particular science he is best acquainted with; for them that are after the flesh, to mind the things of the flesh: so it is natural for the spiritual walker, to mind the things of the Spirit; when he buys and sells, when he plows and sows; when he sits in the house, or travels on a journey; as well as when he prays in his closet, or repairs unto the place of the holy. In every object he is disposed to see God; in every sound to hear him; to taste him in all that is sweet; to admire him in all that is great; to love him in all that is lovely; to reverence him in all that is dreadful. He perceives, with David, the voice of God in the voice of a railing Shimei; and discerns, with Job, the hand of God in the hand of a plundering Chaldean. Every creature is unto him a Jacob's ladder, by which he ascends into heaven.—Spiritual intentions reign in all his enterprises and actions, both civil and religious. Hence the most ordinary occurrences of life are sanctified, whether he eats or drinks; while the very sacrifices of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord.—Spiritual motives induce him to the hatred of sin, to the practice of duty, to the pursuit of good. He abhors that which is evil, as well because it defiles, as because it destroys. He performs what is commanded, because it is commanded; and not that he may be seen of men. He asks temporal and spiritual blessings from above; not that he may consume them on his lusts, but that God may be glorified in all.—Spiritual duties are his delightful recreation; he thinks not of them with reluctance; but anticipates, in a joyful expectation, the stated opportunities of intercourse with heaven. It is not his body that leads the mind, so much as the mind that leads the body, to any holy exercise. When he falls upon his knees in prayer to God, he goes not from

the devil, or from the world, to God; but from God to God; because he is in the fear of the Lord all day long.

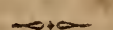
ON A GODLY MAN.

THOUGH he esteems it idolatry to make images of God; yet, he himself is a picture of God, walking up and down in the earth; and he reckons it his greatest duty and honor to be so. The glory of God is the end of all his actions, civil and religious; and a tax which he pays unto him with the same conscience, that he renders unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's. The displeasure of all the world, when laid in the balance with the smallest frown of his Father in heaven, is lighter than a feather poised against a talent of gold. But if he lift upon him the light of his countenance, it is as impossible for him to be miserable, as it would be for one to shiver with cold, who in the warmest months of summer, should bask in the meridian sun. The sovereign authority of God stirs him up to all his duties; without which they would not be proper obedience. The same high will of God reconciles him to every adverse dispensation; saying, with the most honorable of all sufferers, "the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"—By all the streams of created goodness, he is led unto God, as the fountain, from whence they arise. He sees God in every object; he regards him as his awful witness; so that he can never be alone, either in the solitary field, or secret chamber. Prayer is not his drudgery but his element. He not only addresses the throne of grace, when he has some petition to lodge there; or some interest to prosecute; but when he has no errand, if it is not to tell God, how much he loves him; how desirous he is of fellowship with him; and to see his power and glory in the sanctuary.

There is a mystery in the whole of his deportment, when acting like himself, which even the ungodly are forced to reverence. In vain shall they think to burst their bands, and cast away their cords; for, in his hand is a sharp two edged sword. He binds even princes with cords, and nobles with fetters of iron.—He that sits in the chair of the scorner, shall be greatly confounded; they shall be turned back that say, aha, aha.

He greatly triumphs over the little insults of his adversaries. Reproaches shall rebound as burs from the polished surface of a looking-glass; shall melt as snowballs tossed against the sun; and shall pass away as the morning cloud, or as the early dew,—He would not exchange his joy in the Holy Ghost, for the raptures of the scholar, the triumphs of the soldier, and the gratifications of the most sensual epicure. How wide the field wherein he forages for joy, even in tribulation!

Though withered is his vine, his harp unstrung, he is the richest of all merchants; for, *godliness, with contentment, is great gain.* Lay not wait, O wicked man, against his dwelling; spoil not his resting place; "for know the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself; the Lord will hear him when he calls unto him." Though he were laid in the lowest pits; in the darkness and deeps of hell; yet he could not be truly wretched, any more than a wicked man could be truly happy, were he admitted into the pure regions of life and immortality.



DELIGHT IN GOD,

IS a sweet frame of soul whereby the real christian finds all his afflictions to be lightened, all his comforts to be sweetened, all his sins to be embittered, and all his duties easy and delightful. It is the marrow of all his sacrifices, whilst those that want it,

offer nothing unto God, save goodly words, which are only the outward part of the calves of the lips, resembling the hair and skin. It is the commandment, in keeping of which he finds its own reward.

His mind is habitually filled with holy thoughts of God, whether he sits in the house, or walks in the field. He remembers him on his bed, and meditates on him in the night watches, and rejoices under the shadow of his wings. In those solitary moments, when the vile person meditates villainy, and his heart will work iniquity; when the sensual sinner makes provision for the flesh, to fulfil it in the lusts thereof; when the miser betakes himself to his gold, and the ambitious to their schemes of honor, he naturally retires unto his God, and converses with those things above, where Christ sitteth at his right hand. And these thoughts arise in his heart as naturally as the fruit-bearing tree putteth forth her blossoms, or the fountain sendeth forth her waters.

Religious duties are his element; and he rejoices when it is said to him, "go up to the house of the Lord." Not that he may catch the applause of men; not that he may only comply with his convictions, and stop the clamors of his conscience; not that he may, in some instance, gratify his curiosity, and feed a ticklish fancy, but that he may go to God as his exceeding joy; and see his power and glory in the sanctuary. Though the preacher of the word should charm his ear with the delicate cadency of his voice, and his eye with all the graces of motion; if he hear not the voice of God, he is frustrated of his most valuable end. Instead of being like him of Edom, detained before the Lord; or saying, with the unholy Israelites, *when will the sabbath be over?* he binds his sacrifice to the horns of the altar, with no other cords than those of love; and counts the sabbath a delight. As the spirit of the living creatures was in thy wheels, Ezekiel, so is his heart in duties.

His worldly comforts he grasps not with too close an embrace, like those foolish animals, who hug

their young to death; but mainly rejoicing in God, not putting them in his room, he finds them strong and lively.

He cannot perish in his sorest affliction, because God's law is his delight. Though the fig-tree shall not blossom, and the fields shall yield no meat, he has a never failing refuge to betake himself unto.—— He rejoices in the Lord, and is glad in the God of his salvation. In the multitude of his thoughts within him, thy comforts O Lord, delight his soul.

But, O how sin is imbittered, when he tastes those ravishing pleasures that are at God's right hand! In what a contemptible light he regards the transient sips of joy, for which the children of sensuality forego their everlasting interests, when, like Adam, they sell a paradise for an apple! For one morsel of meat they renounce a birth-right, as Esau, ; or taste, with Jonathan, but a little honey, and for it they must die. His pleasures, not being of the sensual kind, fill not his cheeks with blushing; nor is heaviness the end of his mirth. He eats not only the food of angels, but the bread of God. The lines are fallen to him in pleasant places, and he has a goodly heritage. The greater an epicure, he is so much the more temperate.—— His pleasures neither darken his understanding, nor stupify his conscience, nor take away his heart. It is his alone to find honey without stings, and roses void of thorns. Take to yourselves, he says, your paradise of fools, and your impure delights; serve your divers lusts and pleasures, all ye that are in the flesh; but "I delight to do thy will, O God; thy law is in the midst of my heart." Away with the weeping food of Egypt, the onions and the garlic. Welcome thou heavenly manna! Hail ye everlasting joys, which do not resemble the crackling of thorns under a pot; but that cheerful light of the sun that shineth more and more until the perfect day! It is yours alone, not to be blasted by sickness, or nipped by the winter of adversity; and even in death you shall flourish like the palmtree, and pass into eternity.

REVERENCE AND GODLY FEAR,

IS that grace whereby the real christian maintains, upon his heart, a constant lively sense of the infinite distance betwixt the infinite Creator, and himself, a finite creature; and from a principle of love to the glorious Jehovah, as the best and greatest of beings, he stands in awe to sin against him, by thinking, speaking, or doing, what are unworthy the perfections of his nature, and the relations he bears as his Creator and Redeemer.

He is peculiarly cautious, not to intrude, with bold curiosity, into those sublime mysteries which he hath not seen, and which are only comprehensible to the divine understanding, not to censure those dispensations which are unaccountable to his reason, when he makes darkness his pavilion.

If, in the sacred volumes of inspiration, mysterious doctrines are revealed, which far transcend his imperfect views; what he cannot comprehend he humbly admires; and betakes himself to the sanctuary of Paul, *O the height!* For he rightly judges, that to be ignorant of what is revealed, is not more shameful and inglorious, than curiously to pry into what God hath wrapped in darkness. He considers religion as bearing a resemblance to the beautiful fabric of the temple, in which there were not only commodious chambers, and a great variety of necessary apartments; but above the sacred roof, high towers and lofty battlements, which, though ornamental to the building, and grateful to the view of the spectator, would yet be dangerous to climb upon. He knows that it is an adversary who sets him on these pinnacles, where none can stand, but he who builds the temple of the Lord, and destroys the works of the devil. That lust of the mind which commonly goes under the name of curiosity, he endeavors to subdue, as well as any other unruly appetite.

If, in the course of providence, the Almighty's path is in the sea, and his footsteps in the deep waters; he is persuaded, that he is able to justify his ways to men; and fears to snatch out of his hands the reins of government, or call before his tribunal the judge of all the earth. If, therefore, he presumes to talk with him of his judgments, it is with the profoundest submission, and the most lowly reverence; rather confessing the darkness of his own mind than challenging the divine procedure.

The holy and tremendous name of God he never takes up in his lips, but on some occasion worthy of it. He makes it not a needless expletive of his discourse; nor speaks of it with an air of indifference; but with a serious countenance, and humble heart, upon the most solemn occasions. When he addresses him in prayer, though he uses a holy filial boldness, yet is he singularly careful, lest even this should degenerate into a vile commonness of spirit, and an unholy familiarity, altogether unbecoming creatures, whose designation is but dust and ashes.

In the whole course and tenor of his life, the same holy principle makes him fearful of offending God, by doing what is forbidden in the law, or neglecting what is expressly commanded. In ordinances of divine worship, he keeps a steady eye to the sacred institutions of the word; and fears to add inventions of his own, as though he could improve upon the schemes of unerring and comprehensive wisdom.—— Presumptuous sinning, and presumptuous adding, are equally removed from him.

In times of temptation, he preserves his integrity, because of the fear of God. In times of danger, he is confident. When sinners in Zion, are afraid, and fearfulness surprises the hypocrite, he fears indeed, but with that filial fear which is the daughter of faith, the sister of love, the mother of obedience, and the beginning of wisdom.

ON SELF DENIAL.

THE christian who has learned to deny himself, is indeed abundantly conscious of the exalted dignity of his nature ;—which by his first creation, is but a little lower than the angels ;—and by his second, in Christ Jesus, is elevated much beyond them. For, of which of the angels was it ever said at any time, " we are the members of his body, of his flesh, " and of his bones ?" And again, " of him are ye in " Christ Jesus.—Much he esteems that rational and immortal spirit within him, endowed with such noble powers. Much he reverences that curious fabric of flesh, builded for a temple of the Holy Ghost. Moreover, while he entertains the highest opinion of his own excellency, he most effectually promotes his own interest. But there is a self which he does not esteem ;—a self which he does not gratify, that is which he denies.

Self-estimation is the first thing, to which his amiable character is opposed. He studies not to think of himself more highly than he ought ; whether by fancying himself possessed of those endowments he really wants, or putting two high an estimate on those which he really has. As to the former, however much he prizes the noble faculty of reason ; however much he regards the duties of morality ; he trusts not to that as an infallible guide ; nor to these, as the ground of his acceptance. His intellectual powers, he sees, are now impaired, that he cannot discern spiritual truths aright. He renounces his own reason. His moral abilities, he knows, are now infeebled, that he cannot practise spiritual duties in a right manner. He renounces his own righteousness. Those actions, which some would denominate morally virtuous, he sees to be but filthy rags. And if performed by the unregenerate, like the dead ears of corn, which grow upon the housetops, wherewith the mower cannot fill his hand, nor he

that binds sheaves his bosom. Neither does he put too high estimate on these excellencies, real or supposed, which he is possessed of. His natural accomplishments; his civil distinctions; his religious priviliges and attainments; all these he counts as loss and dung. Or, shall we say, he denies his natural, his civil, and his religious self? He thinks not too highly of himself.—For his natural accomplishments, as the elegant proportion of his body, or the sprightliness of his mind; all these, he knows, are the gifts of Heaven; and but of small account, when compared with the more excellent qualities of pure and undefiled religion.—Nor for his civil distinctions. These he knows are still more foreign to him, being mere external adjuncts, and cannot add one cubit to his stature.—Nor for his religious attainments. He thinks it not expedient for him to glory, though he could come to visions and revelations of the Lord. Far less can he value himself, with the vaunting Israelites, on his church-privileges, crying out, "the law, the law; the temple "of the Lord;" and, "we have Abraham for our fa-"ther."

Let us now see how he stands affected to self-gratification. Those darling lusts, which seemed as much a part of himself as his right hand, his right foot, or his right eye, he is taught to deny by the grace of God, which bringeth salvation. He is not only willing to abridge himself of sinful pleasures, but upon occasion to forego his lawful comforts. To part with his worldly riches, for they are not his main treasure; with his worldly reputation, for it is not his chief honor. Even the religious and holy desires of the new creature he may sometimes be called to moderate. Though his heart should sicken at the thought, yet must he consent to the defering of his hopes. If Christ says, *touch me not*, then must he be all submission. "Tarry here a while longer in your state of absence from the Lord:" he acquiesces, though it were far better to depart. Pure are his pleasures, exalted are his honors, high are his revenues; whilst, that he may

please God, he pleaseth not himself. For, while he loses himself in God, he finds himself again to infinite advantage.

Thy glorious pattern, O self-denying Savior, he principally regards, who, for our good and advantage, pleased not thyself; who subjected to thy heavenly Father thy human will, in drinking the bitter cup. A far more illustrious example of self-denial than that of thy most eminent apostle, who pleased not himself, but all men in all things, not seeking his own profit, but the profit of many. What he only wished for, thou didst actually undergo, when thou wast accursed for thy brethrens sake, according to the flesh. It is thine, O humble Savior, to cast this mighty idol self down from her seat, and utterly abolish it in our souls. Thy heavenly doctrine, though far from flattering the lusts of men, yet is not rigorous and severe, even when thou sayest, *if any man will come after me, let him deny himself.* For what thou requirest of us, thou workest also in us, and goest before us by thy own encouraging example. For this end thou laidst down thy life, "that they which live might not live unto themselves, but unto him that died for us."

ON HUMILITY.

HUMILITY consists in a low opinion of one's self, and in a contempt of vain glory. He that shines with this noble grace, is a person whose high imaginations have been cast down; not by the force of moral precepts, but by the mighty weapons of the christian warfare. Once he thought he was something, now he sees that he is nothing. Once he was desirous that other men should think highly of him, and he loved to have the preeminence; but now he can, in some sincerity, say, with the royal Psalmist, "Mine heart is not haughty, neither are mine eyes lofty. I have behaved and quieted myself as a child weaned of his

mother. My soul is even as a weaned child." Shall we describe him in relation to his neighbor, and to his God?

In relation to his neighbor, he thinks more meanly of himself than of others, or than others think of him; and he never abhors himself more than when he is most highly applauded. His Savior was meek and lowly, when the multitudes were crying, hosanna. If you reprove him, he esteems it not an insult, but a kindness; and is not ashamed to own that he was in fault, or error. Talk to the praise of another before him, and he is not disgusted, as though himself were rivalled and eclipsed. You tell him that some person of note has been left to fall, and be a scandal to religion; is he puffed up on this account? Nay; he rather mourns, and adores the freedom of restraining grace towards himself. You inform him of some, who, instead of praising him, revile and calumniate him; but he is before-hand with his reproachers; for he has more ill things to lay to his charge than these you mention, which makes him as a deaf man, in whose mouth are no reproofs. His rest is no more wounded than a dead man's would be, by thrusting a spear into his side. The contempt of bad men does not deter him from, nor the applause of good men incite him to the discharging of religious duties. He loves his neighbor, not in proportion to the regard his neighbor expresses to him, but in proportion to his real worth. If he talks at any time in a humble strain about himself, he is not laying snares for your applause. His humble acknowledgments are not empty words, like the *Dei gratia** which the proudest kings will write upon their coins; or like the pope's subscription to his haughty bulls, *a servant of the servants of God;* but he speaks the genuine sentiments of his heart, and from the bottom of his very soul. If he is obliged at any time to vindicate his character from unjust asper-

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* *By the grace of God.*

sions, it is with the greatest reluctance, and is afraid lest he be talking like a fool. If he compares himself with sinners, he is ready to think himself the chiefest of them; if with saints, he apprehends that he is the least of them all. He sees some excellency about the meanest of his fellow-christians in which himself is surpassed. His eyes are full of his own wants, and the perfections of other men.

In relation to God, how does he behave himself? He thinks that the blessings he receives from God are above, and the afflictions which God lays upon him are beneath his deserts. As to the former, he cries, *I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies.* As to the latter, he acknowledges, *thou hast punished me less than mine iniquity deserves.* If he sins against God, he takes the blame to himself; but if he does any good, he gives God the praise. *I labored; yet not I. Not unto us, not unto us; but unto thy name give glory.*

Instructed by this noble grace, he willingly submits his proud reason to heavenly revelation; and refuses not to admit for true, those tremendous mysteries which far transcend his natural comprehension. But chiefly, being persuaded of the vast imperfection of his own righteousness, that his goodness extends not unto God; that he is but an unprofitable servant, and a great deal worse, he despairs of himself, flies to the mercy, and submits unto the righteousness of God, as the sole ground of his pardon and acceptance. He cannot dig, he cannot work for life; for he is a maimed beggar; but to beg he is not ashamed.

This is that distinguished character of christian humility, to which the highest moralist can produce no claim; nor can ever expect to arrive at, by all the precepts of philosophy. O blessed is that man, who is endowed with this humble spirit! Humility, thou first of graces; thou leading ornament of every noble creature; without whom the most glorious accomplishments are eclipsed into disgrace; with whom the most ordinary and mean qualifications are heightened into glory! who should not love thy comely features? and

what tongue should be silent in thy praises? Thou art the holy ornament of angels, who, in the awful presence of their Maker, cover their faces with their wings, and with their wings they cover their hands, when employed in services of love to man.

The saints in every age have gloried in thee, as a most distinguishing ingredient in their character; and according to their eminency, has been their measure of humility. The high and lofty One, who inhabits eternity, and will not give his glory to another, when from his high and holy place he views men and their works, he turns away disdainful from the pompous palaces of mighty kings, the courts of popes and sultans, and throws a favorable glance toward the humble cottage of him in whose heart thou dwellest.

But above all, to recommend thy heavenly charms, the Son of God disdained not the form of a servant, the humble manger, the ignominious cross, the gloomy sepulchre. O let not man be proud, when God was so humble! Begone from my heart, all self-elating thoughts; hence my ambitious desires. But come holy humility, with all thy amiable train, and fix thy residence in my soul; predominate in my affections. Holy Spirit, make all her enemies her foot-stool; and teach me to despise myself, except on account of my rational and immortal nature, to spurn under my feet all vain glory, and to pursue the honor that cometh from God only.

ON MEEKNESS.

THE meek christian is one who has learned, at the school of Jesus Christ, to restrain unlawful anger, and to moderate lawful resentment. If he is endued with what is commonly called a good natural temper, he exercises this good temper from christian motives; such as, the pardoning love of God, the command of the law, the example of Jesus Christ, who was meek

and lowly. But though his natural temper should happen to be fiery and eager, he has found the virtue of that promise. "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb; the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox." He is not angry but on just occasions; and even when the occasion is just, his anger is kept under proper regulations.

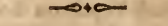
First, he is careful never to be angry but when there is a cause. To be angry at the irrational creatures, that are not capable of offending, or understanding their offence; to be angry at his brother, because he reproves him, or because he outshines him in gifts or graces, he endeavors to avoid. But especially he trembles to be angry at God; whether on account of the strictness of his precepts, or the sovereignty of his dispensations. Jonah, you did not well to be angry, when God spared Nineveh, that great city, in which were so many thousand infants, and also much cattle.

But be the cause ever so just, if it is only a personal injury by which he is provoked, he is not soon angry. No; this is the mark of a fool. By deferring his anger, he often discovers that there is no reason for it; that no injury or affront was intended against him; but perhaps his brother designed doing him a favor. He resembles not flax or gunpowder, that mount in a blaze at touching the least spark of fire, but he may be compared to green wood that is not easily blown into a flame; and to a flint that emits no sparkles, unless it be often and violently struck. He is not much angry. He will be so far from indulging the mad sallies of passion for trivial offences, that though the provocation were great, and the resentment strong, he acts like a reasonable creature; and is not unfitted for the duties incumbent on him, whether social or religious. He is not long angry: he loves not that the sun should go down upon his wrath. He leaves it to the heathens to be implacable. He believes that anger rests in the bosom of none but fools. He is swift to reconciliation; and esteems it his real honor to pass over a transgression.

Do you ask, what are the evidences of this fruit of the Spirit? First of all, it appears by his courteous and obliging behavior to all, his enemies and persecutors not excepted. Even them he is ready to serve, if it lie in his power, by discharging towards them the duties of humanity. It appears by the gentle strain of his discourse, which, like the waters of Siloah, go softly. When he is reviled, he reviles not again; but either by a soft answer turns away wrath; or, by a modest silence, and not answering again, he withdraws the fewel from the fire of strife. It appears by the sweetness of his looks, which are not sullen and morose, but mild and inviting. But chiefly it appears in the thoughts of his heart. The words, the looks, and the outward actions, are not infallible evidences of this heavenly temper. These may be no more but artificial meekness. Even the fell tribunal of the inquisition can talk in the meek style, and recommend to mercy her wretched victims with cruel mockery.—But as he thinketh in his heart, so he is. He can think of his implacable enemy without wishing a curse unto him. He looks upon rancor harbored in the breast, as a more dreadful foe than any outward adversary possibly can be.

He is a profitable hearer of the word; for, he receives it with meekness. His prayers are pure and prevalent; for he lifts up holy hands without wrath.—His reproofs are successful; and let them be never so sharp, are well received, because the spirit of meekness anoints them like precious oil. He is clad in a kind of armor that renders him invulnerable. He lies not at the mercy of every puny assailant, that would attack him with the sword of the tongue; because, like a deaf man, he hears not. He is a most acceptable friend, and a most victorious enemy; and his enemies, though like the devil for malice, are forced to reverence him. When he shews out of a good conversation his works with meekness and wisdom, he is a bright image of Christ; a living representation of God, who is *slow to anger, of great kindness, and repenteth*

him of the evil. He takes the most effectual method to promote even his temporal interest, ease, and reputation. He has the real enjoyment of himself; is a true inheritor of the earth. And God at last will beautify him with salvation.



ON THE MERCIFUL MAN.

MERCY is a disposition to feel the miseries of others; and to do what lies in our power to prevent and redress them. There is a natural mercy consisting in a softness of temper, and an aversion at seeing, hearing, or even thinking of the distresses of our fellow-creatures. There is a moral mercy, when we pity the miserable from moral considerations. Both these may, no doubt, be found in unrenewed hearts, and were actually practised by many of the Gentiles that knew not God. A man who would shudder in every joint to see a fellow-creature broke upon the wheel, or broil on the fire; a man who would be far from thinking it a glorious spectacle to look at a ditch full of the blood of slaughtered men, is not immediately a merciful man in the full and scriptural sense. It is true, this humane and gentle temper is far more amiable than savage barbarity. To be implacable and unmerciful, is a truly heathen character; and the habitations of cruelty should be found no where but in the dark places of the earth. But there is a christian mercy, which is often enjoined as a weighty matter of the law, and an eminent grace of the gospel; and with which none are endowed but the elect of God; the holy and the beloved. Let us describe it from its springs, its objects, and its acts.

The merciful man is one that loves to shew mercy, not only on account of a soft natural temper, self-interest, philosophical considerations; but from an unfeigned regard to the authority of God in his holy law, an earnest desire after conformity to his image; and

especially from a serious sense of his pardoning mercy in Christ Jesus. How can he but forgive a few pence, who is himself forgiven in ten thousand talents? Has God, all-gracious and merciful, opened his bowels of compassion to me, a wretched guilty creature: and shall I shut up my bowels of compassion from my distressed brother? Shall I put on bowels of adamant and brass, who am a pensioner of the tender mercies of God? It is mercy that feeds me; it is mercy that clothes me; it is mercy that delivers my soul from the lowest hell, where I had been miserable beyond all expression. I have freely received mercy, and shall I not freely give? He is merciful to others, for God is merciful to him.

Do you ask the objects about which this heavenly temper is versant! It is the creature that is either actually under, or else capable of misery. A good man is merciful to his beast, and much more to his brother. Merciful to his beast, did we say? yea, to the beast of his mortal enemy. He would not suffer the ass of his most malignant foe, to die under his burden; but would, according to the divine law, assist the helpless animal. He could not even find in his heart wantonly to destroy, or without necessity torment, the most significant and despicable insect. Much more is he pitiful and of tender mercy, towards those more noble beings of his own species. He weeps with them that weep. It is not the miseries of the body alone, for which he is melted into commiseration. A diseased leprous soul is, to his view, a far more deplorable object than a distempered body. He pities the fatherless and the widow; but much more the Godless and the Christless. He beholds transgressors like thee, O David! and is grieved, because they keep not God's law.

Shall we come to the works of mercy? What are the sweet waters that issue from this fountain? The merciful man will not always have it in his power actually to relieve the distressed, but he weeps for them; wishes for them; prays for them, and does for them as

cording as he is able. If they are indigent, or in want of the necessaries of life, hungry or naked, he puts them not off with good words; but gives them things they have need of, or excites others to do it that are more wealthy. If they are insolvent, and unable to pay their just debts, he will not imprison, where nothing can be had; nor take for a pledge the utensils by which they must earn their daily bread, or the garments in which they must sleep. If they are solitary, he will visit them; if disconsolate, he will comfort them; if ignorant, he will instruct them; if doubtful, he will counsel them; if aspersed and calumniated unjustly, he will vindicate their characters; if oppressed, he will espouse their cause; if weak, he will bear their infirmities; if careless and secure, he will warn them, and with compassion pull them out of the fire; if they have fallen, he will endeavor to recover them. His wounds are faithful. Blessed be his anger, for it is kind; his wrath, for it is merciful. He remembers the blessed maxim of the apostle James, that "he who converteth a soul from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death; and shall cover a multitude of sins."

He is an image of God, who delights in mercy; and remembers it even in the midst of wrath. He is an image of Christ, whose whole life was one continued track of shewing mercy. His Miracles were all of the merciful kind, but two. His death was a most eminent act of mercy. And still he is a merciful High Priest, who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. Commonly the merciful man obtains mercy from man, when he stands in need of it; as they have judgment without mercy, that shewed no mercy.—But whatever treatment they should receive from their fellow-creatures, they shall obtain mercy of the Lord in that day, which will come to all others cruel with wrath, and with fierce anger. Yet, after all, it is not according to his own mercy, which is but a work of righteousness that he has done; but according to the mercy of God, he shall be saved.—Having obtained

mercy of the Lord, by which he was made merciful at the first; he shall obtain mercy more and more.

ON TENDERNESS OF HEART.

THE tender hearted christian is he from whom the hard and stony heart, which neither the hammer of judgment could break, nor the oil of mercy soften, is, in some good measure, taken away. His understanding is no more so unteachable; nor his affections so immoveable as formerly. His will has laid aside her obstinacy; and his conscience her insensibility.

Shall we describe him first in relation to God? One reproof, tendered in the sacred oracles, will enter more into his soul, than an hundred stripes into a fool. His heart stands in holy awe of the precepts, and trembles at the threatenings of the word of God.—But, O how melting, how alluring are the great and precious promises! And all its heavenly doctrines drop as the rain, and distill as the dew; not when it falls upon a rock, from which it runs presently off again; but when it descends upon the parched ground, refreshing the thirsty earth, and making it as a watered garden, or a field which the Lord has blessed. As to the dispensations of divine providence; he strives to know the language of them, and to comply with the design of the Almighty, both when he smiles and frowns. *Shew me*, he cries, *why thou contendest with me.* Unlike these hardened wretches, whom the weeping Jeremiah describes in that most doleful lamentation: "thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction; they have made their faces harder than a rock; yea, they have refused to return. His flesh trembles for fear of God; and he is afraid of his judgments." He sees when God's hand is lifted up; he turns at his reproof, and learns righteousness, when his judgments are in the earth.—While the un-

godly sinner despises the riches of his goodness, and after his hard and impenitent heart, treasures up wrath against the day of wrath; he is led by the goodness of God unto repentance; and every mercy pains him to the heart.

The influences of the blessed Spirit, he cherishes in the most kindly manner; he is fearful to quench this holy fire, or fright away this heavenly dove, when he vouchsafes to alight upon his soul. He abhors their impiety, whose character it is, "ye do always resist the Holy Ghost." As to the divine glory and honor, he is grieved with whatever he judges to encroach upon it; and cannot but choose to be uneasy and perplexed, when the interests of true religion are threatened with imminent danger. His heart, with Eli, trembles for the ark of God.

Shall we describe him next in relation to his neighbor, for whom he puts on bowels of mercy, and with whose miseries he cannot be unaffected? Is he not grieved for the poor? Does not his soul weep for him that is in trouble? But chiefly, he is touched with compassion for their deplorable condition, who go on in an evil course with prone career, whilst he sees them incurring the dreadful vengeance of the living and almighty God. Rivers of waters run down his eyes, because they keep not his law.

And with relation to himself, the tender hearted christian is careful to maintain the peace of his own conscience, to have that faithful monitor rightly formed; and with the strictest attention to follow its impartial directions. When the consciences of some are seared, as with a hot iron, his may be resembled to the eye, that tenderest of organs, which even the smallest particle of dust will put into disorder. For, as to sin, by which alone the conscience is defiled, the tender christian is fearful to commit it, easy to be convinced, impatient to be purged.—Fearful to commit it; though secrecy and pleasure should conspire to tempt him with interest and advantage; yet, under the influence of his tender frame, he baffles all tempta-

tion ; and even abstains from those actions of which he is suspicious ; being mindful of the apostle's maxim, *he that doubteth is condemned, if he eat.* He dares not come too near the borders of his christian liberty ; he studies not only what is lawful, but what is expedient for him to do.—Easy to be convinced ; he does not add rebellion to his sin ; like them whose perverseness is as witchcraft, and their stubbornness is as idolatry.

He goes not about to cover his transgression, as Adam ; but takes with his iniquity, when it is said unto him, *Thou art the man.* A very look will melt his heart, and make him, like that fallen, but recovering apostle, who denied his Lord, go forth and weep bitterly.—Even when he has not a monitor to warn him of his sin and danger, his own heart will smite him.

But when the tender Christian is convinced, what does he ? Abandon himself to careless stupidity, and wallow in the mire ? No : while he keeps silence, his bones will wax old, through his roaring all the day, "Restore, he cries, the joy of thy salvation. Wash me from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin."—"For God maketh his heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth him."

ON GRATITUDE.

THE thankful christian is he who thinks highly of the benefits he receives from others, especially from God ; and is disposed to make all the suitable returns that lie in his power, whether by word or deed. He no less abhors ingratitude towards his God than towards his neighbor. And in every condition, he writes himself a debtor to the Almighty. Him he regards as his principal benefactor ; him, as the fountain of his life, and joy, and comfort : the creatures as the conduit pipes through which they are conveyed. If he is refreshed by the kindly visits of an agreeable

friend; it is God who comforts him. He sees his face as the face of God. If by prudent counsel, he is prevented from carrying any unworthy projects into execution: such is the language of his heart, "blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me; and blessed be thou, and blessed be thy advice, which kept me back."

If the gifts of ministers have been edefying and refreshing to his soul; he adores him who puts the treasure into these earthen vessels. Solomon must have a thousand; but the keeper of the vineyard two hundred.

No mercy, however little, can he despised by him; whilst he considers the greatness of the giver, and the unworthiness of the receiver. He is so far from thinking himself entitled to the great and distinguishing favors of providence, that he confesses himself unworthy of the least of all his mercies, as having nothing due, but wrath and indignation.

He does not bury the former loving kindnesses of the Lord in the grave of a bad memory, as though the oldness of their date cancelled his obligations; but every renewed mercy he regards as a new indenture. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, he says; forget not all his benefits."

Is he in prosperity? he rejoices. For it is God who comforts him. Is he in adversity? he rejoices; for it is God who corrects him. Afflictions he considers as blessings in disguise; as mercies which God vouchsafes him, even against his will. Is he punished for his sins? he is thankful; for God "punishes less than iniquity deserves." Is he chastened for his profit? he is thankful; for it is that he "may not be condemned with the world." Is he persecuted for righteousness sake? he is thankful; for "it is given him in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe in his name, but also to suffer for his sake."

To enhance divine favors the more, he sets a peculiar mark on the endearing circumstances that attend them, Such a mercy was bestowed, when I was

going frowardly in the way of my own heart, and might rather have expected tribulation and anguish. Such a blessing was conferred, when I was reduced to the greatest extremity, and in the utmost article of danger. For this I solicited the throne of grace, and he heard me out of his holy temple. With that he prevented my supplication; and before I called he did answer.

Such are the sentiments wherewith his heart is only touched, for all those good and perfect gifts, that come down from heaven. But chiefly for spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus; for thine unspeakable gift, O God; and that mercy which is from everlasting to everlasting.

What thanks can he render unto God for all the joy wherewith he rejoices on his behalf? Too big for the heart, it overflows into the tongue, and extends itself unto the life and conversation. He does not thank God, like the proud pharisee, with a design to praise himself; nor like the flattering hypocrite, by way of compliment and form. When he gives God goodly words, he rests not in mere verbal honor; but whilst he offers praise he orders his conversation aright, and pays his vows to the most High. Has his liberal God any command for his wealth and substance? it is at his service. For his name, credit, and reputation? it is ready at hand. For his wit and learning? it shall not be wanting. Yea, neither counts he his life dear unto him, if called for at his hand. Gratitude will teach his eye to weep for the dishonors that are done to his bountiful Benefactor;—his hands to open in charitable distributions;—his feet to run in the way of his commandments. Gratitude for the mercies of God will enable him to present his body a living sacrifice, which is his reasonable service, holy and acceptable unto God.

ON RESIGNATION.

BE it so; the providential ways of God do not perfectly harmonize with his weak views, nor suit his private inclinations; if any harsh thought of God should arise in his heart, prompting him to utter words unadvisedly with his tongue; the resigned christian will check the rising thought, and keep the door of his lips with that reproof of the apostle, "who art thou, O man, that repliest against God?" And as he trembles to arraign the judge of all the earth, for what he has already done; so he dreads to prescribe, with an unholy boldness, what is farther proper for him to do, who is the Governor among the nations.

If the favors of providence are distributed in a manner that is, to outward appearance, not altogether so advantageous to the cause of holiness and truth; when the wicked are great in power, diffusing their verdant pride like a green bay-tree; he ceases from anger, and forsakes wrath, and frets not himself in any wise to do evil. He rests on the Lord, and waits patiently for him. He lets God alone to be the governor of the world. "For, who hath instructed the Spirit of the Lord? and who hath been his counsellor?" If the subjects of earthly princes submit unto their ordinances, and acquiesce in their administrations, even though strangers to the arcana of their government; much more he judges it incumbent on him not to presume to censure the mysterious administrations of the blessed and only potentate, all whose ways are judgment.

Or, if the more distinguishing favors of divine grace and mercy are dispensed in an absolute and sovereign way; while some are sharers of them, and others equally deserving are passed by; he dares not, with certain bold blasphemers, traduce the almighty King, as though he were acting the part of a cruel and arbitrary tyrant. For, he considers that he may do

what he will with his own.—As some high towers, though finished according to the nicest rules of architecture: yet, to the spectator's eye, who views it in the plain below, may seem crooked: and as threatening a hideous fall, merely through the deception of the sight; so, if the high decrees of the holy One should seem, at any time, partial and unequal, he imputes it to the weakness of his sight, and not at all to the nature of the decrees themselves, "even so Father, he says, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

Perhaps he is touched in some tender point; his afflictions are singular. He is visited with a distress that scarcely happens in an age, to which it is hard to find a precedent, or a parallel. Yet, even in such a case, will the resigned christian say, "it is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good," 1 Sam. iii, 18. Though he be called to quit his earthly possessions for the sake of truth, and to forego some worldly comfort that he most passionately loved; goes he away sorrowful, like him that had great possessions? Nay, but like the afflicted, though patient Job, he says, "behold, he taketh away, who can hinder him? and who shall say unto him, what doest thou?"—— And with faithful Abraham, when about to offer up his beloved Isaac, he rises early in the morning to keep the word of the Lord.—But we must not at all forget thy most examplary resignation, O persecuted king of Israel, when flying before an unnatural son, from thy royal palace and city. But, "if he shall say I have no delight in thee; behold here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him," 2 Sam. xv, 26. Though even his days are shortened, and his purposes broken off, he considers that his times are wholly in the hand of God; in obedience to the will of God he falls asleep; and, like Moses, dies at the command of the Lord. His soul is not taken from him, but he yields it into the hand of God, as the father of it, that he may shew it in the path of life.

If the answer of his prayers flies not upon the wings of the wind, he does not presently commence a suit against the hearer of prayer. For, still he casts not away his confidence, that "if he asks any thing according to his will, he heareth us." Heareth us in the time himself knows to be the most proper; and in what manner should be most conducive to his glory and our good.

In all his enterprises, he leaves the event in the hand of God. The common phrases, "if the Lord will;" and, "if God permit;" are not mere words of form and custom, when proceeding out of his mouth, but they are expressive of his heart; as being persuaded that his dominion is absolute; "for he is higher than the highest;" that his purpose is immutable; for, "he is the rock of ages;" that his power is irresistible; for, "unto him shall every knee bend." He is persuaded of the title God has to him, greater than that of parents to their children, of princes to their subjects, or even of the potter to his clay. How can he be but all submission?

But chiefly his resignation is inspired by the knowledge he has of the tenderness of that care which he exercises towards him, because he is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.—When he reflects, what a good being sits at the helm of affairs; let them that can be miserable; he cannot possibly be so. As the bee puts not forth its sting to the hive, when stored with honey gathered from a thousand flowers, no more can he put forth any sting of fretful murmurs, when he tastes that the Lord is good. He trusts in him, and he is blessed.

ON PATIENCE.

THE patient christian is he who bears up, in a becoming manner, under the painful sense of evil present, and tedious expectation of absent good. It is true, he is not proof against the inroads of sorrow, and

feelings of uneasiness ; he pretends not to the insensibility of the blustering stoic, as though his texture varied from that of other mortals. His heart is not made of stone, his flesh of brass, nor his bones of iron. Confessions of distress may be extorted from him ;—but his great soul disdains to be overcome by the greatest severity of trouble, so as to utter with his mouth any impious complaining thought, or hasten with his feet to a sinful deliverance. Sometimes he has been known to glory in tribulation ; to take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities ; and count it all joy, if he fell into divers temptations.

If he cannot attain to this triumphant gloriation, when patience has her perfect work, he studies to maintain a cheerfulness of temper, and a calm serenity of spirit. But, if he cannot be cheerful, he is silent. —The sovereign will of God is the resistless argument he uses with his own heart, whilst he considers the various ills of life, not as the births of blind and fatal necessity, but as the appointments of eternal wisdom, both in their weight and number. He is justly persuaded, that if consulting angels had contrived his best and properest affliction, and chose it to his hand, they could not have half so well adjusted what concerns him.—He trembles to reply against the God whom all the elements and powers of nature serve, who gives no account of his matters ; all whose dispensations are the result of excellent wisdon, contrivance, and design. Every bitter cup he considers as brewed in heaven, and presented by a Father's hand. "The men which are thine hand, O Lord," is the style he gives the instruments of his affliction, "and the man which is thy sword." He balances the desert of his iniquities with the grievousness of his trials ; and bears the indignation of the Lord, for that he hath sinned against him. He considers the benefit of the rod, and sees it blossoming, like Aaron's, and yielding the peaceable fruits of righteousness.

If the captain of his salvation assigns for him a post of danger, like a good soldier, he does not repine, but rather deems it a very singular honor. The louder shall be the applause, when he returns victorious from the battle. Whilst with his eye of faith he commands the vast unbounded prospect of eternity, the longest period of time dwindles into a point: and why should that be much regarded by him, which is but for a moment? No evil befalls him but he sees it common unto men.

The prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, and those of whom the world was not worthy, he has for his examples of suffering affliction and of patience. But chiefly he regards thy sufferings, blessed Jesus;—the sorrows of thy life;—the agonies of thy death;—thy bleeding cross;—the anguish of thy deserted soul;—and he remembers his own misery no more.

The scriptures are his grand dispensary, where he finds balsamic truths, and healing doctrines. A text of Paul is more powerful to support his fainting soul, than a sentence from Seneca; a thought of Solomon, than a paragraph of Epictetus.—Of all conquerors, he is the greatest; for even when conquered, he overcomes. His greatest enemies prove most friendly, and plait for him a crown of glory.

Sickness is better to him than health;—loss than gain;—death than life. While the vessels of clay crack in fire; he, like a vessel of gold in the furnace, makes no din, but comes out more refined.—Patience, thou art thy own reward. Great is thy present peace. Eternal is thy future glory.

ON FORTITUDE.

O FORTITUDE, thou noble grace; not earthly is thy original. The desperado knows thee not; nor the blustering gallant; who, for a glut of fell revenge,

or the false name *honor*, dares risk his life in the detested duel. Christianity alone inspires thee: God and angels applaud thee. While cowardise falls into the dangers she would avoid, and loses the life she intended to save: it is thine to make more than a conqueror in whatsoever event. Seated on thy triumphant chariot, thou draggest, at thy glowing wheels, both shame and fear; a dreadful pair. Humility, with prudence, manage thy reins; and glory stands behind thee.—By thee the hero is led into the glorious field, and whilst by thee inspired, and love to his dear country, his ears drink in the dreadful thunders of war with a peculiar pleasure; and his eyes behold the dismal scenes of terror and amazement, nor turn away abhorrent.—By thee the still more glorious martyr rejoices in sternest tribulations. So strange is thy enchanting power, galling fetters are turned into delightful ornaments; illuminated is the gloomy dungeon; prisons are palaces, and delectable orchards; and furious flames, fit to torment with keenest anguish, are beds of roses, soft and perfumed, as burning martyrs have declared. By thee the King of martyrs, who witnessed a good confession, was taught to endure the racking cross, and to despise the shame.—Whilst by thee, the joy that he now possesses was set before him, and the almighty Father as his helper, he set his face like a flint, and made his heart like an adamant. Great is thy present glory. Eternal is thy future reward.

Is then the bloody field, the scaffold, or the stake, the only theatres for holy fortitude? Perhaps the cause of your country, and the cause of your Redeemer, may never call you to expose and cast away your life. But go, and bravely dare to be singular in a declining age; though hissing crowds should point at you as you go along; and the men of fashion should despise you. Reverence the sabbath. Reverence the name of the Lord. Bow the knee; and let the voice of praise be heard in your dwelling. Reprove the bold blasphemer. Confess your faults, when it is for the glory of God; knowing that it is better to have a

wound, a blot in your reputation, than your conscience. And before you will endeavor to retrieve your situation in the world, by dishonest baseness, open the door to honest poverty. Be it the leading maxim of thy life, that nothing is greatly shameful, but sin; nor greatly fearful, but the displeasure of your Maker. In the present life you shall have peace of conscience; and, in the world to come, receive an incorruptible crown.

ON CONTENTMENT.

THE christian who rejoices in this excellent grace, is one who would not indeed be satisfied with ALL this world affords, as his eternal portion; yet can he say, even of his smallest share, *it is enough*.—Whether he views himself as a member of the great society of the universe, or of the civil society, to which he particularly belongs, he is pleased with the station which providence has allotted for him. He looks not with envy on those above him; and repels not only outward murmurings against the disposer of his lot, but inward repinings.

If the middle state of life be that which falls him, where he is equally removed from the pomp of wealth, and the indigence of poverty, he considers it by far the more eligible condition; like him who prayed, "give me neither poverty nor riches." For, as the panes of glass in our windows, by their hardness and solidity, bid a defiance to the stormy blast; yet, by their transparency, admit the cheerful beams of the sun; so does this middle state of life defend him from the injuries of the world; and at the same time, it excludes not the divine favor, nor darkens the light of his countenance; whilst the wealthy are exposed to peculiar temptations; and the poor are not without their manifest inconveniences, and even solicitations unto iniquity.

But, if poverty and want be his associates, whether entailed upon him by his birth, or introduced by the hand of accident or calamity, he can cheerfully welcome these unjoyous guests, and find them very tolerable companions.—As the soldiers had no power to break the bones of his Redeemer, "when they saw that he was already dead:" so poverty, with her attendant train of miseries, is unable to break his bones, and wound his rest, when he is crucified to the world. He knows, though he could call the world his own, God never put therein such heavenly virtue, as to inspire contentment; reserving this as his own great prerogative.

Why should he be rendered miserable, by the want of that, whose presence would not make him happy? If he has not all the advantages of riches and affluence; neither is he harrassed with the anxious cares, and dismal fears, and other sore temptations, to which those in high life are necessarily subject.—If he shines not in the glitter of plenty, how many darts of agony will he escape! So, thunders strike tall trees and lofty mountains, while humbler shrubs, and lowly vales, remain untouched.

This world he regards as an inn, where the shortness of his stay reconciles him to the indifferency of his accommodation: and, as a theatre, where it matters not whether he act the part of a king or a peasant; but how well he acquits himself in the character he assumes. He is not always poring on the dark side of his lot, and reflecting how many are happier than himself: but oft times turns his thought upon the favorable ingredients of his condition; and recollects how many have been, and are, this precious moment, more miserable than he.

If a valuable friend, or a beloved relative, is torn from his bleeding bosom by the relentless hand of death, he remembers how many still survive.—He never can persuade himself that he is poor, whilst possessed of so much natural wealth as a man, and so much heavenly treasure as a christian. The glorious

canopy of heaven he considers as the roof of his earthly mansion, far more majestic than that of the most magnificent palace, tho' adorned with glittering silver and refulgent gold. The green earth is the carpet on which he treads. When the chrystal well supplies him with drink, he can forego the flowing bowl. The golden sun, the sparkling stars, and the smiling flowers that strew the earth, shew more glorious in his eye, than gems and diamonds; and, indeed, are as truly possessed by him, as these are of their owners.—Health of body, soundness of mind, (blessings which, for their commonness, are but too generally forgot,) excite the most grateful emotions in his heart. But especially as a christian, O how his riches! how his treasures are replenished! God himself is the portion of his cup; and the word of God the charter for his inheritance.

How can he be envious at the prosperity of the wicked, when the unknown merits of Immanuel are all his own? Though he has but little, he knows it is the earnest of infinitely more; and every table that is spread for him in the wilderness, was purchased by his Redeemer's blood, before it was procured by his labor. It is not indeed a little of God will satisfy him; nor will he be pleased with a small share in the treasures of eternity. These best gifts he most earnestly covets. But as to temporal acquisitions, he esteems it "better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud."

By moderating his desires, he has found out the noble secret of turning every thing to gold, and finds a compendious way of obtaining whatever he will.—He is a true Benjamite who can use the left hand as well as the right; and manage both fortunes to advantage: and the liveliest image of the blessed God; for, like Solomon's good man, he ranges not abroad for happiness, being "satisfied from himself."

ON CONTEMPT OF THE WORLD.

BUT, what shall we say of him who despises the world, and its fashions that pass away? Shall we say, that he is lazy and indolent in his lawful calling, neglecting to provide for his own? No: for we find that even the Son of God himself, in the days of his obscurity, handled the tools of the carpenter. Or that his lawful comforts are tasteless and insipid to him? How then should he be duly thankful to his all-gracious benefactor? He neither admires the foolish action of him who threw his money into the sea; nor the discontented practice of those, whether of the Pagan, Jewish, or christian denomination, who, being weary of the world, condemned themselves to a civil death, or voluntary banishment from the cheerful haunts of men, retiring to the lonely cell, or solitary desart.—He knows there is nothing better than for a man to rejoice in his labor. Even in his worldly portion he enjoys his God, and reaps the love of his dying Redeemer.

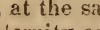
But such is the acquaintance he has with the glory of heaven; the dignity of his own soul; the vain and hurtful nature of the world, that he highly disdains to set his affections on the things of the earth, either in whole, or in part, as though they could be the main springs of his felicity.

Is he placed in humble circumstances, having no large quantity of earthly goods at his command? He discerns, in this providence, the kindly affection of a tender parent, removing from the reach of a beloved child, what might prove hurtful and pernicious, whilst those, for whom he has no such tender regard, are permitted to fall upon it; and, to their unspeakable prejudice, to fill their bellies with his hidden treasure.—He envies not, but rather pities the men of superior rank, whose wishes are not crowned by the abundance of their riches; but their sorrows are multiplied, and

new fewel is added to their lusts; and many of them, alas! have their portion in this life. As for those that set the world in their hearts, (by far too fine a frame for such a wretched pebble,) all whose days are sorrow, and their labor grief; he can no more esteem them truly rich, than we should think the man happy, whose entrails should be tortured with a precious diamond, fit to shine in the crown of the most exalted monarch.

If he is rich in this world, he is neither too joyful in having; too solicitous in keeping; too anxious in increasing; nor too sorrowful in losing these corruptible things. He rejoices more in the promises of the bible, than in the gold of his coffers. As the seamen are careful not to admit into their vessel the waters of the ocean by any, the smallest cranny; as well aware how quickly they would descend unto the bottom: so he is fearful to admit this world into his affections, lest he be drowned in perdition. He is fully persuaded, that he is as much an idolater who offers the affections of his heart to the unrighteous mammon, and says unto fine gold, *thou art my confidence*, as that he is an idolater who uncovers the head, kisses the hand, or bows the knee to an idol, or honors the vanities of the Gentiles with sacrifices and incense. Too eagerly to grasp what is his own, he equally abhors, as violently to snatch at what is the property of his neighbor. Whilst the niggardly wretch wants what he has, as well as what he has not, and his good is not in his hand; he enjoys the gifts of providence, by moderately using them to the glory of his Creator, and the good of his fellow-creature. He steers the middle course between the sordid miser who lays up his talent in a napkin; and the prodigal waster, who consumes upon his lust what was given him for more noble ends. He thankfully receives, but does not anxiously pursue the goods of fortune; nor abandon himself to unmanly grief, when they make unto themselves wings, and fly away. The world is dead to him. What though you bury it out of his sight? He

reverences himself, and highly disdains to place his happiness in what was only designed for his temporary accommodation.—Mindful of his high original, he suffers not this servant to bear rule; which were to submit to a slavery, of all others the most inglorious. Whilst he converses much with things eternal and unseen, he acquires a high disdain of the temporal things that are seen. As he who deals much in pieces of gold, thinks little of copper money; the good of the heavenly country is before him, even the better and enduring substance; and like the venerable patriarch, he regards not his stuff of worldly enjoyments, if he is called to forego them. He rejoices more that his friends are holy, than that they are wealthy; and is more anxious to instil into the minds of his children sentiments of devotion, than to make them acquainted with the art of making their fortune, and growing considerable in the world. He uses the world as a flower, which preserves its beauty and verdure the longer the less you handle it. When the busy worldling at once throws up his interest in the comforts of time and pleasures of eternity, this heaven born soul has the true relish of life; and, at the same time, can rejoice in all the treasures of eternity as his own proper mercies. Happy soul! he has provided for himself bags that wax not old, and durable riches, which no rust can corrupt, no thief can steal; of which no storm, no conflagration, can bereave him.



On the pursuit of real riches.

CAN he be poor that is an heir of God, whose every perfection is more glorious than the mountains of prey? Who can call the unsearchable riches of Christ his own; and is interested in the Pearl of great price? Whose is that saving grace, more precious than gold tried in the fire? that heavenly wisdom, that cannot be valued for jewels of fine gold? Who can

rejoice in the divine word, more than they that find great spoil: and take it for his heritage forever? Who is rich in good works, which are profitable unto men? Who can turn even reproaches into greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt? Of whom it may be said, "though he is not the lord of this village; though that spot of ground is not ploughed by his oxen; that all things are his." Who, viewing the spacious garden of his wealthy neighbor, is transported by his thoughts to the celestial paradise; and, beholding his magnificent palace, can meditate of the house not made with hands? Who can lift his eyes to that blue vault of heaven, adorned with sparkling stars, and considers it as the pavement of his heavenly mansion? Who can consider his scanty share of worldly good things, as the purchase of his Redeemer; and a little that he hath, is better than the riches of many wicked? He has little;—but it is the earnest of much; it is not his portion:—but it is sanctified by the word and prayer. He has little;—but the blessing of the Lord maketh rich. He has little;—but he lays it up in heaven, and lends it to a good creditor, even unto the Lord, who will render it again with usury.

No; he cannot be poor. For he is possessed of the true riches, in comparison of which, how is the gold become dim? how is the most fine gold changed?

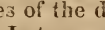
But he is poor, who, though he fill his house with silver and gold, high fed on the lap of fortune, is yet in straits, even in the fulness of his sufficiency. Care, like a greedy vulture, sits praying on his heart. He knows no other riches, but such as may be acquired with injustice, used with indiscretion, and possessed without happiness.

Alas! these corruptible things cannot redeem the soul from death; nor deliver from the incumbent miseries of life. Will the head-ache be less perceived, that the temples are surrounded with a crown? Will the fever be in the least abated, if the sick person is laid on a bed of state? Far less will the resentful conscience be bribed with gold and silver to intermit

its wrath. See how they make unto themselves wings, and fly away! How often has he solicited the cold hand of charity to-day, who yesterday washed his steps in butter, and lived on the finest of the wheat? Where is the man whose glory ever descended into the grave?

O ye children of men, whose foreheads meet the skies; whose souls are rational and immortal; are these the precious acquisitions for which ye stoop ignobly down, and dig into the bowels of the earth? Is it thus ye pant after the dust of the earth, and think no pains too great, no dangers too considerable, to deter you from the fantastic chase?

O did we know the things that are freely given us of God; did we know what is the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints; how would we trample under our feet these lying vanities! Are these thy boasted offers, O vain world? are these a portion for my soul? Can these enable me to live up to my native dignity? Be gone ye vain pretenders. Welcome, ye durable riches; ye safe enjoyments, that puff not up with haughty pride, nor are enemies to my peace, but are evidences of the divine love, and profit in the day of death. Let me call you mine, and I shall not know the approach of poverty.



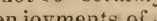
On an ingenuous and free spirit.

HE greatly despises the admired things of the world as low and vulgar. He can behold the gilded chariots, the magnificent palaces, and splendid equipages of the great, without a libidinous eye.—Conscious of his native dignity as a man, and spiritual as a christian, he rather scorns than fears to sin. His motto is, *reverence thyself*; and, from a principle of holy pride, he departs from iniquity, though shame and misery were not its inseparable attendants. The goodness of God has the most powerful influence upon him to

lead him to repentance; but he detests the hellish sophistry of those who say, "let us sin because grace abounds." He asks not, "what can the Almighty do for me? What profit shall I have if I keep his ordinances?" He serves a loving Father, who spares him as a man spareth his son, not for the love of wages, but for the wages of love. He is touched with a generous concern for the glory of God, as well as his own salvation; and for the good of his fellow-creatures, as well as his own interest. He does not say of this duty, is it absolutely necessary? may I be saved, though I neglect it?—Nor of that, what damage shall I sustain? will it infringe my reputation? will it encroach on my estate? But, is it the commandment of the Lord? The reverence he has for God is not that fear which hath torment; but that fear which is attended by love. He is more grieved by far for the displeasure done to God by his sin, than for any punishment which he may have reason to expect. If you eclipse the countenance of the Almighty, who is his sun and shield; in vain shall the twinkling stars of worldly comforts scatter their feeble beams. He weepeth sore as in the night, because the Comforter that should relieve his soul is far away. He is not always contriving how he may serve God at the cheapest rate; but is rather at a loss what he shall render to the Lord for all his undeserved mercies. This was thy princely spirit, O royal prophet, "shall I offer to the Lord that which cost me nothing?" His liberal soul deviseth liberal things. He disdains to be the servant of men; to see things with other eyes; to couch down under the burden of human imposition; but he searches the scriptures daily to see if these things be so, that are told him by learned and holy men; and rejects or receives accordingly. He is willing to receive evil, as well as good from the hand of the Lord; and makes not a grave of any present affliction, to bury the memory of former mercies. He can blush for those sins that are kept close from the eye of the world; and mourn even for a long past and

pardoned transgression. When God says unto him, *seek ye my face;* he does not postpone this work till he is laid on the bed of languishing; resolving to allot those dregs of time to the service of the Almighty, which he cannot make a better of; but he remembers his Creator before the arrival of the evil day.

Does he sist himself in the presence of God? he behaves as though the eyes of men were upon him.—Does he converse with man? he sets the Lord always before him. He is not so sordidly attached to the vain pleasures and enjoyments of the world, but he can, with the joy of the believing patriarch, obey the commandment of the Lord, and go forth, not knowing whether he goes.



ON SINCERITY AND TRUTH.

A LOVELY character indeed! The person who is really possessed of it, is as a man who does not think one way, and speak another; or speak one way and act another; but he thinks as he speaks, and speaks as he does. In all his words, in all his actions he pays the most inviolable regard to truth; more than to his own interest; more than to his own reputation; yea, more than to his very life. Truth he esteems as the most precious of all things here below:—the bond of civil society, without which public communities were nothing else but companies of robbers and banditti:—an eminent part of the illustrious image of God; and a very orient pearl in the crown of Jehovah; who, that he might not stain the truth of his threatening, in acquiting the guilty, did stain the cross with the blood of his only begotten Son. For this end camest thou into the world, O gracious Redeemer! to bear witness to the truth; and to confirm all the divine promises, which are yea, and amen in thee.

How can the inhabitant of Zion allow himself, for any puny interest, to encroach upon these sacred

rights of truth; for the asserting of which the most High has exerted himself in such an amazing manner? How can he suffer himself to turn aside unto the crooked paths of falsehood and dissimulation? whether in judgment or commerce, or in ordinary discourse: For so should he forfeit all pretensions of belonging to that people whose Lord is the God of truth: of possessing that spirit, whose fruit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth:—of being interested in that Redeemer, whose name is the way and the truth:—and of being entitled to that inheritance, which is the land of uprightness, where nothing enters that loveth or maketh a lie.

If he is called to act the part of a witness in civil judicatures, he would not so much as declare what he knows is a falsehood, though the disguising the truth, in the least instance, would tend ever so much to his advantage. Far less can he be guilty of that heaven-daring wickedness they are guilty of, who call the all-seeing majesty of heaven to testify against them, if it is not as they say, even when they are conscious that the contrary is the truth. O abhorred wretches! is it thus you pour contempt on eternal Sovereignty? thus you insult his omniscience? thus you bid defiance to his Almighty vengeance? Yet he also is wise, and will bring evil, and will not call back his words; and you shall know that it is a fearful thing to fall into his hands.

In matters of commerce, he lays it down as his leading maxim, that *honesty is the best policy.* He never can think it an advantageous bargain, that derogates from the peace of his conscience, whilst it puts money into his coffers. He not only abhors the grosser methods of dishonest gain; such as the false balance, the bag of deceitful weights, but the more genteel, or less shameful artifices of fraud and circumvention. Such are these, which Solomon touches at, with beautiful simplicity: "It is naught, it is naught, saveth the buyer; but when he is gone away, then he boasteth."

Nor is this godly sincerity less apparent in all his social interviews, or friendly communications. If he tells any story for true, to divert the company where he is, he takes care it be really a matter of fact; as rightly judging, that nothing can render a man more silly and ridiculous in the eyes of a rational beholder, than to coin absolute fictions, or dress up matters of fact by strange additions, in the garb of novelty, and all for no other end, but to keep the company in good humour, and gain their admiration. If he loses an argument about any painful doubt, sincerity forbids him to give out, that he is fully clear, when, perhaps, he is really in the dark; and that he sees no force at all in his neighbor's argument, though, perhaps, it amounts to a resistless demonstration. If he gives a character of any absent party, he is careful to avoid all hyperbolical descriptions, whether they tend to diminish or exalt the worthiness of the person spoken of. If he makes a promise, though about a trivial matter, he thinks himself obliged to fulfil it. And lastly, in passing of compliments, his courtesy does not intefere with his veracity; pretending the greatest warmth of kindness and affection, when, perhaps, his esteem is very low, and his affection very cold. His love is without dissimulation.

ON TEMPERANCE.

"BEAR and forbear," is a precept which may include under it, if not the whole, yet a very great part of moral duty. The first part of the maxim relates to the afflictions, the latter part refers to the pleasures of life. Are you in adversity? do things happen to you, not as you could wish? Bear them in a becoming manner; and let patience have her perfect work. Are you in prosperity? do the pleasures of life lie within your grasp? Moderate your desires by temperance; and forbear every unlawful gratification. If

you want temperance to use discreetly the pleasurable good things which you enjoy, they are turned into real evils, as afflictions are turned into good by the exercise of patience.

Temperance is the power and command which a man has over himself, in moderating those appetites which are common to us with the beast. Gluttony, drunkenness, and lust are the opposite vices. The two first are opposed to sobriety, and the last to chastity.

It is a melancholy matter, that ever intemperance should be deemed a necessary article in the character of a gentleman. Why should it not be regarded in the same light as treachery or lying; seeing it is equally condemned by the light of nature itself? Be it so: this ugly hag has the appearance of good humor, and has many votaries among your gallant spirits; to be intemperate is the most horrid ingratitude in its own nature, and argues a littleness of soul, and narrow way of thinking, extremely contemptible. Was it for this, O ye sons of intemperence! your bountiful Creator endowed you with his own resemblance; gave you that comely grace, and dignity of aspect, by which your bodies are distinguished from the brutes? Was it for this, he spreads your table with unsparing liberality, and gives you all things necessary to support your lives, and comfort your hearts? That human nature, which is by you defiled with filthy lusts, your Creator deigned to assume, when he took upon him the form of a servant. In this same human nature the Holy Spirit deigns to dwell. And the time is fast approaching, when many parcels of it shall be raised in glory, and clothed with immortality; but what is this to you, who seem to disclaim your humanity; and while you affect to be artificial brutes, are worse than the natural ones! Such knowledge is too wonderful for you; such motives too celestial to have influence upon your sensual minds. Yet shall the truly wise be influenced from such considerations to cleanse their way.

As to the pleasures which are supposed to attend upon sensuality of every sort, coolly viewed, they will appear infinitely deficient. He who is perpetually feasted with a cheerful conscience, is an epicure of a right kind. The pleasures of temperance are by far superior to those of her rival; perhaps in real poignancy; but sure I am, if fleshly satisfactions have any thing to recommend them on their own account, the attending evils swallow up the imaginary pleasure; as Pharaoh's lean kine eat up the fat and well favored ones.

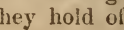
As a physician, I could advise you against intemperate courses. Temperance is natural physic, whereas intemperance is artificial distress. Are you not beset round about with fatal distempers? Is not old age soon to wrinkle your face; and death to toss his dart? Why invite these unjoyous guests? They will come soon enough of their own accord. O if you could but think what an ugly set you give unto your features! Lo! there is a looking-glass, drunkard, which Solomon holds unto your face. "Who hath "wo? who hath sorrow? who hath contention?— "who hath babblings? who hath wounds without "cause? They that tarry long at the wine, and go "to seek mixt wine." When the glutton is murdered by his own mud; and when the flesh of the adulterer is consumed;—then shall he mourn. O Britain! Britain! though famine, pestilence, and war, should never visit you again; yet this is a destruction that wasteth at noon-day.

As your lawyer, I might tell you, how this vice drains your worldly substance; is a fire that wasteth to destruction; and will bring you to a morsel of bread.

As a philosopher, I might put you in mind, that it makes you less than a man; darkens the understanding, takes away the heart, metamorphoses you into a beast.

But especially as a divine, I must tell you, that for these things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the

children of disobedience. We are taught by our holy religion, to consider the lusts of intemperance, as the procuring cause of temporal judgments; of eternal death. What cast Adam out of paradise? Intemperance. What brought the flood on the old world? Intemperance. What kindled Sodom's flames, and laid in ashes the cities of the plain? Intemperance. Intemperance brought on national judgments upon the Jews, and exposes to everlasting burnings.—It is related by an eminent author in his travels, that in some places of Germany, they executed certain capital offenders in a very extraordinary manner. There was an engine shaped like a handsome lady, which the criminal saluted, and afterwards retired. He returns again to salute the fatal machine: The figure opens its hands and cuts him through the heart. "Knowest thou not that the dead are there? that her guests are in the deeps of hell? None that go in unto her return again; neither take they hold of the path of life."



The harmony of the divine attributes; or, the council of peace.

AS yet there were no mountains covered with verdure, nor vallies clad with yellow plenty. The trees had not yet reared their lofty heads. There was no sun yet lighted up to spread the cheerful day; no armament glowing with lively sapphires. But the eternal mind alone existed. Himself was his own happiness. Beholding from his exalted prospect—(from which all future things are present) the numerous events which providence would bring forth, he spied the human race all grovelling in the dust, and utterly unable to recover themselves from a ruinous fall. He saw them, in their great progenitor, in the very morning of the world, involved in one common ruin, by the artful insinuation of a subtle apostate.—

He saw the mischief and spite of his implacable adversary, and resolved to redeem the lapsed race in such a method, as should redound to the glory of his perfections, and the never-ending confusion of the malicious impostor.

He is revealed to have called a solemn council, (for we must speak after the manner of men concerning him,) in order to concert the grand design. Holiness and wisdom were present, with all their sister attributes; but chiefly, justice and mercy met together. Graces, which, like the sun and moon, are rarely seen together among the sons of men.

And first, stern justice rose with an awful countenance. Justice, whose province is to see the rights of heaven. For, sooner would she tear the earth from her deep foundations, and blend it with the heavens in undistinguished ruin, than suffer any, the least infringement of the fundamental laws of God. She seemed to be altogether averse from the merciful design. She pleads, that guilty man is no more the proper object of mercy, than the angels that sinned.—Have they not violated thy holy laws, O righteous Father? See what confusion and disorder sin has introduced into thy fair creation! How the beautiful subordination of all things to one another, and to thee, the great Creator and Governor, is disturbed!—And therefore, die he must, or blot me out from thy nature, discard me from thy court, let me be no more the supporter of thy throne.

Holiness and faithfulness did back the speech of justice. For my lustre is stained, said holiness, by sin; and my honor is pledged, said faithfulness, that the deserved punishment shall be inflicted; witness the threatening of the law.

But a smiling attribute, in which the Almighty has a peculiar delight, next interposed. Her bowels were moved for us. With looks of gentlest aspect she held forth the olive branch of peace, and dropt these precious words, "shall mankind perish, thy youngest son, thy latest born? Shall the avenging enemy al-

ways blaspheme thy name, and deem himself the conqueror? O! spare thy helpless tribe, befooled out of life and happiness! O! stay thy arm of vengeance! thou hast glorified these my sister attributes already, in thy works! I see the beauteous creation emerging out of nothing, to the glory of thy power and wisdom! Holiness and justice have triumphed in punishing the sinning angels. Shall no ray of my glory shine forth in any of thy works? Here is a proper season, O! let me now be glorified! It is true, O divine holiness! you have been stained by sin; nor is it less true, you are engaged to inflict the awful vengeance, O divine Veracity! righteous are thy demands, O spotless Justice! but is there no surety who may be substituted in the room of offending mortals? Who is able? Who is willing, to underlie the threatened vengeance? Hast thou no expedient, O eternal Wisdom! to answer the pleas of Holiness and Justice? Canst thou not devise, how Faithfulness shall be verified, and Mercy be displayed?"

Eternal Wisdom then proposed for the surety, the second person of trinal-unity. It is true, we cannot find one equal to the mighty task among the angels, or the human race. But, let the Son of God become man; let him do; let him die; let him rise again.—The malicious adversary shall behold, with keen despair, all his designs blasted: God will be highly glorified. And even the gracious Redeemer will be highly exalted. While mankind will be honorably saved, by a righteousness of infinite worth and everlasting duration. O glorious device!

The gracious overture found universal acceptance; the Son of God consented. Mercy rejoiced.—Justice sheathed her sword. Faithfulness laid her hand on her mouth. And Holiness shone out in bright effulgence.

ON STEDFASTNESS.

AS the plant never can thrive, which is always removed by the gardener from one spot to another; neither can the christian abound in the work of the Lord, who is not stedfast and immoveable. But where shall stedfastness be found? In the jangling schools, among the wise men, the scribes, the disputers of the world? Alas! none have been more unlearned, more unstable, more pernicious wresters of the scripture, to their own destruction, than the persons of this denomination. Far less can the obstinate bigot lay any just claim to this character. So call him, who is eagerly attached to the peculiarities of his party, without being able himself to render a reason for his persuasion; or willing to undergo an impartial enquiry.

But the established christian is the person who has heard and learned of the Father; who knows the power of divine truth on his heart and conscience.—Long perhaps he wandered in uncertainty; had no where to lay his head, or fix the sole of his foot. But when he found these old paths, these good ways, he found his rest. Alighting, like the dove of Noah, on the true ark; *this is my rest*, he says, *and here I will abide*. He is no more like the chaff, which, when separated from the grain, becomes the sport of winds; but, rooted in Christ Jesus, he flourishes like the palm-tree, and grows as the cedar in Lebanon. His religious opinions are not now like travellers in an inn, that lodge but for a night; nor his holy resolutions like the morning cloud, or early dew, that passeth away. But that which he heard from the beginning abides in him; and with full purpose of heart, he cleaves unto the Lord. He holds fast the profession of his faith without wavering; and, by a patient continuance in well doing, seeks for glory, honor, and immortality. Is he assaulted by the winds of vain doctrine, and strong temptations? The strength of his

persuasion, and the firmness of his resolution, are so far from being overcome, that, on the contrary, they acquire a more unshaken stability; as the tree, that is well rooted, clings closer to the soil by being tossed in a tempest.

He peruses the holy scriptures, and finds God's word as a hammer to fasten him, as a nail in a sure place. He purifies his heart from every vile affection, and holds the mystery of faith in a pure conscience. He prays without ceasing, and finds his heart united to fear God's name continually. He sets before his eyes the stedfastness of his Redeemer; who, in the cause of his salvation, did set his face like a flint; and knew that he should not be ashamed:—and the examples of those christians, who endured unto the end, and held fast the beginning of their confidence. He would not submit the truth of the doctrine, certainly believed by him, even to the judgment of an angel from heaven. In the christian race, he runs not as uncertainly; and, in the christian warfare, fights not as beating in the air.

While the soul that is unstable as water, becomes a ready prey to every temptation, and never can excel in holiness or comfort; the established christian is a lively image of the living God, who is stedfast for ever; and with whom there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning. He is a disciple of Christ indeed; for he continues in his word, an ornament to the religion which he professes, and a bestower of gladness to the heart of every faithful minister, who can say, with the holy apostle, *now we live, if we stand fast in the Lord.* But, O that blessed serenity of mind, now settled into a pleasing tranquility, as milk into a sweet cream, when allowed to stand still!

Go on, O happy soul! resist the devil, stedfast in the faith. Thy prayers are powerful; thy reward is certain. And, at the last, you are presented holy and unblameable before him, if ye continue grounded and settled in faith, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel.

ON ZEAL.

THE zealous christian is one, who, from a tender regard to the honor of his God and Redeemer, burns with a holy anger against all doctrinal corruptions of his truth, and practical violations of his law; and does what in him lies for advancing his glory among men, and for transmitting to latest posterity pure and incorrupted the holy religion wherein he has been taught. In times of abounding iniquity, he waxes not cold, but glows the more intensely, as the piercing rage of winter imparts new vigor to the elements of fire. Though he very well knows the Almighty needs not his feeble help, being fully able to defend his own cause, and vindicate his injured rights; yet, like thee, O venerable Elijah, he is jealous for the Lord of Hosts, when the children of Israel had thrown down his altars, and fears the bitter curse of Meroz, should he not come forth to the help of the Lord; to the help of the Lord against the mighty. For, he remembers how, in the cause of his salvation, his gracious Redeemer was clad with zeal as with a cloak; he put on vengeance, and it covered him.

He does not, like the scrupulous Pharisee, confine his whole regard to the lesser matters of the law; while those of greater moment are forgot; but still he highly values every the smallest truth; and had rather that heaven and earth should pass away, than one jot of his word should perish. Many things which some account of as small punctilios, and trifling circumstantials, he finds, upon a nearer inspection, to be worthy of contending for; as being more nearly related to the whole system, and present state of religion, than is generally imagined. Even those laws, whereby the government of christian societies is adjusted, he considers as necessary as the bark is to the tree, or the hedge to the vineyard.

It is not a blind and headstrong passion that influences him, when he dissents from the way of the multitude, like them that had a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge; but being able to render a reason to every man that asketh. He may be compared to the bush that burned; it was sharp indeed, and prickly, but in the midst of light. Or, as the legal priests burned incense, and lighted the lamps together in the ancient tabernacle, so ought this holy flame never to be awakened, but when the lamp of knowledge is also lighted up.

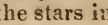
Let Saul, in his zeal for the Israelites, imbrue his hands in the blood of the Gibeonites; let another of that name waste and persecute the church, being exceedingly zealous of the traditions of the fathers; let bloody papists think they are doing God good service, when they consign over to the flames pretended heretics; blow up parliaments; massacre whole nations of men; and make the streets of populous cities to swim with human gore; he has not so learned Christ.—If any such wrathful emotions arise in his heart, as would excite him to call for fire from heaven, even against the most atrocious sinner; he recollects the needful caution of the meek and lowly Jesus, "ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." Mercy and compassion is the oil that feeds this flame, which many waters cannot quench. If it consumes any, it is not the persons of other men, but himself.

He affects not the zealous character for a cloak of covetousness, like the crafty Demetrius of Ephesus; nor for a mask of ambition, like Jehu, the proud and furious captain;—nor that he may, with greater secrecy, wreak his resentment on those he hates, as if this heavenly grace could prove a sanctuary to malice and revenge. It is not the persons of the sinners he abhors; but the sins of the persons. And against these he fights; not so much by bitter invectives, and noisy exclamations, as silent tears, and secret prayers. He sees transgressors, and is grieved much for the certain miseries they procure to themselves; more, for the

dishonor they reflect upon their Maker. His generous godly sorrow is not confined to his own personal iniquities; his heart can bleed for a world that lieth in wickedness; but still his zeal begins at home, like charity. He entertains no more favoring thoughts of any evil way, though his most beloved friends should be the abettors of it. But chiefly he keeps his own heart with all diligence; and carefully suppresses those vices in his own soul, against which he declares in other men. He remembers, that as the snuffers in the temple were pure gold; so they who would be advocates for pure and undefiled religion, ought to be pure themselves. And he fears to fall within the verge of that most cutting challenge; "thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?"

Though far from the indifference of a Gallio, in the matters of his God; yet will he never speak wickedly for him, nor have recourse to pious fraud for the promoting of his interest. As the stars in their courses fought against Sisera; so he, when striving against sin, is careful, in this holy war, to keep his rank, and never to step aside from that station that is allotted for him by his prudent General.

Such is the constant frame, and such the habitual temper of his soul; not resembling a transitory flash of lightning, but a standing pillar of fire. Sometimes indeed he incurs the censures of men, as though he were righteous overmuch, and of a gloomy nature; but God and conscience acquit him from the charge. In times of fearful judgments, and dangerous apostacy, he is ordinarily preserved, being marked with the seal of the living God on the forehead.



ON RELIGIOUS STRICTNESS.

THE strict christian is a person who places not his religion in a rigid censuring of others, nor in an eager attachment to the customs or opinions of a par-

ticular party; but is influenced in the whole of his conduct by an inflexible regard to the divine law, as the only rule of his life; and by a careful attention to the example of Jesus Christ, as the great pattern of his obedience. He reckons it not sufficient to distinguish himself from the many that walk in the broad way, by entertaining better notions, and more exalted sentiments than they; but his life is orthodox as his faith, and his conversation as his tongue.

He is afraid to engage in whatsoever course of action, without being first at all due pains to satisfy his conscience, that it is well pleasing unto God, or, at least, not prohibited in the law. But when he discerns the stamp of God's authority on any precept; though the world should countermand, he knows his own master, and obeys God rather than man.

It is true, he abhors those foolish and cruel macerations of the body, which some superstitious bigots have mistaken for true mortification; for he knows, that his body, being a temple of the Holy Ghost, deserves to be honored, by keeping it in repair: and, being the servant of his soul, should be mercifully used, as the good man is merciful to his very beast.—But, at the same time, he takes care not to pamper the flesh too much, and make provision for its lusts, under the specious pretence of using his christian liberty. For, though he stands fast in this liberty, and will not be brought into bondage by any, he chooses not to be walking always upon its utmost verge or border.

Some things that are in themselves lawful, he judges not expedient, on account of the attending circumstances; and he abstains from them accordingly. The regard he bears to the law of his God, is uniform, equal, and constant. He is no less conscientious in performing relative duties, than in practising those that are immediately religious. He abhors their impiety, who make the divine commands to clash, and break the one table of the law against the other; who, under the pretence of devotion, forget natural

affection; as if one should devote unto sacred uses what is necessary for supporting the life of his nearest relations, and say, "it is a gift by whatsoever thou mightst have been profited by me."

Though he is strict in observing every the least commandment, it is not that he may indulge himself in neglecting the weightier matters of the law; but rather to demonstrate unto all beholders, that if the authority of the great Lawgiver is to be so much respected, even in the smallest things, much more in those weightier and important matters, that are the very soul of religion.

He equally detests the spurious strictness of the pharisee, which was only partial and hypocritical; and the profane looseness of the multitude, who walk at random, and seem to think, that it is scarce possible to go wrong in the way that leadeth unto life.

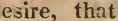
He neither shuns nor courts the approbation of the world, and studies rather not to deserve than to avoid their reproaches. His heart being reconciled unto the spirituality and holiness of the law, his liberty and freedom is not in the least impaired, by the strict rules he has imposed upon himself; he walks at liberty, because he seeks thy precepts, O God.

Some there are who esteem him to be no better than a nice precise fool, and an affecter of singularity; but he endeavors, by joining to his strictness, a sweet and obliging behavior, to confute this calumny; and oftentimes he encreases, like his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, in favor with God and man. He looks upon all his strictness as too little; and coming not only exceeding short of what is required in the law, but of what others have arrived at; and he renounces it all in point of trust and confidence. It is not his own strictness, but his Savior's atonement on which he builds his hopes of a happy eternity.

Go on, O happy soul! though thy companions should be few in the narrow way that leadeth unto everlasting life; in a little thou shalt no more complain of being solitary; for thou shalt come to the

innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first born, whose names are written in heaven, where the strictest christian shall receive the most glorious crown. For their shame, they shall be advanced to double honor; and for confusion, they shall rejoice in their eternal portion.

It now remains to beg the reader's excuse for detaining him so long from a perusal of the more important and interesting contents of the following sheets;* and to express my ardent desire, that blessed by a gracious providence, they may gain the haven of public acceptance, and import these most valuable commodities; pleasure which improves, and improvement which delights.



ON THE RELIGIOUS WORSHIPPER.

FIRST of all, he is careful that the worship he performs be of divine institution, and suited to the genius of the gospel. He is not so much taken with gaudy ornaments and glittering ceremonies in any set or religious observances, as with the stamp of heaven's appointment. Though the commandments of men should be ever so plausible and dazzling to the eye, he can despise them as weak and beggarly elements, as worldly rudiments, as carnal ordinances.

But though his worship should, as to form, boast of ever so much purity, he knows where there is a spiritual worship, there may be a carnal heart. The soul of his devotion lies, neither in the reverence of

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NOTE.

* *This essay concluded the preface in the first edition.*

bodily demeanor, nor in the exercise of shining gifts; but in the fixing of his mind, and the exciting his grace into action, by the influence of the Holy Ghost.

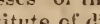
The bended knee bespeaks the humiliation of his soul; the exalted voice indicates the fervency of his mind; the elevated hand betokens the lifting up of his affections. The request of his lips is the same thing with the desire of his heart. If his lips are burning, his heart is also fervent.

Duties he considers as the means of communion with God; but he endeavors never to rest in them as the end. He neither worships God with a view to gain the applause of men by shewing his fine parts;—to appease a resentful conscience by some faint compliances with its impartial dictates;—to work out a righteousness whereby he might be justified before him;—or, to encourage himself in the indulgence of his lusts, because he has peace-offerings with him, or because he has paid his vows. But his flesh and heart cry out for the living God.

The influences of the divine Spirit; these are the winds that blow upon his garden, and make the spicy odors of every divine grace to flow forth. These are the gales that urge him forward in every act of worship; without whose kindly aid he might ply the oar of natural endeavors in vain. But the spirit helpeth his infirmities with groanings that cannot be uttered. Without his divine succors, what were he, but as the mighty Sampson, when shorn of his sacred locks, he became as another man? Therefore is he tenderly solicitous to cherish every motion of this beningn agent: and to avoid whatsoever course of action might quench this heavenly fire by which his sacrifices are inflamed.

It is true, he may, through the workings of inbred corruption, and the influence of wicked spirits, be pestered with the intrusion of vain thoughts, even in his most solemn devotions. But if these hellish birds will alight upon, andpick his sacrifices; he will, as Abraham drive them away. And though he should

not be able to acquit himself with much clearness of thought and elegancy of expression; yet he finds a gracious acceptance with God, who understands the stammering tongue of his beloved children; and is more moved with their unutterable groans, than with the accurate addresses of the gifted professor; from whom, as being destitute of divine grace, shall be taken away even that which he seemed to have. The angel of the covenant ascends in the smoke of all his offerings. Though he covets earnestly the best gifts, yet God has shewed unto him a more excellent way.



ON HEARING THE WORD.

ASK you, why faith should come by hearing?—why it should be the ministration of the Spirit? why he should fall on them that hear the word? why saints should be comforted, and sinners converted, by the foolishness of preaching? The same gracious appointment by which the clouds of heaven drop down fatness from above, at the return of spring, hath ordained that his doctrine shall drop as the rain, and his speech distil as the dew. Suffice it for us to know, that *of his own will begat he us by the word of truth.*—He who teaches the tender babe to hanker after the mother's breast, and renders the milk more nourishing when sucked from that living fountain, than when presented in a cup; also instructs the infant christian to desire, as a new-born babe, the sincere milk of the word, and makes him grow thereby. Let us rather attend to the character of him who is not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the word.

First of all, he looks not on this divine ordinance as a mere amusement, or as an expedient to pass away a little time. He repairs not to the place of the holy, merely to see, and be seen:—that his curiosity may be gratified with the novelty of the matter:—that his

ears may be tickled with the melody of the voice:—that his passions may be touched by the elegancy of the address:—that his mouth may be filled with some matter of discourse:—that an angry conscience may be pacified; or that an empty name may be maintained; but that his graces may be quickened, his lusts may be mortified, his temptations resisted, his doubts resolved, his discouragements dispelled, his understanding may be stored with truths, his will with holy resolutions, his affections with heavenly emotions. In short, that he may hear what God the Lord will say; and that he may profess the dependence he has on him for the knowledge of his will, and instruction in the way of life.

For, though he is only to hear the voice of a man of like passions with himself, he considers him as the mouth of the living God speaking unto him from heaven. Thou art going to hear, O my soul, not the word spoken by an angel from the blessed abodes, whose tongue is tipt with heavenly eloquence;—not the word of a king, wherewith there is no power commanding deep respect from all that hear; but the voice of him who is terrible to the kings of the earth, and angels bend before him with lowly reverence. Instead of diminishing his respect to the heavenly message, because delivered by a mortal tongue, it fires his gratitude to the condescending Deity, who once spoke to the Jews in the likeness of sinful flesh, when the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and now he speaks unto us by flesh, having received gifts for men, that his terror may not make us afraid.

How can he but be all attention, when so great is the majesty of the speaker?—so vast the importance of the thing spoken? No vain speculation; no idle tale; no cunningly devised fable; but truths which angels pry into, and wherein he is most deeply interested; even that word which God has magnified above all his name.

Having, by fervent prayer, and serious meditation, composed his wandering thoughts, allayed his

passions, and hushed his worldly cares, he receives, with meekness, the ingrafted word. To the hearing of the ear, he joins the hearing of faith. Wisdom enters into his heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto his soul. If the reproofs of the word are applicable unto himself, he does not apply them to his neighbor, nor hate him that reproveth in the gate. He adores that goodness that ceaseth not to be a reprover, but that makes the word to be quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, and a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. He obeys the voice, and receives correction. If the thunders of Sinai sound their trumpet, his belly trembles, and rottenness enters into his bones. Knowing these terrors of the Lord, he is persuaded to fly from the wrath to come. Blessed soul! he is not offended with the strictness of the precepts; he turns not from the holy commandment, though it should encroach upon his lusts, or worldly interests, and cost him a right hand, or a right eye. He esteems no commandment little, on which the authority of the great God is instamped; or difficult, when it comes from him who gives power to the saint. But chiefly, he mixes faith with all those great and precious promises which in Christ are yea and amen, and by which he is made a partaker of the divine nature. These, he knows, it is his duty to believe, as well as to reverence the reproofs, to obey the precepts, or tremble at the threatenings.

What shall we say more? What he hears, he understands; what he understands, he remembers; what he remembers, he loves; what he loves, he believes; and what he believes, he practises. His life is a continual sermon. And not being a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the word, he shall be blessed in his deed.

ON MEDITATION.

IT is the intense fixing of the thought on some heavenly subject, till either the mind is informed, or the heart affected. It may be compared to the bruising of sweet spices, which makes them spread abroad their odor; or to the chewing of our natural food, which makes it fit for being digested into nourishment.

Happy is that soul, who, being renewed in the spirit of his mind, can retire into himself, from the hurry of the world, and from the storm of passion, to converse with God and Christ, and things above, and find that solitude is sometimes the best society;—who, with his own thoughts, can cheer the darkness of the night, and soothe the labors of the day. While he is musing, the fire of holy love burns, vanity disappears, and holiness advances.

Ask you the themes on which he dwells? Neither on things that are too high for him, nor things unprofitable and vain. Instead of weaving spiders' webs, or hatching cockatrice eggs, like the vile person, who will meditate villany, and his heart will prevent the night-watches, to meditate on thy statutes, O God. When he remembers thee upon his bed, and meditates on thee in the night-watches, he will rejoice under the shadow of thy wings; his soul will follow hard after thee, and thy right hand will sustain him. His meditation of thee shall be sweet, both when the morning shines, and the evening draws her curtain over the world. How great shall be his peace! how great his safety! and how unspeakable his joy!

Or, shall thy person, and thy mediation, O exalted Redeemer! what thou art, what thou hast, and what thou hast done or suffered, employ his thoughts? When his heart shall indite a good matter concerning thee, his soul shall be filled with marrow and fatness. He shall meditate on the agonies of thy cross, and mourn for thee whom he has pierced; the glories of

thy present state, and rejoice in thy highness. Thou wilt send thy holy Spirit to take thy own things, and shew them unto him, that he need not betake himself to antichristian aids, of bringing thy dying love to his remembrance. Though crucifixes and pictures should not meet his eye at every turning of the street, yet will he naturally think of thee, the author of his life, and centre of his happiness.

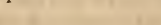
Often times he will take a trip into the world of spirits, and come back all immortal. His thoughts will range in the eternal regions: contemplate the happiness of the heavenly state, which he will compare with the restless agonies of unquenchable fire; and beholding this glory of the Lord, he will acquire a blessed meetness for, and longing after its enjoyment;—will think but lightly of his transitory affliction;—will be roused into a holy ardor, to be a follower of them who inherit the promises;—will commiserate their mistaken smiles, who take up the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. His faith will be strengthened, his hope invigorated, and though his outward man should perish, yet, for this cause, he will not faint.

At other times he will indulge the thought of death;—will consider his latter end;—will familiarize unto his thoughts the dismal solemnities of his dying bed, and say to the grave, "it is mine house."

Shall I mention, in the next place, how he will regard the doings of the Lord, and consider the operations of his hand; that he may know what the Most High is calling for, in a way of duty, by every merciful interposition of providence; and by every frowning dispensation; and that, like a man of wisdom, he may hear his voice, and see his name.

But we must not at all forget, how he communes with his heart, how his spirit makes diligent search, how he considers himself, lest he be tempted; and what is that sin which easily besets him. For thus he regards the avenues of temptation, because he knows what is the plague of his heart.—What shall

we say more of him? In the divine law, "he meditates day and night; and shall be like a tree planted by the river of water, that bringeth forth fruit in his season. His leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doth shall prosper."



ON SINGING OF PRAISE.

WHERE can grave, sweet melody be applied, with such propriety, as to the sacred subjects of religion? By this, devotion is invigorated, joy is heightened into rapture, divine truths are better impressed upon the heart, and fixed in the memory. Distempered passions are allayed, and heavenly affections are inspired. Even as the hand of the Lord was upon the prophet, when he called for a minstrel, and the evil spirit departed from the king of Israel, while David touched, with his skilful hand, the sweet resounding harp. From the most remote ages, and from the most remote places of the world, have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous.

To this heavenly mirth the christian is inspired, not by the fumes of wine, wherein is excess; but being filled with the Spirit, he speaks to himself in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; singing and making melody in his heart unto thee. He makes the voice of his praise to be heard, not only in the public assembly, but in his private dwelling.

Though there are peculiar seasons of this duty, when it is more remarkably incumbent; yet he sees abundant reason to bless the Lord at all times, and to have his praise continually flowing from his lips.—Even in the night of his distress, oft times he has a song, when all joy would seem to be darkened, when his harp would seem to be turned into mourning, and his organ into the voice of them that weep. Thus Paul, with Silas, sung at the dead hour of midnight, though their backs were colored with ignominious scourges, and their feet made fast in the stocks.

Though he despises not the melody of the voice, yet, by itself alone, he accounts it no more but bodily exercise, that profits little. Therefore, he uses it only in a subserviency to his devotion; and rests not in it as his ultimate end. What he chiefly attends unto, is, that he may sing praises with understanding, and with grace.

His praising is his reasonable service. And though the subject sung should not exactly suit his own case: though it should be—some dreadful imprecation, uttered by the spirit of prophecy;—some high attainment, to which he is not arrived;—some deep distress, which himself is unacquainted with:—yet, by ejaculatory prayers, and serious meditation, he can digest even these seemingly foreign subjects into the nourishment of his soul, and sing of them to the praise and glory of God.

As far as in him lies, he wants to have these affections set a working, and these graces educed into exercise, that are naturally required by the theme of which he sings: be they holy joy, fervent love, burning gratitude, reverential fear, or godly sorrow.—But chiefly the grace of faith must never fail to be acted, in this as in other parts of worship. Christ is the chief musician, to whom his songs are inscribed.—Christ is his altar, by which he offers up his sacrifice of praise continually.

And here can I forget to celebrate the fulness and variety of that little bible, composed by the Hebrew king and prophet? What attribute of God does he not describe in lofty numbers? What work suffers he to pass uncelebrated or unsung? What moral duty, what christian grace, is not here recommended? What possible case is not here painted? To what distemper of the soul may we not find here a sovereign remedy? Here the secure may find what is proper for their awakening, the disconsolate for reviving, the doubting for directing, the feeble for spporting, to make them be as David.

What mortal pen can equal the sublimity of his thoughts, the liveliness of his metaphors, the majesty of his descriptions? Which of his psalms may not say, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made?"—When he displays the glory of the God of Israel, thousands of mighty angels stand before him; "God is in the midst of them, as in mount Sinai." Now he flies on the wings of the wind, and rides on flaming cherubim.—His lightnings lighten the world. The earth trembles at his approach. The mountains melt as the snow that covers them. The foundations of the world are discovered. The floods drive back their tides. The mountains skip like rams.

Now he sets him on a throne, of which justice and judgment are the foundation: and mercy accompanied with truth, go before his face. Now he describes the fierceness of his anger; and rains down snares, fire, brimstone, and an horrible tempest. Darting his eye through distant ages, he brings down the Son of God to dwell in clay; a body is prepared him. The Jews are filled with rage against the Lord's anointed. He hears his melancholy groans. Sees his heart melting like wax in the midst of his bowels.—But he leaves not his soul in hell. Messias lives, ascends on high, and leads captivity captive. Rejoice, ye worlds of blessedness. Be lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in.

ON PRAYER.

LET prayer, the most honorable, the most pleasurable, and the most beneficial of all exercises, be next our theme. In this we converse with the eternal mind, and contract a blessed familiarity with that all-glorious Being, whose favor is better than life, whose frown is worse than death. By this we taste more exquisite delights, than all the pleasures of sin

can boast, than all the vanities of the world can bestow. By this every mercy is sanctified, every affliction is alleviated, every holy disposition is invigorated, every corrupt affection is weakened, and every temptation is resisted.

Now, prayer, in the most general and abstracted notion of that word, may be described: The speech of the rational creature unto God, whether conceived in the heart, or uttered by the mouth; whereby we either celebrate his amiable perfections, confess our own defects, implore his divine power for the mercies we want, or thank him for the blessings we have received.

But let us more particularly attend unto his character, of whom it may be said, *behold he prayeth.* And, first of all, detesting their abominable idolatries, who direct their religious addresses, either to these imaginary beings that never, perhaps, did so much as exist; or those beings which indeed have a real existence, but no divinity, seeing they are all the creatures of God, and many of them the works of men's hands.—God and God alone, is the object of his adoration; who only can hear, who only can judge, who only can answer the prayers that are made; for his knowledge is infallible, for his equity is inflexible, for his power is irresistible. "O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come." Nor shall any rotten distinction, devised by the antichristian church, ever induce me to entertain a favorable thought of that palpable violation of the law, who hast expressly commanded in thy word, "thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou fear."

But how shall he, whose character is a miserable sinner, dare to approach that tremendous Majesty, in whose presence the foolish shall not stand, who hears not sinners, who abhors the workers of iniquity?—The mediation of Jesus Christ is the sole, is the happy solution of this knot. To his care he directs all his petitions, His name he mentions in faith and in righteousness; and finds a gracious acceptance. If,

as we are informed in history, the king Admetus was reconciled to Themistocles, when the latter taking the young prince in his arms, presented him to the father; shall not much more a gracious God shew favor, complacency, and love unto sinners, who, though unworthy in themselves, yet bring the dearly beloved Son of God in the arms of their faith, saying, "See, O God, our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed!" By him the humble supplicant, draws near to God, of whom it is said, "this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

As in the sacred story the angel of Manoah ascended in the smoke of his offering; so Christ ascends in the incense of all his prayers, and brings them near the throne of his heavenly Father. By him he has access with confidence. Towards him he bends his eye in all his supplications; even as the ancient Jews never did pray, but with their faces towards the holy temple at Jerusalem, though at the greatest distance from them.

The word of God is the only rule by which he regulates his devotions, both as to the time, the place, the matter, the manner. By this he is taught, that as no time is unfit, so no place is improper for this honorable duty. Though there are stated times of public and private devotion, which he cheerfully observes; and though it is the joy of his soul to join with his fellow-worshippers in places that are appointed for the assembling of the church; yet he can never think that prayers which are made in canonical hours or consecrated places, are of greater efficacy on that account. The labors of the day he begins with prayer, he mixes with prayer, he finishes with prayer.—He is more anxious to get a praying heart, than to find a place; for he remembers how Jeremiah could pray in the dungeon, Daniel in the den of lions, Jonah in the belly of the fish, Hezekiah upon his bed, Nehemiah in the king's presence, Peter on the house top, Paul on the shore, and Christ in the garden.—He considers that Christ is an omnipresent temple; and therefore lifts up holy hands in every place.

By the same unerring rule he is directed to have a special care, that the matter of his addresses be agreeable to the divine nature and will. The bodily gesture he uses, is from irreverence on the one hand, and from superstition on the other. Bowing, kneeling, bodily prostration, elevation of the hands and eyes, uncovering of the head, are the outward expressions of his inward reverence. But ludicrous and antic ceremonies, pharisaical disguisings of the face, he avoids as tending to beget a contempt of religion in the minds of spectators, instead of imprinting a reverence. The words of his mouth are neither too low and familiar on the one hand, nor too high and affecting on the other: far less are they unintelligible, and pronounced in an unknown tongue. For, as the priests offered incense when the lamps were lighted; so, when he prays in the spirit, he prays with the understanding also. The words which the Holy Ghost teaches, he prefers above all others. He uses not vain repetitions, as though much speaking were the thing that recommends him to the Almighty. A multitude of words, he knows very well, is not that importunity which availeth much in the fervent prayer of the righteous. For, though the gesture of the body should be ever so decent, and the words of the mouth ever so well chosen, he knows very well, that still one thing is lacking, and indeed the principal thing, the disposition of the heart, which if it is not right with God, the most lowly gestures, and the most elegant expressions, are but smoke in his nostrils, and a fire that burneth all the day.

ON MOURNING OR FASTING.

LAUGH, ye profane, and prove your misery by your smiles. What though games and revelry should snatch your hours away, and your whole life should seem but one continued festivity? Miserable crea-

tures ! while you dance on the brink of a tremendous precipice, in a moment you descend into the grave ; and drop into that place, where all joy is darkened, and horrors reign in everlasting triumph. Commend me to that awful joy that dwells with him that is poor and of a contrite spirit.

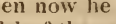
A person of this holy temper is not a stranger to natural cheerfulness; far less to spiritual joy. But he endeavors to repress that vain and frothy mirth, which, instead of doing good as a medicine, will eat as doth a canker. He waters with his tears even the pardon of his sins, and cannot think on the transgressions of his past life, without real emotions of grief.—For, though they will never subject him to condemnation from God, for this very reason he condemns himself the more He is often heard, like Ephraim, bemoaning himself, and mourning like a dove in the valley, for the sad prevalence of the body of sin and death.

He can drop a generous tear for the miseries of his fellow-creatures, and remembers them that are in bonds as bound with them. He cannot but be grieved with transgressors; cannot but be vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked ; cannot but sigh and cry for all the abominations that are committed in the land of his nativity. He satisfies not himself with open censures of public evils, which may proceed from pride and malice ; but weeps for them, like Jeremiah, in a secret place; and thus he proves his real charity ; his sincere regard to the divine honor ; and disinterested benevolence to men. Moreover that he delivers his own soul from the guilt of those sins for which he mourns.—If the church of God is involved in great distress ; if she is under persecution; or, what is infinitely worse, if the bulk of her sons and daughters are laboring under a lamentable decay as to the power of godliness ; if her pastors are brutish, if her ordinances are barren ; if her doctrine is corrupted ; if her discipline is perverted; if her government is neglected ; if her unity is broken; then is he sorrowful

for the solemn assembly ; he weeps when he remembers Zion ; like Nehemiah, who was the king's cupbearer; and like you, ye captives of Babylon, when ye hanged your harps upon the willows.

He follows for his pattern the great apostle of the Gentiles, who served the Lord with many tears, warning every man ; who had continual sorrow in his heart for his brethren according to the flesh ; and could not without weeping, so much as mention the enemies of the cross of Christ. But chiefly he looks on him whom he has pierced, and mourns for thee, O suffering Redeemer ! *Surely thou hast borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.* We have often heard of thy tears, but never of thy laughter.

O greatly wise, whose heart is in the house of mourning ! strangers indeed they are to loud and jovial mirth, and to the drunkard's noisy song; but not unto the smile at heart, and calm sunshine of the mind. For them Christ is anointed to preach glad tidings ; to give them the oil of joy for mourning, and the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness.—— With them the holy One will deign to dwell, before all palaces and temples. Even now he keeps a bottle for their tears, and is mindful of them, as they were written in a book. A time approaches, when, with his own kindly hand, he will wipe them forever from their eyes; and they who have gone forth weeping, bearing precious seed, shall bring back their sheaves with rejoicing.



On the sacrament of the supper.

IT was in that fatal night, when the accursed traitor had resolved, with calm, deliberate malice, upon the most unworthy terms, to betray his Lord and Master into the hands of sinners. Ah ! cursed lust of gold, to what enormous crimes dost thou push on the human race O heart impenetrably hard, which

was not softened by all the endearing speeches and deportment of the meek and dying Savior!—The rulers of the Jews were met in close cabal; and thirsting for the blood of the innocent Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world; they concerted measures for apprehending him, like a notorious disturber of the peace, and troublesome pest of society. Their dark designs were not unknown to the wise Redeemer, whose penetrating eye beheld them through the deepest shades. Full well he knew the success their enterprise was met with, according to the plan laid down in the eternal council of the skies. He was not unapprised of the inglorious and agonizing death which was immediately before him; nor with the still more dismal conflict with angry Omnipotence.—— Gethsemane can tell how he, the heavenly vine, was squeezed in the wine-press of the wrath of God, till from his opened pores, even in the cold night, and on the cool ground, there issued forth great drops of bloody sweat.—Under all these direful apprehensions, he enjoyed a calm serenity of mind, and mixed familiar discourse with his disciples at the last passover-supper. If the last words, and dying actions of our friends, claim our peculiar regard; the last concluding scene of our Redeemer's life is ten thousand times more worthy our attention. It was in these precious moments, he, as the king of Israel, instituted the commemmorating ordinance of the supper.—No more, ye true Israel of God, shall ye practise the bloody rites, which I commanded Moses, in memory of your deliverance from the bondage of Pharaoh. Now, that my blood is as good as shed; and I, who am the true passover-lamb, on the brink of being sacrificed for you; be it enacted, that, in all succeeding generations, the simple elements of bread and wine be my only memorials.

Had this ordinance been of a trifling nature, a matter of indifferency, and but short of duration, who can persuade themselves, that a person of such consummate wisdom, would have employed those valua-

He hours, in giving any injunctions about it to the dejected apostles? The holy evangelists record it; and the chosen vessel to bear God's name unto the Gentiles, adds his confirmation; "for I have received," says he, "from the Lord, that which I also delivered unto you, that in the same night wherein he was betrayed, he appointed this expressive ordinance to be perpetuated in the church."

Lo! he takes the bread, which was before him on the table; bread, which is the staff of life; bread, which strengtheneth the heart. He blessed it; not for a natural use, as ordinary bread is sanctified by prayer for common purposes; but he blessed it for extraordinary purposes, and supernatural ends. As man, he craved; as God, he bestowed the blessing.—He breaks it; he gives it into the hands of the apostles. Take with your fingers, eat with your mouths, he says, this consecrated bread. For this, and not the roasted flesh of the passover-lamb, is, by my own appointment, the sign and symbol of my body, broken by the stroke of justice in your law, room, and place. —Supper being ended, and the wine poured out to his hand, he takes the cup, he blesses it, he gives it to his disciples. The wine which is contained in this cup of blessing which I give you, is an emblem of my blood; by which, not the Old, but the New Testament, is confirmed; of my blood, which is now about to be shed; not in typical sacrifices, but in my real crucifixion. Shed, not for the remission of ceremonial guilt unto a few Israelites; but for the remission of the numerous sins against the moral law, both unto Jews and Gentiles.

Ye that are the lovers of Christ in sincerity, reverence his dying command, who said, *do this in remembrance of me.* Had he left us in charge to do some great thing, to practise some burdensome rite, to observe some unintelligible ceremony, whose meaning was not easy to take up; we ought to have been all submission. How much more, when he only bids eat the consecrated bread, and drink the consecrated cup, as a memorial of him to all generations.

Great is your privilege! exalted is your honor! who eat bread in the kingdom of God, and are worthy partakers in this mysterious feast. Here Christ is clearly crucified before you; and you taste that the Lord is gracious. Let the deluded followers of the Antichrist of Rome, fall down to their breaden deity, and fondly dream of swallowing the real flesh of the Redeemer; ye have not so learned Christ; for ye know, that the flesh profiteth nothing. Monstrous absurdity! unprofitable and senseless vanity! the belief whereof none can profess, who renounces not all his sense, and bids not adieu to reason, without being guilty of the grossest hypocrisy. Or if any can believe for true such a glaring lie, let us tremble at the strong delusion.

No wonder the adversary, who sits in the temple of God, and exalts himself above all that is called by that tremendous name, should fearfully disfigure this holy institution, by his cursed abominations. No wonder, that, in numerous instances, they are guilty of sacrilegious mangling; and, in numerous instances, of presumptuous and horrible adding to this important ordinance of the supper. For here, as in a medal, there are engraven in miniature the characters of dying love; and in the conscientious discharge of this commanded duty, the soul is satisfied as with marrow and fatness.

Full oft the true christian can tell, how, in this holy supper, his diseases are cured, his desires are satisfied, and his discouragements converted into exultations; whilst he feeds, not on bare and empty symbols, obvious to the corporeal touch; but on the hidden manna, signified by external elements, and obvious to faith alone. What wonder, his body and his blood afford such heart-felt satisfaction to the believer in the sacrament; when even the heart of God was infinitely delighted therewith, while on the cross he offered himself through the eternal Spirit! This is the true bread, with which the angels' food may not compare. This the true wine which rejoiceth the

heart of man ; and even makes glad the heart of God. When blooming in spiritual health, this makes you grow ; or if you languish under woful decays, this will restore your souls again. At this banquet of wine, the king will give commandment, to put to death the wicked Haman of this and that corruption. Yea, " what is thy petition ?" will he say, " and what is thy request ? it shall be granted unto the whole of the kingdom."

Blessed be that bleeding love, that instituted these holy rites, for the remembrance of itself. But cursed be that impious superstition, which, not content with the plainness and simplicity of the original commandment, goes about to refine the ordinance, and trick it up in robes of human ceremonies. Glory to God, for that happy providence which ordered our lot in these reformed lands; where we have open access to worship God, in his own comely order. The mass ; an unmeaning word, an unscriptural name, worthy to be used for such an antiscriptural abomination ; the mass is now banished from our high favored island, with all its magical rites, and base idolatries. Blessed be God for his mercy !

Vain man would be wise, though born a fool, even like the colt of the wild ass. In no instance have the children of men bewrayed their ignorance and folly more than this, attempting to improve and amend the ordinances of heaven, with their own puny inventions. The plainness of the elements, and the simplicity of the actions, have given them offence ; and therefore they will deck the simple ordinances with gaudy pompous rites. Why are they not offended also at the inglorious cross ? why not disclaim the lowly Savior also; who made no splendid appearance in the days of his flesh, but wore the humble garb of poverty ? As the carnal Jews would not receive a mean despised Savior, but wanted a Messias that should be distinguished with worldly grandeur ; so carnal christians will have carnal ordinances, and a worldly sanctuary, or they can see no glory in them.

But those who are endued with the spirit of wisdom and illumination, behold a glory in the naked ordinance, which they search for in vain in all the solemn fopperies of man's invention. It was not the privilege of every one who conversed with the incarnate Redeemer to behold his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father. Nor can every one discern, in the sacramental symbols, the body of the Lord.—— "Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel the Savior." It is only they, the desire of whose soul is towards thee, and towards the remembrance of thy name, who shall see thy power and thy glory in the same sanctuary.

On the divine institution of the sabbath-day.

NOW had six days finished their rounds; the heavens, and the earth, and all their host, had undergone the last retouches of their Creator's hand. He, from his high and holy place, reviewing, with delight, his recent works as yet unstained by sin, pronounced them all very good. "And he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it he rested from all his work which he had created and made." How he blessed it? how he sanctified it? To be sure the sabbath was made for man, as the Lord of the sabbath tells us. He blessed it; he sanctified it; because he ordained, that every seventh day should be employed, by his newly-formed creature, in holy exercises. Was it not then, that the morning stars did sing together, and all the angel-sons of God shouted for joy?

But soon, ah! soon was the harmony interrupted. Man, being in honor, did not abide. Full soon the foul impostor found means to involve, in his apostacy, our wretched race. Here if mercy had not interposed, the sabbath would have been for ever at an end. For

he, whose justice is inflexibly severe, would never have consented to accept of any religious homage from his fallen rebellious creature. But having from eternity proposed to restore us again to his love, favor, and image, by the mediation of his Son Jesus Christ; he comes, and preaches peace to our trembling first parents.

Who can suspect, that the sabbath should be now superceded unto him? that such a holy institution should be discontinued; and its observance neglected by Adam and his believing seed? Surely this law was not first given by Moses? Is it not evident, that great lawgiver speaks of it as a thing in use before the giving of the law? The glorious Jehovah had not yet uttered all these words from amidst the thunders of Sinai; yet even then the manna was miraculously restrained on the seventh day, and what they gathered the day before, miraculously preserved from putrefaction. "And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day to gather, and they found none. And the Lord said unto Moses, how long refuse ye to keep my commandments, and my laws? see for that the Lord hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days. Abide ye every man in his place."

To what original shall we trace up the custom, which universally obtained among all nations, the Roman and Greek? Can any natural reason be assigned for it, like what may be assigned for the division of time into months and years? Can we reasonably suppose they would copy it from the despised nation of Jews? Is it not more than probable, that it was an ancient tradition, conveyed from the first man, and preserved among his apostate race, when its true design was forgotten?

May we not then more than presume, that the ordinance of the sabbath was an eminent part of the religion even of the patriarchal age? and that it was on this day a very ancient sacred writer informs us, the

sons of God came for to present themselves before him?

But now God plants his sanctuary among the peculiar people of the Jews. How great a part this was of their national religion, is witnessed both in their law, their prophets, and in the history of their church.

Let us descend to the days of the Messiah; who indeed has abolished the ceremonial law, but has not made the ordinance of the weekly sabbath to cease. Why did you reproach him, O malicious Pharisees, as though he had been a sabbath breaker, who indeed was Lord of the sabbath day? On the sabbath day he honored the synagogue worship with his presence: and speaks of it as an ordinance which he was to perpetuate in his church after his resurrection: "Pray, (says he, to his disciples,) that your flight be not in the winter, nor on the sabbath day."

It is true, indeed, we that are christians, do not observe unto the Lord the seventh, but the first day of the week; but we observe one day in seven, which is the substance of the commandment. If the Lord of the sabbath shall establish this alteration by his authority, who can reasonably find fault?

If the day which he rose from the dead be the day which is called *the Lord's;* if on the first day of the week the primitive christians, even in apostolic times, did assemble for religious purposes, did hear the word, did celebrate the supper, did lay by them in store, as God had prospered them; shall we not conclude, that it is the will of God, that now the seventh day shall give place unto the first?—Hereby is intimated to you, christians, that ye are not first to work, and then to rest, as under the ancient covenant of works; but that, in the order of the new covenant, your privilege precedes your duty, and your labor follows after your rest.

O thou queen of days, shall we not count thee our delight, and thou holy of the Lord honorable?—Be shut our heart to vain thoughts. Let no idle discourse flow from our tongue. Let us not only rest

from servile labor, but chiefly from all our sinful, and from all illegal works. Then shall this earthly rest be but a sweet prelude of that eternal sabbath they are now celebrating, who died in the Lord, and their works did follow them.

On the benefit of ordinances.

"A DAY in thy courts," says David, "is better than a thousand: I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." Psal. lxxxiv, 10.

Never did any words proceed out of the mouth of the sweet singer of Israel, in which more of that noble character, the man after God's own heart, appeared. In this beautiful ode, where piety strives with elegance, the royal psalmist extols the happiness of those who have it in their power to attend upon the divine ordinances, the whole psalm being an illustration of that rapturous introductory exclamation, "how amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord God of hosts?" He not only pronounces them truly blessed, who perpetually resided in God's tabernacle, but also them who travelled thither, from the most distant parts of Judea, three times in the year; though the weather was rainy, and the journey was tedious. By a strong poetical flight, he seems to envy the little birds that nested near the altars of his King and God, from which himself was now debarred.

The subject of which he speaks in this text, is the courts and house of his God. By which we are to understand, the tabernacle, or that magnificent tent which Moses reared up in the wilderness, and which, at this time, was the royal palace of the mighty king.

Concerning this tabernacle, he affirms two very remarkable things.

"A day in thy courts is better than a thousand." A divine sentence indeed! The celebrated Roman

orator, long after, hit upon a thought that bears some small resemblance to this: "One day, O philosophy, spent in obeying thy precepts, is to be far preferred to a sinning immortality." Here that saying is brought to pass, "one shall chase a thousand." A day in thy courts, that is spent in the exercises of devotion, and abstracted from the cares of the world, is not only equal to two days, or ten days, or twenty days, in any other place, but better than a thousand days; or, if you will, a thousand years; yea, a thousand ages.—And, though the happy person who enjoys but one day of communion with God were to resign his breath that very evening, and never more behold the outgoings of the morning, he need not retract his assertion as too bold and daring, when he considers, that a day in the courts below, of fellowship with God, is a sure earnest of everlasting days in the courts above.

"I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than dwell in the tents of wickedness." Let us here observe how the psalmist, not content with approving the things that are excellent, in a speculative manner, makes a particular and practical choice of them for himself. The contrast between the house of God and the tents of wickedness, and betwixt being a door-keeper in the one and an indweller in the other, is abundantly striking. At this time the house of God was but a tent. He speaks as it were a palace. The houses of the wicked were, perhaps, sumptuous and magnificent palaces: he styles them but the tents of wickedness. Here it is natural to think how the divine presence can aggrandize a tent into a palace: but if God be absent from a palace; if the voice of riot instead of prayer and praise, is heard in it; if it is inhabited by doleful creatures, as all wicked men are, it is more despicable in the eye of God than the most ragged cottage can be in the eye of men.

On the excellency of christianity.

LET this man glory in his illustrious ancestors, and think himself entitled to the honor and esteem of others, because descended of the worthy and renowned; yet, if he does not at all inherit their supposed virtues, the nobility of his birth is the stain of his reputation, and the sounding titles wherewith he may be addressed, are in reality no better than a satire upon his manners. As it will not add any thing to the value of lead or tin, these vulgar metals, that they are extracted from the precious silver ore; so neither will an high extraction impart a value to the worthless and vulgar character.

Let another bless himself in a fancied superiority to others, because he enjoys the favor of the great, dwells in a fine house, heaps up silver as the dust, maintains a numerous retinue of servants, and loads his table with the most delicious food; I never can think his character ennobled by all this pomp and wealth. He enjoys the favor of the great, but not thy loving kindness, O God, which is better than life.—He dwells under a magnificent roof, but he makes not the Most High his habitation. Tell me not of his heaps of silver and gold, for he is not rich in good works; nor of his numerous servants, for himself is a slave to vile affections. He loads his table with luxurious food, but his soul feedeth on ashes, and husks that swine do eat.

Nor has he a whit better title to fame and solid glory, who enjoys what is commonly styled *popularity*, and lives upon the tongues of multitudes. Alas! how far are they from being competent judges of what is truly great and laudable! What wise man values himself on the commendation of fools?—But sometimes they may be in the right. Be it so. Yet still how scanty the limits, how short the duration, in which the fame of the most renowned must necessari-

ly be confined! How many places, even in this our globe, where the name of the most celebrated man on earth has not been so much as heard of! How many heroes of antiquity, that kept the world awake with noise and lustre, whose names and actions are forgot, as though they had not been! Where now are the mighty troublers of mankind? O death, what contempt dost thou pour on princes! As clouds are driven by the northern blast; as snow is melted by the sun; and as stubble is consumed before the fire; so vanishes all glory and renown at thy approach. Seest thou that repository of the dead, where the dust of the vassal and his lord are blended together in gross familiarity! Here all precedency is a jest. In vain is the corpse of the right honorable deposited in marble, or enclosed in silver. Alas! the worms are not afraid to riot on his flesh, who wore imperial purple. They keep no awful distance from majesty itself.

Miserable they! who were not careful to distinguish themselves from the common herd of mankind, but by these distinctions that are abolished in the grave, and that are of no avail in the awful judgment. With what blank faces will they look, who have no other recommendations but their illustrious pedigree, their abundant wealth, and their popular renown, when the son of the carpenter, whose life was lowly, and his death ignominious, shall sist them before his tribunal? When every mask shall be pulled off, and every man appear in that character which really belongs to him? when their eternal state shall be adjusted, not according to what they seemed in their own or others eyes, but according to what they were in the eye of God, the most unquestionable judge of all their actions?

Cease then, O my soul! to admire, or to envy the glory of the world. Nor judge them truly honorable, whose souls are not truly great, and whose glory will not descend after them into the grave. If a horse is not judged of by the gaudiness of his trappings, a statute by the grandeur of its pedestal; why should

we judge of men by their outward appendages, which may be stript off in this present life, and must of necessity be in the life to come?

Christianity, it is thine alone to lift the poor from the dunghill, and the needy out of the dust, and set them among princes! In thy light we cleerly see how these that are esteemed the offscourings of all things, may, notwithstanding, be the excellent of the earth. He—he is truly honorable, whom the Almighty, from the heavens, beholds despising in his heart those things which are reckoned great among men; and ardently aspiring at those sublime distinctions that are worthy of his rational and immortal nature. He pays indeed a due regard to his good name; and would not willingly so much as incur the suspicion of being guilty of what is unworthy of him. If a fair reputation may be acquired and maintained by a patient continuance in well doing, he does not at all despise it, but esteems it more than riches: for a good report maketh the bones fat, and enables the man that is possessed of it to be more extensively useful, in promoting the good of his fellow-creatures, and the glory of the Creator. But even when he does good, it is not the applause of men he principally courts; but by honor and dishonor; by evil report and good report; he approves himself unto the conscience of every man. If he gains their commendations, he does not greatly rejoice; if he incurs their censure, he is not greatly sorrowful. Sometimes he takes pleasure in reproaches; and rejoices that he is counted worthy to suffer shame for his name's sake.

What though he should live in the vale of life? though he be not pointed at as he goes along? though he hear not the acclamations of the people? His praise is not of men, but of God; who knows his way; who points him forth to angels, as the object of their regard; while they, with true applause, recount his praises.

What though he boast not of the honors of his race, when the royal blood of heaven flows in his veins, because he is born from above?

What though he be not a favorite of the prince; when, like a prince, he has power with God?—Tho' he possess not a great quantity of wealth; when the unsearchable riches of Christ are all his own?—Tho' his steps be not attended by a numerous train of servants; when even the blessed angels are ministering spirits unto him, and keep him in all his ways?—Tho' he have no better mansion than a cobwebbed cottage, when the King of glory deigns to come under his lowly roof, and even to dwell with him?—Though his clothes be not besmeared with gold, when he puts on righteousness as a garment? Though he live on homely food, and drink not generous wine in gold and silver vessels, when the flesh and blood of the Son of God is his daily provision.—And though his memory should die away in the city where he lived, yet his memorial in heaven is everlasting.

Go then, O immortal soul! seek this honor that comes from God only, which is no phantom that will mock thy grasp; no bubble that will break at thy touch; no shadow that will fly from him that pursues after; but a blessed reality that will crown thy wishes. This passion needs not fill thy cheeks with blushing; for it is adequate to thy rational nature. O glorious honor! which Cæsar cannot confer; which money cannot procure. The praises of men cannot bestow; the reproaches of men cannot take it away. The Lord of hosts hath purposed to stain the pride of all other glory; but this honor shall never be laid in dust.

On the high privilege of adoption.

"BEHOLD what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God!" This was an exclamation worthy of thee, O beloved apostle, whose favorite topic is love; inspire us with these admiring thoughts, O divine Spirit! enkindle in our hearts that holy flame which the apos-

He felt, who declares unto us the things which he saw and heard, that we may certainly know it is not merely a rhetorical flourish, but a most weighty truth, and a most blessed reality.

For, O ye children of this world, who glory in the nobility of your birth, and trace your pedigree from ancient kings! and ye that said, we have Abraham for our father! what title can you show to such an exalted honor, to such a glorious prerogative, as to be called the sons of God? This honor have all his saints, being born from above, and adopted into the family of heaven. To the adoption of children they were predestinated before the day-spring knew his place, according to the good pleasure of his will.—And when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that they might receive the adoption of sons. By faith in Christ Jesus they all partake of this high privilege, and in some happy moments they are pleasingly conscious of this distinguished felicity, while the Spirit of the Son, sent forth into their hearts, bears witness with their spirits that they are the children of God, and enables them to cry, Abba, Father.—It is true, their real glory is eclipsed in this state of their pilgrimage, while absent from their father's house; but the day of their manifestation is fast approaching, and in the mean time they wait with humble hope for the adoption, the redemption of their bodies, when, by their resurrection from the dead, they shall, like their glorious Redeemer, be declared the sons of God with power, before the assembled world.

Justly, very justly, may our wonder be raised to the highest pitch, when we consider the greatness of that God by whom this blessing is conferred; the meanness of those persons on whom it is bestowed; the loftiness of the means by which it is procured; and the innumerable advantages with which it is attended.

If the glory of children is their father's; if kindred to the great is valued, though remote; if to be

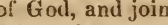
the son-in-law of a king was held by David a matter of such great importance: how distinguishing is their lot, whose God is their Father, and Jesus Christ is not ashamed to call them brethren! Though every king and every emperor that wears a crown, and sways a sceptre, were allied to them by the ties of blood, it could not equal, by ten thousand degrees, this high and ample renown.

And wherefore, O glorious JEHOVAH wouldst thou confer upon the children of men such inconceivable honor to join them to thy family? It was not to supply thy wants, who was sufficient to thy own happiness, and infinitely well pleased in thy beloved Son. It was not to reward our worth, who had no attracting qualifications to recommend us. This is not the manner of men, O Lord, who use not to adopt, unless they have no children of their own, or at least observe some amiable quality about the object of their favor. Thus Esther is adopted by Mordecai, being a beautiful virgin; and Moses, being a proper child, is drawn out of the water by the daughter of a great king, and nourished as her own son. But we were the children of wrath, heirs of damnation, and cast out in our blood to the loathing of our person. How often have we rebelled against the reproofs of his word, contemned the thunders of his law, and rejected the offers of his grace! yet patience waited for us, and mercy apprehended us.

And that we might receive the adoption of sons, the Son of God did not abhor the ignominious cross! With a great sum indeed hast thou obtained this freedom for us! To make us creatures, did cost thee but a word; to make us children, demanded the effusion of thy blood; and it pleased the Father to bruise thee! Herein perceive we the love of God, that he withheld not his Son, his only Son, from the most inconceivable agonies, to compass his design.

Glorious indeed must be the advantage of this high relation, the purchase of such precious blood!—Angels ye shall have in charge these favorites of hea-

ven. Ye enemies of their salvation, rejoice not against them. If you devour them, ye shall offend: if ye touch them, you shall touch the apple of his eye.—For in the fear of the Lord is strong confidence, and his children shall have a place of refuge. Their parents may leave them, but the Lord shall take them up. He may correct, but will not cast off. If he speak against them, he earnestly remembers them; his heart is turned, his bowels yearn, and his relentings are kindled. Their strength is small, but he spares them as a man spareth his son that serveth him. Their imperfections are many: but he pities them as a father pitieth his children. As a crane and as a swallow, so do they chatter, but he loves to hear their voice. Make known your request unto him, and he will give you what is good. Cry unto him, my father! he will be the guide of your youth. But, O the riches of the glory of that inheritance, which is neither corruptible, like thy gold and silver, thou vain world! nor defiled like the paradise of Mahomet! but incorruptible, and undefiled, and fading not away, which is reserved in heaven for them.—How justly may they say, the lines are fallen to me in pleasant places, when God himself is their portion? For thus runs the apostolic declaration, "if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." Hail, ye distinguished, happy persons! who, though poor and despised, are the children of the Most High. Live to his praise, and demonstrate to the world, that you are indeed the children of your father. Imitate his example, reverence his authority, and let it be your meat and drink to do his will.



THE COMPLAINT.

SWEET was the time when he, whom all the angels love, and the ransomed tribes adore, did hold familiar discourse with me a prisoner of earth. For,

whither could I turn mine eyes, and not behold the most ravishing and delightful prospect? Above me, I could lift up my most ardent thought to God that dwelleth in the heavens, and I could call him mine; and these bright globes I could contemplate but as the pavement of my father's house. For me, O radiant sun! you shine, you rise, you fall. Angels! ye are my guardians. Ye beasts of the earth! and ye stones of the field! are my allies round about me. The various ills of life I could survey with calm composure; yea, in the midst of them, I could rejoice as more than a conqueror.

Before me, death met my view, deprived of his sting; and I could ask the grave, where is thy victory? yea, even the awful judgment could not appal my soul, in some distinguished moments. "Amen; even so, come, Lord Jesus!" could I say. Begone, ye envious clouds! prepare his way, ye glorious storms of thunder and lightning! For, O my conscience! what perfect peace was made in all thy borders!

The rising morn beheld me pouring out my prayers; and when the evening star arose, this was my exercise. O then! the sacred word was sweet as honey, refreshing as the dew, and cheering as the light. The high praises of God were uttered by my mouth; and when they said, go up to the house of the Lord, to the tabernacles of the Most High; how greatly I rejoiced! then I could count the sabbath a delight. Methought the lovely light did wear another aspect, than that of other days. How sweetly could I meditate on the law of the Lord! The doctrines of religion, the mysteries of redemption, and the promises of the everlasting covenant, were my darling theme; and my delights were with the excellent ones of the earth.

Ah! lovely peace of mind, where art thou fled? The thoughts of God are a terror to me. I tremble at his justice, and even his mercy and his goodness afford not consolation. How dismal is the vale of death, and the grave's solitary mansion! The glory is de-

parted. I went out full, but am returned empty.—O! wherefore wouldst thou leave thy first and best beloved for all that is in the world? Can sin, with its bewitching pleasures, the world with its empty enjoyments, or thy own imperfect legal righteousness, be in the stead of Christ unto the soul? Begone ye vain pretenders; "I will return unto my first husband; then was it better with me than now."

THE SUCCESSFUL SUPPLICANT.

SOME take delight in hunting after the breath of popular applause; and if they can live upon the tongues of the multitude, they fancy they have attained a great measure of felicity. This man revolves, with a world of pleasure, the works of the learned, and reads the stars, and talks with heroes of former ages. The flowing bowl, and jolly company, are the delights of another.

But to the real christian, no exercise appears with more distinguished grace than prayer in the name of Christ. This opens the gates of heaven, and fetches blessings from on high. The bended knee, the lifted hand, the imploring eye, with the inflamed heart; these never fail to be attended with joys unknown to you, ye sons of the earth! Angels rejoice, and God's own ear listens delighted. Lift up your voice to him; O! talk with him; whether the morn purples the east, or the evening star lights up his lamp.

The eternal Son was yet unclothed with flesh and blood; but, trying on the coat of our humanity, he is recorded to have appeared, in human shape, unto the father of the patriarchs, from whom the Jewish nation derived their original. Overwhelmed with perplexity, and deeply distressed how to face the supposed rage of his incensed brother, he tries to pour his complaint into his compassionate bosom; nor was his labor vain. It was night, and silence reigned over

all ; when, lo ! a human likeness is presented to his view. With him he held discourse, and spun out the night, till now the star of the day was advancing his chariot wheels; and thus the heavenly stranger spoke, " it is enough, O friend of God ! permit me to depart. The rising day, and flying shadows, forbid my presence here." " No," said the favorite of heaven ; " I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." He wept, he made supplication, he had power over the angel, and prevailed. Hence he had deserved the name of *Israel.* O happy victor ! He had power with God, and conquered the OMNIPOTENT !——Let us go, and do likewise.

ON WATCHFULNESS.

THIS may be considered, either as relating to sin, that we may resist temptations to it ; or to judgment, that we may be prepared for the coming of the Son of man.

In these views, the watchful christian is one, who from a persuasion of the strength of his enemies without, who wait for his halting ; of the wickedness and deceit of his own heart within ; and the greatness of the danger he incurs ;—carefully guards all the avenues of temptation. There is nothing about himself he judges safe to trust ; not his lips ; for with thee, O David ! he prays " set a watch, O Lord ! before my mouth ; keep the door of my lips." Not his eyes ; for he makes a covenant with them. Not his ears ; he shuts them from hearing of blood, of slander and detraction, and of the instruction that causeth to err. But chiefly he darts a jealous eye over his heart ; for, of its being " deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," he has the most unquestionable proof, both from his own experience, and from the experience of the great surrounding cloud of witnesses.

No *sin*, he judges himself absolutely secured against, though ever so atrocious; whilst he surveys the numerous troops of slain, and sees how many stronger than he hath fallen by the power of temptation. How can he be confident in himself, when he sees the man according to God's own heart weltering in murder and adultery? And that most eminent apostle, whose faith the Lord so highly commended, who was with him in the holy mount, and faithfully as well as particularly warned of his danger;—even that most eminent apostle denying his Lord and Master; (blush, ye papists, who make *him* the foundation of your church!) denying him thrice; denying him with oaths and curses; not when intimidated before any tribunal, at the presence of his judges, but at the accusation of a silly maid.

Neither is there any *time* in which he thinks it safe to intermit his vigilance. The whole time of his sojourning here, he studies to pass in fear; and even when he sleeps, his heart is waking. He knows, that although there is a time for the body to sleep, that its wearied powers may be recruited by these balmy dews, and reanimated to new labors; yet there is no time for his soul to slumber, whose nature, like the fiery flame, is to be ever in motion; and, instead of being repaired by indolence and inactivity, is rendered more dull and languid. Neither in prosperity nor adversity, neither in solitude nor in society, can he sing a requiem to his soul, as if it were without the verge of danger: And even in the time of special enjoyments, and distinguished manifestations, he knows very well that he ought not to say, "my mountain stands strong; and I shall never be moved." As he who comes out of a hot bath, is very careful how he ventures himself immediately to the cold chilling air, as being never more ready to catch a cold, than upon such an occasion; so, he is never more circumspect how he returns into the world, and exposes himself to its hurtful snares, than when he has been enjoying the happy hours of fellowship with God.

But if there is any *known* sin, which may gain advantage over him, or easily beset him, whether because suited to his natural constitution; or, perhaps, it is common to the age, and not branded with the infamy it deserves; or, perhaps, it is of a secret nature, and may be transacted without the knowledge of others; or, perhaps, it is an old sin from which he was purged, to which, if he should return, his last state would be worse than the first; or, perhaps, it is a sin which is very ready to put on the visor and mask of duty, of which it is very difficult to repent;—he is peculiarly watchful against *that* sin. And that he may keep at the remotest distance from all approaches unto iniquity, and abstain from all appearance of evil, he goes not to the brink, or utmost verge even of lawful liberty. That he may not be guilty of any unlawful thing, he will abridge himself in the use of lawful things, upon a proper occasion.

But it is no less the duty of a watchful christian *to wait the coming of his Lord*, that he may be found of him in peace. He gives diligence, that neither his conscience be defiled with known sin, nor his affections entangled with vain cares; that when he shall appear, he may have confidence, and bid an unreluctant adieu to transitory vanities. He refers not his eternal interests to be adjusted till he is stretched on his sick or dying bed; for he knows, that both the time and manner of his exit are wholly in God's hand. The numerous deaths of his acquaintances and fellow-mortals, he considers as the calls of the bridegroom, *be ye also ready*. If his head ache, if his stomach loathe its food, or sleep fly from his eyelids,—all these, and such like distresses, he regards as a set of monitors, crowding round about him, and telling him, *that the judge standeth before the door*, and *the coming of the Lord draweth nigh*. Death comes; eternity unfolds itself to his view. See! with what dauntless magnanimity he enters the list with his last enemy. Far from discouraging his surviving fellow-christians, by a dispiriting behavior, he throws an additional lustre on

the christian faith, and makes the beholders wish themselves were the dying person.

Ye lying vanities of life! farewell. Welcome, ye heavenly joys! *Amen: even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus.* Such are the wishes he breathes from his inmost soul. His latter end is peace.

ON GENTLENESS.

IT is that amiable grace, whereby the christian restrains unlawful anger and moderates even just resentment. Perhaps, his natural temper is of the rugged kind; yet he has experienced the accomplishment of that gracious promise, that "the Leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the lion shall eat straw with the ox." It is not in his tongue, but in his heart, where this grace chiefly resides. He pretends not, with the ancient stoics, wholly to discard the passions of anger, which were not the meekness of wisdom, but of folly. Nor does it wholly lie in a courteous and obliging behavior, commonly called *good manners*, which may be but an artificial appearance.—Sometimes he may come with a rod, and assume a prudent severity; but it is rather in the cause of God, than in his own cause. If he smites, he breaks not the head; but his reproofs are precious oil. Blessed be his anger, for it is merciful; and his wrath, for it is kind. O my soul! come thou into his secret, and be thou united unto his assembly.

Cruelty and delight in the miseries of others, though his most bitter enemies, is a disposition he greatly abhors; far less can he suffer his attachments to any particular party to swallow up all his sentiments of humanity to those who differ from him. Let bloody papists sport themselves with the torments of those whom they call *heretics;* he has not so learned Christ, upon whom the Spirit descended, not in the likeness of a vulture, but a *dove.* When man is born at first

into the world of nature, we behold him a peaceful infant, all naked and defenceless; not armed with claws and teeth, as some other animals; and can we reasonably suppose, that when a man is born again into the world of grace, he will come, armed with fire and sword, to destroy all around him?

So far is he from stretching forth his hand against them that are at peace with him, that he will not suffer rancor to foster in his breast against his most malignant foe. He wisely considers, that he himself has acted a more unjust part towards his God, than ever the most ungenerous person did to him; and yet obtained mercy. He does not only suppress his resentment from bursting out into violent vociferations; nor is he like some who affect a sullen silence, louder than all words, to proclaim the implacable malice of their hearts: but he banishes from his very thoughts the purpose of revenge. He considers, that it is far more glorious, that it bespeaks more solid wisdom and greatness, to forget an injury than to requite it. He leaves it to fools and madmen, to furious beasts and silly wretches, to tear themselves in their anger, to flash fury with their eyes, to faulter in their speech, to tremble in their joints, to stamp with their feet, to wreak their resentment on whatever comes in their road, though perhaps senseless and inanimate;—when they receive some petty affront, or meet with contradiction.

He resembles not a city without gates, or broken down, and without walls, that may easily be assaulted; nor powder, that may quickly be inflamed; but may be compared to green wood, that is not easily kindled, but may soon be extinguished. He looks not at every petty injury as through a microscope, which magnifies far beyond the life.

The natural state of mankind.

See how the mountains are covered with snow, and the valleys are stript of their lovely verdure. No fragrant flower perfumes the air, nor embalms the evening walk. The songsters of the grove have folded up their wings, and forgot their notes, who, some time ago did sing among the branches. Where are the golden treasures of the harvest, or the smiling flowers of the spring? Joy and gladness is fled from the plentiful field, and all is one scene of desolation.—What wonder! when the glorious fountain of our day has withdrawn his enlivening beams; resigning to the power of chilling cold, both the aerial regions, and the watery element. In comparison with the heat of summer, the warmest days are cold, even at the height of noon. Full often the scowling wintry clouds wrap up the day's fair face. All joy is darkened. The sun seems to be swallowed up: the moon and stars withdraw their shining. The low-bent clouds pour down. Short is the day. How tedious the length, and how deep the horrors of the night! When every brook is swelled to a river, let not the traveller pursue his journey. Ye that do business in great waters! be not rash to tear your cables from the shore, when winter's fury rages on the main.

But, while I muse on the rigors of this unjoyous season, let me reflect what moral sentiments may here be taught. Even the barren winter may be fruitful of intellectual truths; and binding frost may be instrumental in thawing the heart, and melting the affections.

And first then, what a lively emblem have we in this, of that state we are in when we come into the world! who are, as an apostle tells, *by nature children of wrath.* While this winter is not past, the flowers appear not in the earth, the time of the singing of birds is not come, the voice of the turtle is not heard in our

land. Then we derive not our consolation from the glorious Sun of righteousness, but from the fire of worldly enjoyments, or sinful pleasures; no flowers of divine grace adorn the conversation, nor are we filled with the fruits of righteousness; we know not the joyful sound, neither is the melody of praise heard in our tabernacles.—Is the day short, and the night long? Know, O natural man! that it is the very picture of that natural state wherein you are. How soon is the day of prosperity made dark with night!—a night that shall not see the dawning of the day, and no joyful sound comes therein. Though for a while you may cheer up your heart, and think to kindle a fire, and walk in the light of your fire, and compass yourselves about with sparks; what will you do, when the shadows of the everlasting evening shall be stretched forth, and the long night of eternity shall wrap you in its impenetrable gloom? Who can live in his cold? Who knows the power of his anger?

And here I recal to mind an admonition of our Lord to his disciples, when warning them of the dreadful catastrophe of that ungrateful city Jerusalem; *pray ye, that your flight be not in the winter.* O merciful Father! let it not be my miserable fate, to take my flight from time and this my mortal body, while the winter of thy wrath is not past, while the rain of thy indignation is not over and gone.

ON IMMORTALITY.

REJOICE, ye wise and good! tremble, ye knaves and fools! (who is anxious for your happiness?) for immortality, that pleasing awful thought, is no fantastic dream. Not only is it brought to light in the gospel; it is written in the volumes of creation and providence. Set immortality aside, and beasts are wiser and happier than men, and vice is preferable to virtue.

Ye brutal race! that fly in air, or swim in floods, or tread the ground;—soon you arrive at your highest perfection, and are quickly put in possession of your chiefest good. You are not cursed with carking cares, nor anxious thoughts of evils yet unfelt. Small are your capacities; and your desires are few, but none of them are vain. But we always travel by slow degrees to the summit of our perfection; yea, in vain we think to arrive at the perfection our nature is capable of. How dim is our knowledge! How languid is our virtue! How imperfect is our happiness!—while here. Our eyes are not satisfied with seeing, nor our ears with hearing, nor our understandings with truth, nor our desires with good. Were we to live coeval with the sun, we might be still enlarging our views, exalting our sentiments, approaching nearer to the glorious Godhead, whose image we are.—Large are our capacities, many are our desires, which are not filled, which are not satisfied.

Nor is the desire of immortality the feeblest.—Who among mankind covets not to be remembered, when he himself shall forget all mortal things? For this the image of the mind is transfused into the page of the orator, the poet, the philosopher. It is the office of the statuary and painter, to eternize the image of the body; and even the poor mechanic erects his monumental stone. There were who have called their lands by their own names. Their inward thought was, that their dwellings should continue to all generations. Death comes; death, the mighty leveller; he stops our ardent pursuits, disappoints our fond hopes; and even the monuments designed to immortalize our names, are mortal.—Like you, ye thoughtless herds! we fall, we die, and are laid in the grave; our place no more beholds us. And, even in death, you seem less wretched than the human race. To you, death comes undreaded; but we, long ere we feel, must fear the blow. Yet we are your superiors, higher in the dignity of our natures, and higher in the divine regards. Short-lived is your happiness, with

which your existence terminates in death. But ours then first commences, when the dull body falls into the grave. The sprightly mind spurns the vile earth. No more we complain of unsatisfied desires, and useless capacities. Then, and not till then, shall we attain that perfection, and taste that satisfaction, to which we were designed.

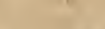
Thus, even our inferiority to the brutes, proves that we are superiors; and the eternal perfection of our nature, is proclaimed by our greatest imperfections. Nor is it the only merit of immortality to assert the glorious prerogative of human nature above the bestial order: it is this alone which can support the cause of virtue, and justify the ways of God to men.—Virtue has charms indeed; none will contest it. Being a lady of heavenly extraction, she shines in native elegance and beauty. The radiant sun is not so fair, when he emerges from the eastern wave; nor the fair handed spring, when she flushes the infant year with many-colored blossoms. Yet, O celestial virgin! who would match with thee for good and all; if misery here, if annihilation hereafter, were all thy dowry? Even peace of conscience, without the glory of immortality, were but a shadowy happiness.—Were this hope a mere delusion, how could we justify thy procedure, O thou wise and holy governor of the world? "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" See! wickedness, in various shapes, lifts her proud head, and reigns triumphant; while modest virtue seeks the shades, or pines in want, or groans in chains, or mourns in the dungeon.

And even in these happy countries, where justice, enthroned by wholesome laws, draws his impartial sword; how many secret crimes, exceeding heinous and detested, which cannot be found out by the most accurate inquisition, or are incapable of being animadverted upon! How many virtues, which cannot be rewarded! Presume not to blame the divine procedure, nor question the wisdom of providence, when Jacob-like, she lays her hands awry; the right hand

of prosperity, and the left hand of adversity, appearing as misplaced, upon the heads of righteous and wicked men. "For, verily, there is a reward for the righteous, and a strange punishment for the workers of iniquity." You see the wicked great in power; but suddenly you curse his habitation. But, mark the perfect man; behold the upright; his latter end is peace. "Righteous, O Lord! are thy judgments; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints."

O glorious immortality! it is thine alone, to maintain the rights of virtue and humanity. Without thee, the beasts were our superiors, and the worst of men would have the advantage of the best in numberless instances. The dying raptures of the saints and of martyrs, and the misgiving horrors of the ungodly, are inspired by thee alone. And though thou wert a gay chimera, and but a pleasing deceit; yet were it the interest of mankind to hold thee fast, to refuse to let thee go.

And can eternity belong to ME? With what an awful joy are all my powers affected? Ye worldly vanities! where are ye now? Lo! there the beggar stands upon a level with the king. At once the robes, at once the rags, have disappeared. Weighed in this even balance, how small your weight, ye worldly afflictions! Where is thy grisly aspect, king of terrors! Be still a king of terrors to the wicked, I crown thee prince of life. Why should I fear, if it is only thine to wound my mortal part? My heaven born soul laughs at the shaking of thy deadly dart. "O death! where is thy dreadful sting? O grave! where is thy boasted victory?"



The holy scriptures.

HAIL, sacred page! volumes of inspiration! in whose presence the compositions of mortal wit hide their ashamed countenances; as stars which shone

brightly in the clear sky, disappear, when the morning sun purples the eastern clouds. Where shall we find such venerable antiquity, as in this reverend code? Before Abraham was, was Christ, the great I AM. Before Orpheus, or Linus, or Hesiod, or Homer, were the scriptures of the Hebrew Lawgiver.

It is true, the hoary head is not a crown of glory, except when found in the way of righteousness.—There are trifling, there are immoral, there are inconsistent productions. If these should vie with the sacred oracles, in the earliness of their existence; yet they must not presume to claim an equal regard from men, with the book of God, whose subject is a compound of the *marvellous*, the *pious*, the *useful*, and the *grand*. The histories of the past, the prophecies of future events, are neither trifling nor deceitful. The precepts how pure! The doctrines and mysteries, how sublime! How worthy of God, to reveal them! of man, to believe them! Here, both the natural and moral world unfold unto our view. Here, we behold this beauteous fabric, emerging out of nothing, and wrapped in a winding-sheet of flames. Here we are informed of the birth of evil, both natural and moral; and how they are again rooted out of the world. The miseries you are to avoid; the happiness you are to pursue; the method wherein you may attain the one, and avoid the other;—these are the important and interesting themes of the bible. Peruse these holy records; and be acquainted with thyself, and with thy God, O mortal! To ransom thee from death, to render you blessed both here and hereafter; see here, thy great Creator, lying in the womb, groaning on a cross, and sleeping in a grave. Jesus! thou Savior of the world, these scriptures testify of thee. Thou art the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending of them. In the Old Testament, thou art concealed; in the New Testament, thou art revealed. Thou art the end of the law, and the sum of the gospel.

It is true indeed, not every place shines with an equal lustre. But is it any detraction from the beauty

of the material world, the fair book of the creation; that here there is a champain country, and there a barren wilderness; here a craggy rock, and there a fruitful valley? We despise not the beauty of the firmament, though some parts of it are not sown so thick as others with starry lamps. But should we nearer view those seemingly barren places in the field of revelation; should we dig into those rocky texts, with care and reverence; perhaps then we might find cause to alter our sentiments. Even the genealogies are not endless, nor the ceremonies insignificant.—Even here we find rich veins of wisdom; and Christ, the pearl of great price.

But is there not something more than mortal breathing through every page? It is here the attentive mind is struck with awe, as under the impenetrable shade of some aspiring grove, or under the roof of some religious edifice. Thus, angels which appeared to holy men of old, struck the beholders with a dread, for which they could not well account. There was something in their voice, in their air, in their gesture, which spoke more than human. What loftiness of phrase in some! what majestic simplicity of expression in other passages! How unparalleled! How inimitable by mortal pen! Thus he whose name is called "the Word of God," in his exalted state, is more glorious than the kings of the earth; and, even in his humiliation, there was something exceedingly majestic, which poured contempt upon princes.

Be not ashamed of the scriptures. They are the power of God to salvation, to every one that believeth. O blessed word! thou convertest the soul; thou enlightenest the eyes; thou rejoicest the heart; thou givest wisdom unto the simple; and light unto the blind; and life unto the dead!—Peruse the scriptures; your corruptions shall be mortified; your graces shall be vivified; your thoughts, your words, your actions, shall be sanctified, be purified, be rectified.—These will alleviate your sorrows in adversity; and in prosperity heighten your enjoyments. Here, multitudes have found life everlasting.

O ye who have received the truth, in the love thereof! who have his blessed word sweeter than honey to your mouth! give glory to that God, who, when the human race were wandering in uncertainty and error, was pleased to make such a revelation of himself;—a revelation even dropt, where we have notices conveyed to us, more true and certain than from the famed deadly oracle of Delphos, or Dodona.

Praise him, who has not committed the intimations of his will unto the leaves of uncertain tradition, which every breath of wind might puff away; which, in latter ages, might have been greatly corrupted, by passing through a multitude of hands. But he hath written the same word, which formerly was only verbal, in a book the peculiar care of providence; where the divine revelation is kept as in a garrison, and needs not fear from the injuries of time, from the cunning of Satan, nor from the evil designs of corrupt men. Adore him, who by his Holy Spirit, informed the minds of holy men of old, with such concealed truths; and guided their pens in writing these holy originals. Acknowledge his goodness, who hath preserved these heavenly records from flames, and floods, and desolations; who hath cast your lot, not in those dusky corners of the world, where the word of God sheds not its holy light, or is, by public authority, prohibited from being consulted.

Know thy privilege, O happy land! much are you advantaged every way beyond thy neighboring states; but, chiefly, that unto you are committed the oracles of God. Turn not your blessing to a curse. Young men! search the scriptures; they will make you wise unto salvation; you shall have more understanding than the ancients. Old men! search the scriptures; they will be the support of your old age, and make you sing as in the days of your youth. Ye men of rank and station! who dwell in lofty palaces, and ride in gilded chariots, O make them your heritage forever! Ye weaker christians! here is much to satisfy your craving appetite. Ye men of genius!

here is strong meat, to suit your nicer palates, and drive away disdain.

Meditate on the law of the Lord both day and night. The more you draw from this refreshing fountain, the more will the waters abound. But, would you enter into the secret of the Lord, which is with them that fear him, bring with you a pure, a humble, and a fervent mind. Whom shall he teach knowledge? Whom shall he make to understand doctrine? Those whose hearts are not haughty, nor their eyes lofty; but who are like the child weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts; those who are estranged from their lusts, who lay aside all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness; those whose souls do pant exceedingly, and long for God's commandments, like thee, O blessed David, whose eyes did timously prevent the night-watches, to meditate on the statutes of the Lord.

Take to yourselves, ye jealous papists! your fabulous traditions, and hide this holy lamp under the bushel of foreign languages; and, by this, confess the weakness of your cause. Ye wild enthusiasts! vaunt of the light within you, but take heed, lest that light you boast is in you, be darkness. Walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks of your kindling, ye unbelieving deists! But O house of Israel! come, and let us walk in the light of the Lord. Consult this heavenly guide, O thou my soul! and let your delight be in the law of the Lord. Let me often expatiate in these hallowed fields of revelation, and, like the disciples, pluck the full ears of corn; and rub them from the husk, by ardent meditation and fervent prayer.

Shine upon my soul, O heavenly spirit! bear witness in my heart. Imprint the bible there; make this the library of God. Then shall I be made wiser than my teachers, and, in all my afflictions, be comforted; and, though I walk through death's dark shades, yet will my steps be conducted unto those blissful regions, where "the sun shall no more go-

down, nor the moon withdraw her shining: but the Lord shall be my everlasting light, and my God my glory."

ON ELECTION.

STOOP down, presumptuous reason! remember from whence thou art fallen. Behold even in thy perfect state, it was not in thee to find out God, by the most accurate researches; how much less shalt thou now be able to find out the Almighty unto perfection? Come holy faith, and humble reverence! teach us to lift our thoughts to the most distinguishing privilege of electing love. O! that while we admire the sublimity of the doctrine, we may taste the sweetness of the benefit. Happy they who, instead of intruding, with bold curiosity into the secrets of the Most High, give diligence to make their calling and election sure. By the dictates of unerring wisdom, let our sentiments be regulated, in this important article of our most holy faith, the purpose of God according to election.

The date of it is eternal. Yes; it must be so; for every purpose of his will must be coeval with himself. O glorious thought! to have dwelt upon the heart of a loving God before the foundation of the world! What grateful emotions may it not excite in the minds of these high-favorites, that God has loved them with an everlasting love, before the day-spring knew his place? How deservedly shall their meditations of him be sweet, both in the night and day, whose precious thoughts towards them are ancient as eternity itself?

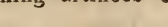
Its objects are particular. Of the determinate counsel of God we read in the scriptures; but of the indeterminate counsel we do not read. If the names of the disciples were written in heaven: if Clement's name was in the book of life; assign a reason, if you

can, why any that are the Lord's should be less foreknown by him, who knows whom he hath chosen, without respect of persons. If in thy book, O God! all our members are written, which, in continuance, were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them; much more are all the saints, the members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones, written without exception, in the fair book of life. O ye that are partakers of such distinguished honor! live to his praise; and be his worthy name engraven on your hearts and on the palms of your hands,—by whom your worthless names are written among the living in Jerusalem, when others are written in the earth.

Its motives are sovereign. Boasting, thou art for ever excluded here! Even the Savior's merits, to which we owe our salvation, are not the source of our election. Nor will precious faith gather where it has not strawed, by laying claim to be the cause of God's electing love. But least of all can it be said, that God hath chosen us because we were holy; and according to our works. Election is the root; these are the flowers: election is the foundation; these the superstructure: election is the fountain, and these are streams that issue from it. How can they be elected of God for any civil distinction, or moral prerogative! when some of them were profligate and flagitious; most of them illiterate and poor; and all of them by nature the children of wrath even as others? This is not the manner of men, O Lord! how deservedly they love thee, who, without deserving, were loved by thee!

The tenor is irrevocable. For, though the purposes of earthly sovereigns may be disannulled; tho' unforeseen accidents may dash their maturest schemes, and encroach upon their wisest plans, what should alter the counsel of the Most High, who is not a man that he should repent? The mountains, these strong foundations of the earth, may be removed, but the foundation of God standeth sure. The election shall obtain both grace and glory, though earth and hell

were leagued against them. As many as are ordained to eternal life, shall believe; nor shall they be deceived by the most cunning artifices of the enemy of their salvation.



Evidence of the truth of christianity.

IT is true that miracles are ceased, by which, in early ages, it pleased the Holy Ghost to attract the observation of the unthinking world to the doctrine of the gospel, and to confirm the faith of true disciples.—But let not modern infidels complain on this score, for want of sufficient evidence to the truth of christianity. Though we see not now the laws of nature reversed; the lame foregoing his crutches; the blind rejoicing in the light of day; and the dead restored to life again; we are not wanting of other advantages, which the miraculous age could not afford. The doctrine of the gospel has travelled with the sun; is publickly professed by sundry nations of differing customs, and various dispositions. Glorious are its effects upon the hearts and lives of many (though alas! too few) of its professors. The sensual man no more serves divers lusts and pleasures, when he obeys it from the heart. The cups of the drunkard, the oaths of the blasphemer, the sordid gain of the oppressor, are renounced and forgotten. Those who once wallowed in every sinful pollution, now shine in the beauty of holiness. Such blessed effects, it is true, were known even in the age of miracles, in those places where the gospel was first preached. But what shall we now think of the almost universal spread, and long continuance of this holy profession, in spite of the philosopher's wit, and the persecutor's sword.—Be it so; these favorable presumptions in behalf of christianity, do not beget that lively faith that purifies the heart, nor what the great apostle calls *the full assurance of understanding*. No more could miracles.

Yet both the one and the other are sufficient to screen the holy faith from absolute contempt, ay and until its high pretensions are candidly examined by the serious enquirer after truth.

Nor can I be easily persuaded that ever the deist was born, who can truly say, I exerted myself to the utmost of my ability to find out the truth; I begged with my utmost fervor my Maker to shew me his way; I was not previously prejudiced against the gospel by the love of any lust. But after all my efforts, I cannot think that Jesus is any more than an impostor.—Such an impartial and vigorous enquiry is certainly that will of God, which, if any man will do, he shall know the doctrine, whether it be of God.

Shall we say, then, that it is in the power of every man to acquire the noble grace of faith by his native abilities? Is not faith the gift of God, and not of works lest any man should boast? The gospel itself affirms they cannot please God who are in the flesh. How then shall they, by prayers or tears, or utmost fervor, prevail with him to bestow this good and perfect gift? But we need not be under any uneasy apprehensions, as though the gospel were impeached, by asserting that a gracious God reveals himself to such an impartial enquirer. This will not in the least infer the natural power to doth at which is well pleasing in his sight. Nay, it rather confirms the doctrine of the fall. For such is the depravity of human nature, such the aversion to every divine thing, that no man is able to do all which himself allows is in the power of his hand. It is only supernatural grace which can enable one to exert even his natural ability to the utmost, and do with all its might what his hand findeth. Happy the man who is thus strengthened from above to search for God with all his heart! I say not that the sovereign God is obliged, is constrained, to confer the blessing of faith. "For, who hath first given unto him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again." But such is his goodness, now that he is in Christ; such his condescending regards to

the sons of men: his ears will not be deaf, his heart not slow to give them their importunate requests for things agreeable to his will. When the deist then has exerted himself to the utmost of his confessed abilities, (which he cannot do but by the Holy Ghost in a saving operation,) let him complain for want of evidence. I cannot but think it will bear an orthodox sense, what a noted poet says,

> "*An honest deist, where the gospel shines,*
> "*Matur'd to nobler in the christian ends.*"

But, if he is not able to do all he can (which is a certain truth, though it sounds hard in Pelagian ears) and be unable to believe the gospel, why should his unbelief be counted to him for a sin? For it seems he cannot believe till it please God to give him the Holy Spirit. Indeed, we are come at last into the depths of God, whose way is in the sea; whose path is in the mighty waters; his footsteps are not known. Perhaps it will not satisfy the refractory understanding of the haughty deist to tell him, that sovereignty may withhold and dispense her favors as she pleases; and that it is not unjust to punish men for inability, when it is of a voluntary kind. Yet right reason will attest the first, and conscience the last.

It is not required that you renounce your reasoning powers, O ye unbelievers! Ye need not turn simpletons to be christians! Faith is no light credulity! But when the proposed doctrines are matters of everlasting importance, do not belie the Lord, and say it is not he, whether he speaks in the promise or in the threatening, merely because they quadrate not with your vicious inclinations, or transcend your shallow apprehensions. Alas! is the mystery, is the purity of the gospel, the stumbling-block in your way, which ought to prejudice right reason in its favor? But when you stop the mouth of conscience, it is just your reason should mislead you. You are afraid, you are unwilling to know, to understand the truth, what-

ever you pretend; and therefore you walk on in darkness.

If you were the true and genuine sons of reason, you would see the necessity of submitting it to your Maker. If you really had the interests of virtue and morality at heart, you would willingly see the imperfection of all human righteousness, and the necessity of a better than your own. If you knew what real good and true happiness was, willingly would you believe in the eternal reward of blessed life and immortality. Infidelity is an enemy to wisdom, virtue, and felicity.

Be convinced that you are blind and miserable! Down with your high imaginations! Reflect as you ought, what for a God he is, with whom you have to do! How just and severe, that you may not presume! How merciful and good, that you may not despair!—Shall empty honors, swinish lusts, great possessions, part you and your Redeemer? Perhaps there are not wanting who would believe on Christ, and gladly be saved by him, from misery, but not from sin. If the grace of faith would start up in a night without their care or labor; if they could yawn themselves into heaven; then good and well. But love of sin, and love of ease, are inconsistent with striving to enter in at the strait gate; and being followers of them who, through faith and patience, now inherit the promises.

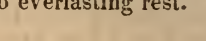
Some are not startled, if eternal vengeance is denounced against the lawless and disobedient; if against murderers; if against adulterers; if against blasphemers; if against idolaters. But why, say they, against unbelievers? *He that believeth not, shall be damned.*—A hard saying! who can bear it!——As though unbelief were not the worst of murder; that crucifies the Lord of glory; that stabs him to the heart, not in his human nature only, but in his mediatorial office. As though it were not the worst of robberies; that steals away from God his most precious Jewel, his glory, which he will not give to another: the most horrid blasphemy, that makes the God of truth a liar.

Upbraid a miscreant wretch, one of the gallant spirits of the age, with lewdness and debauchery; upbraid him with his revelling and drunkenness; upbraid him with his horrid swearing;—he may perhaps hear you with patience, nor take it in bad part, to have his good-humored and fashionable vices thus kindly laid before him. But should you call his sincerity in question; you are nothing, sir, but a villain, a liar, a knave: you touch him in a tender point. Roused are his resentments. He storms, he rages, he breathes! you are in danger of having your throat cut, for the insolence of your tongue. Wicked as he is, this foul reproach he would willingly wipe away with your blood.—Now, shall a puny mortal have such regard to his character for truth; and will not the holy God, who cannot lie, any more than deny himself, render a due reward to that audacious sinner, that tells him, he is a liar, either in the promise or in the threatening?

But especially if you reject his testimony concerning his beloved Son; you pierce him in every attribute, as Christ was wounded in every member; you touch the apple of his eye; you filch away the most splendid gem of his crown; you do what in you lies to pluck him from the throne of grace, and wipe away that precious blood, wherewith the mercy-seat is sprinkled; you pour contempt upon his prime Messenger; you bring his counsel to nought, and say upon the matter to your Maker, thy gifts be to thyself. I see no glory in the contrivance of thy infinite wisdom. You declare that Christ hath labored in vain, and spent his strength for nought.—All this, and much more than this, is the language of the evil heart of unbelief.

What more shall I say of thee, thou cursed monster! What sins are not involved in thee only!—What innumerable evils compass thee about, thy constant and inseparable attendants! Thou art the soul which animates the body of sin; Beelzebub, the prince of devils; the great Antichrist, that in the heart ex-

altest thyself above all that is called God. Thou art the shield of every sin, and the enemy of all righteousness. Whereas other sins are wounds, bruises, and putrifying sores; it is thine to cast away the healing plaister. Sooner shall God cease to be true; cease to be just; cease to be God;—than those in whom thou reignest shall enter into everlasting rest.



The different states and ends of the righteous and wicked. A Fragment.

YE sons of men, give ear whilst I relate the different states, the widely different ends of the righteous and the wicked. Who is the blessed man; and where shall you find the possessor of true felicity? Will you call them happy who work iniquity, and greatly scorn religion, whether in its sacred doctrines, or in its distinguished practices? No; you are not happy, though fame should sound her trumpet, and honor should prepare your way before you; though you should fill your coffers with glittering dust, and swim in tides of polluted joys. How far am I from envying you, your perishing honors, your winged riches, your brutal satisfactions! But, lo! the man, the rare and despised man, who, far from imitating the pernicious example of the sinner, or reducing his hellish devices into practice; who, far from mocking at religion with lordly pride, and assuming impudence, will even abandon the society of the wicked, greatly disdaining to make them his bosom friends, or sit in their assembly: this is the man who hath found true and perfect felicity. I will not say he will be blessed, but he is so already. Neither is it in the power of language to express, or of my thoughts to represent, this superabundant blessedness. Blessed shall he be in his immortal soul, and even his mortal body shall partake of his joy. Even in this wretched state of imperfection, even in this vale of tears, he is a happy man, without

the smiles of fortune; nor waits he dissolution to be blessed.

Would you know where the exalted delights of this uncommon person are pitched, who thus abandons the society of the wicked, and is not indebted to the world for his felicity? To meditate upon the scriptures of truth is his favorite employment, whether they point forth unto him the doctrines that are to be believed, or the duties that are to be practised, by thy authority, thou great Lawgiver, that speakest in every part of that hallowed page. Not content with a superficial knowledge of these sacred contents, he seeks to enter into the life and spirit of these heavenly writings; and knowing how rich they are in hidden and valuable treasures, he is not wearied in digging for the latent truths, whether the cheerful morn purples the east, or whether the evening-star lights up his lamp.

As a tree planted by an industrious man upon the verdant banks of a copious unexhausted stream, spreads far and wide its watery roots, defies the stormy blasts, and is not much dependant on the clouds of heaven, but in sultry years, and under parched skies, fails not, in the proper season, to adorn his branches with fruit after his kind, and verdant foliage: so, just so, the truly religious man, planted by the divine hand, along the margin of the sanctuary waters; he shall not be afraid of the wintry blasts of temptation, because he shall acquire an unshaken stability; neither shall he be meanly dependant on the variable clouds of worldly enjoyments, because he shall, without them, be maintained in a perpetual moisture.—And, therefore, whatever seeming barrenness may for a time appear; yet, in the convenient and proper season, this tree of righteousness adorns his branches with fruits of holiness and consolation, after his kind; the leaves also of his fair and beautiful profession shall not be tarnished or fall away.—Success shall crown his enterprises; and even when disappointments shall betide him, yet in the event it shall appear how all things wrought together for his real good, and every action of his hand was truly prosperous.

But as to those who are despisers of the divine word, and arm themselves with honor and insolent contempt, and are the workers of iniquity; they are far from being resembled to this deep rooted and fertile plant, however considerable in the esteem of others, or in their own conceit; they are but like the chaff, which, being light in its own nature, and altogether unprofitable when separated from the grain, is suffered by the careless husbandman to fly abroad, the sport of winds, which, with the greatest ease imaginable, drive it away.

THE

GREAT MATTER AND END

OF

GOSPEL PREACHING,

*A SERMON.**

2 Cor. iv, 5.

For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord.

WHEN you consider the occasion of your present meeting, it will not, I presume, be necessary to make any apology for making choice of this text as the ground of discourse. For it is a theme, the consideration of which, may not only be very suitable to my brethren in the ministry, but very profitable to every gospel hearer. I am sure, that it is incumbent upon every one that is vested with the sacred character of a minister of Jesus Christ, to join with the apostle of the *Gentiles*, in this solemn and serious declaration, *we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord.* O that every minister could say it, with the same sincerity and truth!

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* *This sermon was preached at the ordination of the Rev. Mr. Alexander Dick, to be minister of the associate congregation of Aberdeen, upon Thursday, Dec. 7, 1758.*

In these words, you have the duty and character of a preacher of the everlasting gospel exhibited unto you, both in negative and positive terms. What ought he not to preach? *Himself.* What ought he then to preach? *Christ Jesus the Lord.* Do you not observe, that all the three names of our gracious Redeemer are mentioned here? The frequent repetition of the lovely titles of this wonderful person, in the writings of this apostle, (which, as some observe, is as good as five hundred times,) renders them all like boxes of precious ointment, inexpressibly refreshful to every christian soul.—He is called *Christ*, to signify his unction to the mediatorial offices. For he was anointed a priest to procure, a prophet to reveal, and a king to apply the blessings of redemption. He is called *Jesus*, because, in the execution of these offices, to which he was anointed, *he saves his people from their sins.* This name is pregnant with salvation and *highly exalted above every other name.*—He is called *the Lord*, to denote his true and proper Deity, and his sovereign dominion. A very extraordinary Lord indeed is Jesus Christ. He was the Lord of his forefathers, Luke xx, 44; and is the Lord both of the living and the dead.

But to proceed directly to the subject in view: you easily see, that the doctrinal truth we are to declare from these words must be the following:

DOCT. "That it is the character of every faithful minister, and should be the study of every gospel preacher, to preach not himself, but Christ Jesus the Lord."

In illustrating this proposition, I shall essay,

I. To enquire into the import of this declaration of the apostle, *we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord.*

II. To point forth some of the reasons, why it ought to be the character and study of every gospel minister, not to preach *himself*, but *Christ Jesus the Lord.*

III. Then we shall see what improvement should be made of the doctrine, by making a few obvious reflections from what may be said: And these things we will do, if God permit. Let us begin with the first.

First. What is imported in the declaration here made by the apostle, concerning not only himself, but all faithful ministers of the gospel, *we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord.*

And I shall here content myself with observing only two things. 1*st.* It evidently imports that we are not to make the inventions of our own brain, but the doctrine of Christ, the great matter of our preaching. 2*d.* That we are not to make the advancement of our own worldly interest and reputation, but the glory and honor of Christ, the great end of our ministrations. Favor me with your attention, while we endeavor to explain, at some further length, both these particulars. And,

1*st.* It is as if the apostle had said, "we make Christ Jesus the Lord the great matter and theme of all our sermons." The minister of Jesus Christ must not content himself even with declaring such things as have a general truth in them. Things that are said may be *truth*, and yet not THE TRUTH, or the word of the truth of the gospel. But, though we should be far from despising the excellent sentiments of moralists, or neglecting to preach the duties of the law, and inculcate the necessity of personal righteousness, still Christ should be the main argument of every sermon. As in a regular building, the most remote parts of it are supported by the foundation, without which it were nothing but a *bowing fence, and tottering wall:* so, whatever the minister of Jesus Christ shall think fit to insist upon, Christ is his everlasting foundation, that imparts to every doctrine solidity and consistence.

He is not like your PHILOSOPHICAL *harangver*, whose sermons are generally nothing but stiff and unaffecting declamations on some moral subjects: who

waves the peculiar doctrines of christianity, as dry and speculative points, and chooses commonly for his theme those topics that are common for all religions. You may hear a course of sermons from a person of this stamp, without ever learning what is the great end of revelation, or how a fallen creature may emerge from the ruins of his apostacy. He talks much about the beauty of virtue, and how conducive is morality to the happiness of mankind, in social and private life. It is true, he cannot, for shame's cause, altogether omit mentioning the name of Christ; but it is as seldom as possible he can: and, lest it should be shocking to the polite part of his audience, he commonly veils it under some paraphrase; calling him *the sacred author of our religion; that finished pattern of obedience*; or the like. I have read in a famous author, "that some have avoided pronouncing the name of Christ in their discourses, because it is a harsh monosyllable, and likewise clogged with too many consonants."

Nor is the gospel minister like your LEGAL *declaimer*, whose character it is, to be always inculcating the *duties*, but seldom the *privileges* of christianity. Instead of making privilege the foundation of duty, he makes duty the foundation of privilege. It is true, he may seem to entertain an abhorrence of the before-mentioned *philosophical harangues*, and to talk in a more baptised and christian style, and pay a greater compliment to Christ Jesus the Lord in the strain of his discourse: yea, he will even not scruple to tell his hearers, at some times, that they cannot merit any thing at God's hand, and that they can do nothing in their own strength; and therefore we need to seek the aid of divine grace, for the performance of this or the other duty. But, alas! these necessary points are so faintly handled, and so superficially insisted on, as to leave but very faint impressions on the mind.—Indeed, though he does not openly go over to the camp of the *Roman* doctors, by crying up the merit of good works, and crying down imputed righ-

teousness altogether, he is afraid to insist upon the opposite Protestant doctrines, except upon some rare occasion; as suppose a person in the agonies of death, or under the horrors of conscience. He is always exhorting his hearers to perform duties, but seldom to believe. He hampers the general gospel call with absurd conditions, and impossible qualifications; and, turning the gospel into a *new law*, that prescribes easier terms of life than the first covenant allowed of, (as sincerity, or repentance,) he makes the *gospel of Christ of none effect*: for, indeed, if we should speak accurately, the terms of life that are prescribed in the second covenant, are so far from being easier than those prescribed in the first, that, on the contrary, they are infinitely more difficult than ever: for, *the redemption of the soul is precious, and* would have *ceased forever*, without the shedding of blood by a person of infinite dignity.

But the evangelical preacher of Jesus Christ, though he should have ever so deep acquaintance with the scene of philosophy, forgets it, when he ascends the pulpit to shew unto his hearers the way of salvation: and, as *Aaron's* serpent swallowed up the other serpents, so does the wisdom of the cross, all other wisdom. The glorious person, the mysterious incarnation, the amazing satisfaction of Christ Jesus the Lord, the glories of his exalted state, his mediatorial characters, offices, and relations: these are his darling themes on which he expatiates with a peculiar delight.—And whether these topics, that have not the most *immediate* relation to Christ, are the subjects of his discourse; yet still it may be said of all his sermons, what the apostle says of christians, *of him are ye in Christ Jesus*: they have no being but in HIM; in HIM they live and move. Whatever mystery—whatever privilege—whatever duty he chooses to explain, still Christ is ALL in ALL. If he insists on a divine *attribute*, he declares how it shines forth in Christ with the brightest evidence.—If on a *promise*, he explains how in Christ it is *yea*, and *amen*.—If on a *com-*

mand, he inculcates the necessity of obedience, by motives drawn from Jesus Christ; and how impossible it is for us to obey, without being first united to him as the head of vital influences. Christ is the *beginning*; Christ is the *end*; Christ is the *middle*; Christ is the *all* of every sermon. With him, he comforts the drooping heart; with him, he corrects the wandering transgressor.—To him he can apply these emphatical words of Jeremiah, Jer. li, 20. "thou art my battle-axe, and weapons of war; and with thee will I break in pieces the nations, and with thee will I destroy kingdoms: and with thee will I break in pieces the horse and his rider; and with thee will I break in pieces the chariot and his rider: and with thee also will I break in pieces man and woman; and with thee will I break in pieces also old and young; and with thee will I break in pieces the young man and the maid; I will also break in pieces with thee, the shepherd and his flock; and with thee will I break in pieces the husbandman and his yoke of oxen; and with thee will I break in pieces captains and rulers."

Lest any should think that this character of making Christ Jesus the sole matter of our sermons is but chimerical, I shall adduce the particular example of this same apostle Paul, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, chap. ii, 2. "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." What, I beseech you, is the language of this? Is it not a lively confirmation of the present truth? Here is a man of genius, who was educated at the famous school of Gamaliel, and who was well acquainted with the most eloquent compositions of ancient poets, orators, and philosophers. It was in his power to have entertained these *Corinthians* with fine poetical and philosophical discourses, and have made them admire his wisdom and erudition. "But, *O ye Corinthians*, it is not (as if he had said) your applause I seek after, but your salvation. Therefore, Christ Jesus is my theme: Christ Jesus in his inglorious cross." Some, indeed, might have been apt to

reply, "truly, *Paul*, this subject, of a crucified Christ, may do indifferently well to preach about in some obscure country village, where the people are not great judges of refined sentiment; but when you come to a polite city, like *Corinth*, what harm would there be, though you should wave your favorite topic of the cross, and give the polite citizens some display of your fine taste and universal learning; for, we assure you, such a doctrine as that will never take in a place like this.—Take it to second thoughts, and deliberate upon it, whether this would not be the most prudent method." "Nay," says the apostle of the Gentiles, "I will deliberate no more on such a subject; I am quite at a point about it. It is not rudeness; I could do otherwise. It is not rashness; I have deliberately and peremtorily resolved; and my resolutions never shall be shaken, that I dwell on no other subject, even in your fine city of Corinth, but *Jesus Christ and him crucified*."—So much for the first thing imported in preaching, "not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord," namely, that we are to make the doctrine of Christ the great matter of our preaching.

2d. It is, as if the apostle had said, "we make not the advancing our worldly interest and reputation, but the honor and glory of Christ the great end of our ministration." For it is a very melancholy truth, there are persons who may have the glorious Redeemer for the matter of their sermons, even when they are not in the least swayed by regard to his glory and honor; but are solely animated by sordid *interest* and groveling pride. A person of this character preaches himself, even when he preaches Christ. Though he seems to make as if he wanted his hearers should be in love with his Lord and Master, yet, he chiefly intends they should admire himself. When he composes his sermons, he is more solicitous how he shall touch the passions, please the fancy, and tickle the ears of his hearers, than how to instruct, than how to persuade, than how to break the heart, and espouse the sinner to Christ.—That he may be esteemed a

man of learning, it is ordinary for him to cloud his meaning with strange words, with which the ears of the common people are not accustomed; and how very often mistake that which is *wonderfully dark*, for *wonderfully deep*. And that he may be reputed a man of *piety* he finds himself under a necessity of counterfeiting those devout affections to which he is an entire stranger. Pride chooses his subjects, invents his ornaments, and animates his delivery. What he is chiefly desirous to know, when the sermon is over, is not what benefit his hearers have reaped, but what are their sentiments about himself. If he gain the applause, and is extolled to the skies, as no ordinary man, his end is reached, and he blesses himself in his fancied superiority unto others. But, if he shall understand that they consider him as but an indifferent, ordinary preacher, he is extremely mortified, being disappointed in his principal aim.

How unlike unto this is the character of the servant of Jesus Christ, who is constrained by his love, and is willing that HE should increase, himself should decrease? He chooses for the ground of his sermons those subjects which will give him the best opportunity for recommending Christ Jesus the Lord, rather than of ingratiating himself with the world, or displaying his own abilities. He does not clothe his ideas in *strange* words and *unusual* language, that he may be admired by the ignorant; but he chooses such expressions as are common and intelligible to every one, rather than high-flown expressions that are not generally understood. For, as Augustine says "an iron key that can open a treasure, is preferable to a golden one not fitted for the purpose."

He does not affect *new* and *unheard-of* ways of speaking, to illustrate the commonly received doctrines of the blessed gospel; but he will even abstain from those phrases that are capable of a *diverse* interpretation, if they are offensive to weak christians. He is ever seeking to adapt himself to persons of common rank and capacity; "not many wise men,

not many mighty, not many noble are called;" and he never discovers in his air, looks, and gesture, contempt and high disdain of those whom he pretends to instruct. If he should happen to win the applause of the common people, he rejoices not greatly in it; and if he miss of their applause, it "is a small matter to him to be judged of man's judgment; he that judgeth him is the Lord."

Though the faithful minister of Jesus Christ will not affect a slovenly way of preaching, and descend to low familiarities of diction, taking his images and metaphors from the low and sordid occurrences of life, at the same time he does not hunt after a pompous and gaudy diction, or what is styled by this apostle, "the enticing words of man's wisdom." I would not be thought from this observation, to cry down all study in a minister to find out *acceptable words*; indeed, to preach the Lord Jesus Christ with true eloquence, is not inconsistent with the greatest humility.

We cannot sufficiently admire the eloquence of the scripture. There is nothing in Homer himself that can rival the sublimity of the song of Moses, the majesty of Isaiah, the tenderness of Jeremiah, or the loftiness of David. And then the herd-man Amos is justly considered by Augustine, in his book of christian doctrine, as a great pattern of lofty expression. Nor is this peculiar to the writings of the Old Testament; the most simple writers of the New Testament want not very fine strokes of eloquence. So much did the apostle Paul excel in this, that he was actually taken for Mercurius, the god of eloquence, when he was in the town of Lystra.

But, permit me here to lay down two necessary cautions to all the admirers of human eloquence in evangelical discourses. 1. That the efficacy of the doctrine must never be ascribed to it. There are too many who allow of no other energy in the word but the moving of the affections by a pathetic orator; while the invisible and irresistible operation of the di-

vine Spirit is altogether forgotten and despised. "But though Paul should plant, and Apollos should water, it is God alone that gives the increase." Thus though soldiers should burnish their armor, yet, in the day of battle, they will not wound their enemies because they glitter upon the day, but because they are of strong and solid temper. 2. There is a false rhetoric that men are very apt to mistake for the true. For, it is not every person that can fill a discourse with crowded similies, forced conceits, bombastic phrases, jingling quibbles, swelling sentences,—who may immediately lay claim to the character of "APOLLOS, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures." The windows that are most daubed with paint give not the greatest light; and the trees that are most covered with leaves bear not always the greatest quantity of fruit: in like manner, these discourses that are adorned with the greatest profusion of ornaments, are not always the most informing or fruitful.

Sermons that are composed and delivered in this *false taste*, may be known by one of these two marks; either they are heard with contempt and disdain, or they serve only to fill the hearers' minds with admiration of the speaker; but not at all to inspire with the sentiments he would inculcate.

To conclude this observation; the minister of Jesus Christ, who preaches not himself, considers eloquence, and the gospel, as the gift and the altar. It was not the gift that sanctified the altar, but the altar that sanctified the gift: so, it is not eloquence that sanctifies the gospel, but the gospel that sanctifies it.

Having finished what I intended, on the first head of this discourse, which was to enquire into the import of PAUL'S declaration here, *we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord*, I will now proceed to enquire,

II. What may be the reasons why every minister of Jesus Christ should make him the great matter and end of all his sermons. And,

First, as to the reasons why he should be the great MATTER of our sermons. As I said before, we are very far from despising rational and moral truths, which are excellent in their own nature, and which it may be very profitable for a gospel-minister to be acquainted with. The duties of the law are also to be preached, as we said before. But let philosophy, let morality beware how they usurp that room which belongs not unto them. Let them shine in their own firmament; but let them not presume to aspire to a higher dignity than they are originally destined unto. Let not this *Reuben* seek to ascend his father's bed, lest *he lose his excellency*. Let not this *Hagar* presume to Lord it over her mistress, *lest she be cast out*. Let not this woman (philosophy) though extremely talkative, *speak in the church*. For, if we make *philosophical disquisitions* the subject of our sermons, instead of Christ, then,

(1.) This is a *high indignity* to him who is the foundation of all our hopes, and our gracious deliverer from misery and sin. O how dishonorable to Christ, to esteem any truth more, as it comes from Cicero, Epictetus, or Marcus Antonius, than as it comes from the great prophet of the world! It is a notable effect of the atheistical pride of men, who pretend to inculcate obedience unto God, to betake themselves to other rules and directions, as more plain, more full, more efficacious, than those of the gospel, which are the teachings of Christ himself. How reproachful is it to christianity, for a pretended preacher of it, to prefer those topics that are common to it with all other religions, to these by which it is peculiarly distinguished from them! "Do you thus requite the Lord, O foolish and unwise!"

(2.) As it is the height of shameful ingratitude, so it is *utterly unprofitable to the hearers*; for the great end of preaching never can be reached by such discourses. The *philosophical haranguer* can neither inform the judgment, nor affect the heart.

He cannot inform the judgment; even the truths he teaches are not satisfactory to the mind, when separated from Christ, who is the true light, that enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world.—In *Christ* alone, all the lines of truth do centre. In him only they have a firm consistence. If truth is not learned, *as it is in Jesus*, the mind remains in midnight darkness; and, after a long course of attendance, on such instructions, one may be as ignorant as a heathen in the knowledge of salvation. Who knows not how the great masters of philosophy have lost themselves in endless disputes about the nature of morality and moral obligation? And what is the reason; they scorn the aid of revelation, which would furnish them an easy solution to many perplexing questions. "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools."—Truly if you take Christ out of the bible, *the bible itself* will be but an inconsistent composition; and we could no more expect to derive from it the satisfactory knowledge of any divine truth whatsoever. The blindness of the modern Jews, bears witness unto this: who, though they have the scriptures of the Old Testament among their hands: yet, not finding Christ in them, they are almost as absurd in their doctrinal system, as the very heathens themselves.

He cannot affect the heart; for, as *professors of religion*, that have no union with Christ, are but withered branches; so *truths, even of religion*, when separated from him, are but dry and sapless speculations. Christ is the fountain of truth; and when water is separated from the fountain, it will soon gather putrefaction, and turn into a puddle. If any should be of the mind, that to reform the world, the best way would be, to preach the moral truths, and leave out the peculiar doctrines of christianity from our sermons; I beseech them seriously to consider the following queries. If such discourses are the most habile means of reforming the world; why did not the great moralists of the Gentiles reform the world?—

Yea, why did they not reform themselves from the gross irregularities of their own lives, by reducing their own refined notions into practice? Why did the apostles make a crucified Christ the theme of their sermons? Why did they not rather preach *the great beauty of virtue; the great dignity of human nature?*—Then would the offence of the cross have ceased:—then would they not have suffered persecution. Was it by preaching of moral truths, the apostles captivated the world to the obedience of faith, triumphed over their inveterate prejudices, their deep rooted lusts, and vicious propensities? Was it thus they laid the axe to the root, that wickedness might be broken as a tree? Was it thus they prevailed against the emperor's sword, and the wit of the philosopher? No, surely. The world was not reformed by moral haranguers in the days of the apostles; and have we any reason to conclude, that such discourses will be more successful in our days? On the contrary; is there not abundant reason to think, that God, who is jealous of his Mediator's glory, will not bless such sermons with success?

Let me here then address every such preacher, in the words of a modern author: "Had you all the refined science of Plato and Socrates, and all the skill of morals attained unto by Zeno, Seneca, or Epictetus: were you furnished with all the flowing oratory of Cicero, and the thunder of Demosthenes: were all these talents united in one man, and you the person so richly endowed; and could you employ them in every sermon you preach, you could have no reason to hope that you could convert or save one soul, while you leave the gospel entirely out of your discourses." Such preachers can neither save themselves, nor them that hear them. And as they are "walking in the light of their own fire, and in sparks that they have kindled;" is there not ground to fear, that "this shall they have at the hand of God? they shall lie down in sorrow.—O my soul, come not thou into their secret; be not united unto their assembly!"

Poor will be the compensation, and pitiful the reward of those preachers, who leave out Christ in their sermons, to be complimented by unbelievers as men of *distinguished parts* and *superior abilities*: for, though they gained the applause of infidels, "what is their hope, when God taketh away their soul?"

And what we have said of the *philosophical harangner*, we may also affirm of the *legal declaimer*, who inculcates the precepts of the law, without pointing forth Jesus Christ as "the end of the law for righteousness." Though indeed, in the law, rightcousness is revealed; yet the gospel is the only ministration of it. The law may demand righteousness, but the gospel confers it. When the law comes, the soul may indeed die, but sin revives; but when the gospel comes, the soul revives, and sin dies. It was not without a mystery, that Moses could not lead the chosen seed into the promised land; for, though the *natural force* of the law is *not abated*, (as it is said of Moses,) "it is become weak through the flesh to give life;" and it is the province of Jesus Christ alone, (the true Joshua,) *to give us rest.*

To conclude, then: this is the sum of what I have said: "Suppose a minister should come forth, armed with all the literature of the schools, and all the thunders of Sinai, he will be but like David in Saul's armor, unable to do any execution; neither will he work any salvation in the earth.—But Christ Jesus the Lord, like the small stone taken out of the brook of the scriptures, lights with a vengeance into the forehead of every high thing that would defy the armies of the living God."

2*d.* I will now say a few things about making Christ Jesus the Lord, the great END of our ministry. And I cannot sufficiently express the great iniquity, absurdity, and danger of having no other end in our preaching, but to advance our own interest, or gain the applause of men.

Consider, (1.) how great *a sin* it is. Is it thus we resemble "the meek and lowly Jesus, who sought

not his own glory, but his that sent him?" Is it thus we requite the condescending Savior, "who made himself of no reputation," by snatching at the honors belonging to him alone? Indeed, where pride and self are wholly predominant, it argues a little groveling soul, destitute of the grace of God. Neither is it in the power of any person, who is wholly influenced by them, to do so much as one hour's faithful service unto God.

(2.) Consider, that the folly is equal to the sin. For, pride and self are vices which very commonly have the peculiar happiness of disappointing their own schemes. Alas! if pride is our sovereign principle, if applause is our ultimate end, how miserably will we be disappointed? Fame is a shadow; if you pursue it, it will fly. Fame is a bubble; if you grasp it, it will break.—Full often the ambitious preacher stands confest to the discerning christian; and, instead of the vain-glory he is so passionately fond of, he meets with that contempt which he so richly deserves. For this love of fame, or desire of vain-glory, like the ointment of the right hand, betrayeth itself. For, there is something of that genuine simplicity in the voice, air, and gesture of him who is animated by the love of Christ, which the false pretender cannot imitate by his utmost art. Hence it is very ordinary for such a preacher, to seem to be all in raptures, when his audience is not in the least affected. For, he throws out his vehemency at very improper places, and without discretion, which renders him extremely contemptible.

(3.) Consider, lastly, the *dangerous consequences*, both to minister and people, that may attend upon such a method of preaching as this. It is not at all to be supposed, that a minister of this ambitious turn of mind will be countenanced of God in the discharge of his ministerial function, seeing *he resisteth the proud*. And though he should be so far assisted, by the common influences of the Spirit, as to acquit himself in the external duties of his office, to the approbation of

men; yea, though his labors should be crowned with success, in converting and edifying the hearers; yet sure I am, it is not at all so probable that this will be the case, as if he were of the contrary temper; for, *he gives grace unto the humble.*

But let us farther, suppose, that he should be universally esteemed among men, and his labors crowned with more than ordinary success; yet still he cannot be approved of God, nor be entitled unto that glorious reward provided for his faithful servants, who "serve him with their spirits, in the gospel of his Son." How shall proud ministers enter these blest abodes, where proud angels could not stay?

But, on the other hand, when a minister of the gospel has it for his undivided aim, to advance the honor of his glorious Lord and Master; such is the goodness of God, that he will not ordinarily suffer his reputation to sink, even among men; for this is his determined method of procedure, in the general course of providence, that "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." And though his labors should not prove so successful as could be wished, or though Israel be not gathered, yet will he be glorious in the eyes of the Lord.

III. A few obvious reflections, or inferences, from what hath been said, shall shut up this discourse. And,

1st. We may be informed, whence it comes about, that the public state of religion amongst us, is at such a low pass, in the day and time wherein our lot is cast. *O Lord,* said the devout sister of Mary, *if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died,* John xi, 21. So may I say, "hadst thou, O Lord, been in the sermons of our modern preachers, there would not have been so many dead souls in our congregations; and so many on the very brink of giving up the ghost." It is reported, there are seen in the mines, a kind of spirits or fairies who imitate real workmen, and seem to be very busy in every part of their work: but, after all, there is nothing done. These beings, whether

real or imaginary, are but too just emblems of all preachers who leave Christ Jesus the Lord out of their elaborate compositions. Let them be ever so busy, they are busy about nothing.

I have no intention to insult over any person whatsoever; nor to depress any order of men, with a view to raise the character of a particular party. Let such unworthy views be far removed from us. But, is it not a melancholy truth? (sorry should we be there is so much ground for saying it,) is it not a melancholy truth, I say, that too many preachers of our time have not the Lord Jesus, either for their *matter* or *end*? Is not he the *stone rejected by the builders*, though he be the *head of the corner*? Are there not many preachers who are perhaps better versed in classic authors than in the holy scriptures?

Polite apostates from God's grace, to wit.

How much reason to fear, lest a pretended rational religion hath obtained among us; little different from deism, and having scarce any relation to Christ Jesus the Lord? Some publish philosophical inquiries and moral disquisitions, and call them sermons: Into what times are we fallen!—And even the more serious part of the ministry are but too much strangers, in many places, to the evangelical method of winning souls to Christ. "For Moses hath" (I will not say in every synagogue, but) "in many synagogues, them that preach him, every sabbath-day."—As in the days of this apostle, the two great competitors with the doctrine of Jesus Christ, were, the philosophy of the Gentiles, and the ceremonies of the Jews; so, in the days wherein we live, his two great rivals seem to be, "the boasted light of nature, and the imperfect works of the law."

And will it not require an extraordinary charity for us to think of many preachers in our day, that they have the glory of Christ, and the salvation of souls for their great end, who will intrude themselves

upon reclaiming congregations, in flat contradiction to all the principles, both of religion and generosity? What can be more evident from the word of God, than that it is the province of the church-members, to elect and nominate her own officers? Acts vi, 6.—We read, indeed, of the centurion who *built the Jews a synagogue:* but not that he acted as a patron, to present a teacher unto it, though he might have pleaded a power of doing it upon a better foundation than any modern patron. Yea, is it not an encroachment upon the very rights of mankind, and the liberties of a free people? You may, indeed, choose your lawyer, or your physician, but not your minister: No; this belongs to the patron of the parish, no matter whether he be a heretic, or a profane person, or a bitter enemy of the church: if he has money enough to purchase this right of presenting, no other qualification is requisite in the least. Perhaps he has some friend to gratify; and therefore he authoritatively presents a person you never saw, nor heard of, or a person whom you would not willingly take for your pastor. But, if you mutter or reclaim, then you must be held for a seditious or schismatical set of men, that can be pleased with nothing. Alas! how shall a patron be a proper judge of the person who is to take the charge of *my* soul, when there are too many patrons that have no concern for their own souls.

Pardon me, if I say, that it is a custom shocking to *common sense*, as well as diametrically opposite to the rules of the word of God. And whether it has ever tended to promote religion, peace, and unity in the church, let experience declare and testify.

I know indeed, there is a very strong exception to all we have said on this head, which is considered by very many, as an irrefragable argument for compliance with the present method of settling vacant congregations. And it is this: "That the settling of congregations by presentations is according to law; and there is no other way of obtaining a settlement, but by accepting a presentation. Indeed, this argu-

ment is so convincing, that I would not so much as attempt to make any reply, were I also convinced, that religion is a thing merely *political*, and that we need not pay any regard to the rules of the word, except in so far as they comport with a present civil administration.* But the argument happens unluckily quite to enervate itself, by proving more than is necessary.—For, it would also prove, that the pleading of the Jews, in another case, was strong and valid; "we have a law, and by our law he ought to die."—And here a large field might be opened for just invectives, against those persons, who with their utmost efforts promote this antichristian usurpation, and yet are always declaring against divisive courses: though nothing can be more evident, than that they themselves are taking all possible methods to rend and divide the poor church: yet they will not take with the

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* *It is not hereby intended in the least to distil disloyal principles into the minds of any, or to foment disaffection to the present civil government. Every body knows that the persons who complain of patronages, as a grievance, are as firm friends to his majesty, and the protestant succession, as any subjects whatsoever. Yea, it is very well known that the yoke of patronage was wreathed about the neck of this church, at a time when the state ministry inclined to* Jacobitism, *in the latter end of queen Anne's reign, in resentment to the zeal for the Hanoverian family, which was shewed, at that time, by the church of* Scotland: *of this his late majesty king George I. was so sensible, that when application was made for a redress of this grievance, an act was passed, in the year* 1719, *making the presentee's acceptance necessary to the validity of the presentative. And if it had not been for those men, who acted such a mean part, as to snatch at presentations, wherever they could obtain them, without the least regard to the inclinations of the people, this church had been, by that favorable act, restored to their former privilege.*

charge in the least, but raise a hideous noise of schism and division against such as adhere to those principles, which are presently professed and authorised by the fundamental laws of this land.

But let us rather talk of this ungrateful subject in the style of lamentation. "O Lord, thou hast rejected and scattered us; thou hast been justly displeased: return unto us, O God." How deplorable is it, that this enormous grievance, so heavily complained of by the greatest part of serious ministers and people in this national church; and even inconsistent with the very fundamental articles of the union of the two nations,* should not only be patiently submitted unto by the prevailing party in our judicatories; but considered by them, rather as a privilege, than a burden. Do we not seem to be in love with our fetters? How easy were it for our judicatories, quite to enervate the patronage act, if they had a mind so to do, by prohibiting the accepting of presentations, which no law, presently in being, forbids to be done? How have our "hands made the snares wherewith we are caught?" Is there not abundant reasons to think that God is saying, "I will not return to my place, until they acknowledge their iniquity?"

Lastly, You that are gospel hearers and fellow-christians may also be informed, from the doctrine we have taught, what should be your aim, in your attendance upon divine ordinances. As it should be our great design, to *preach* Christ; so it is yours to *learn*

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* *In the act passed by the* Scotch *parliament*, 16*th Jan.* 1707, *ratified by the* English *parliament*, *March 7th, ensuing, it is enacted*, "*that the true protestant religion, as presently professed within this kingdom, with the worship, discipline, and government of this church, should continue without alteration in all succeeding generations.*" *Now, it is evident the settling of kirks by presentations, contrary to the will of the people, was a very material alteration in the government of the church.*

Christ. Though the minister should preach Christ ever so much; unless you learn Christ, you do what lies in your power to make him labor in vain, and spend his strength for nought. Alas! for the unprofitable, negligent, and wanton hearing of the word, that prevails at this day and time! Christ Jesus the Lord is the great subject of our sermons; and a noble theme he is, indeed, to expatiate upon. In his name, and by his authority, we preach to you the gospel of your salvation: and, wo! wo unto us, if we have not his glory for our ultimate end; if it is only your applause we are seeking after. Yet, are there not many hearers, who come to hear the minister preach; not as though he were to preach Christ, but as though he were to preach himself? It is not, that they may be acquainted with THE CHRIST, whom the minister preaches; but that they may be acquainted with the minister that preaches him; that they may know what he will say upon such a subject; and how he will acquit himself upon such an occasion.

But, my brethren, if we are what we profess to be, it is neither your applause we are courting, nor do we dread your censure, in the faithful discharge of that ministry we have received of the Lord, to fulfil it; and if you do not learn Christ Jesus, and the truth as it is in him, though you should commend us ever so much, it will be but a poor compensation of our labors. We beseech you, therefore, to forget us altogether, and to consider principally the message we bring; for truly it is "worthy of all acceptance:—for we preach Christ Jesus the Lord," as the only all-sufficient Savior, every way adapted to your need, whatsoever you are. Art thou a *foolish* sinner? We "preach Christ Jesus the Lord, as made of God, unto you, *wisdom*."——Art thou a *guilty* sinner? We "preach Christ Jesus the Lord, as made of God, unto you, *righteousness*."—Art thou an *unholy* and *polluted* sinner? We "preach Christ Jesus the Lord, as made of God, unto you, *sanctification*."—Art thou a *miserable* and *captive* sinner? We "preach Christ Jesus

the Lord, as made of God, complete *redemption*."—Art thou a *hard hearted* sinner? We "preach Christ Jesus the Lord, a Prince and Savior, exalted to give unto you *repentance*."—Art thou a *diseased* sinner? We "preach Christ Jesus the Lord, as the Balm in Gilead, and the Physician there."—Art thou a *dead* and *lifeless* sinner? We "preach Christ Jesus the Lord, as the *resurrection and the life*."—Sinners of every nation of the world; of every station of life; of every sex and age; sinners of every size and temper; we "preach Christ Jesus the Lord," as God's great *ordinance* for your salvation.

And we testify and declare, that if any of you shall perish, it shall not be for want of a Savior.—And if you will not hear, but will despise this Christ Jesus the Lord, whom we preach, saying, "how shall this man save us?" then be it at your peril: for, "how shall ye escape, if you neglect so great salvation?"—And whether you embrace the Savior or not, know, that the election shall obtain: "As many as are ordained to eternal life, shall believe, and purify their heart in obeying the TRUTH, through the Spirit.—Ye see your calling, brethren; how that not many WISE, after the flesh; not many MIGHTY, not many NOBLE, are called. But God hath chosen the FOOLISH things of the world, to confound the WISE. He hath chosen the WEAK things of this world, to confound the things that are MIGHTY; the BASE things of the world, and things that are despised, hath God chosen; yea, and things which ARE NOT to bring to nought things that ARE; *that no flesh should glory in his presence*.—For we preach Christ Jesus the Lord; to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks, foolishness: but to them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, CHRIST, the POWER of God, and the WISDOM of God."

THE CHARGE TO THE MINISTER.

Dear Brother,

THE work and office to which you are now separated and called, to serve God in the gospel of his

Son, as a minister and a witness, is indeed very great and important. According to the judgment of an apostle; "who is sufficient for these things?" 2 Cor. ii, 16. "but your sufficiency is of God," and your reward is with him.—I shall suggest but a very few things unto you, relative to your deportment in that character wherewith you are now clothed. And, "I beseech you to suffer the word of exhortation," which I desire also to take to myself.

First of all, I would say unto you; let it be your resolution, with the apostle, to "preach not yourself, but Christ Jesus the Lord."—Make the peculiar doctrines of Christ, your great theme. Let the blessed JESUS live upon your lips, and reign in all your ministrations. Though profane wits should scoff, and call you *babbler*, still let your sermons be a savor of Christ in every place. This lovely name will add unto them an ornament of grace. This, dear brother, will make your lips like "lilies, dropping sweet-smelling myrrh." O what a noble theme have we to enlarge upon! a theme not unworthy of angels and arch-angels. Even these glorious beings desire to pry into the profound mysteries of revelation. CHRIST is the great subject of the scriptures; why should he not be the great subject of our sermons? The scriptures are the *ring;* Christ is the *diamond.* The scriptures are the *circle;* Christ is the *centre.* The scriptures are the *field;* Christ is the *treasure* hid in that field. The scriptures are the *box;* Christ is the *spikenard.* The scriptures are the *building;* Christ is the *foundation.* The scriptures are the *body;* Christ is the *soul.*—What is the Old Testament, but Christ *concealed?*—What is the New Testament, but Christ *revealed?*—Make the glory of Christ your great end. Seek not your own glory, but the glory of HIM that sent you.—You have Christ for your example. If any viper of pride should fasten upon our hand, let us speedily shake it off by repentance and deep abasement. O how vain is the breath of popular applause! how soon will the *momentary* buzz of renown expire and cease, when our rest together shall be in the dust!

And that you may "preach Christ Jesus the Lord," with the greater success; seek to maintain fellowship with him, and to taste, yourself, the sweetness of the divine truths concerning him you are to declare unto your hearers. When *his name* shall be *as ointment poured forth* unto your own soul, with what raptures of delight, will you spread it abroad unto others! O! did we have the thorough persuasion, the suitable impression of the truths we deliver; how would heavenly eloquence flow from our tongue!—"For, out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Would we follow the direction which this maxim of our Lord would hint unto us, I have often thought it would be a better way to attain the perfection of eloquence, than by a strict attendance to the precepts of the greatest masters of elocution.

But I must not forget, likewise to put you in mind, that you are to preach by your life, as well as by your doctrine. It is not sufficient, we give God your tongue; for he says, "my son, give me thine heart." Let your life be a commentary on what you preach. Endeavor, not only to avoid all just censure, as much as possible; "but let your conversation be adorned with whatsoever things are holy; whatsoever things are lovely; whatsoever things are of good report. Let your light so shine before men, that others, seeing your good works, may glorify your heavenly Father; and those of the contrary part may be ashamed, when they speak evil of you falsely for his name's sake. Be thou an example to the believers, in word and conversation, in charity and spirit, in faith and purity. I give the charge in the sight of God, that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: and when the chief shepherd shall appear, you shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

THE ADVICE TO THE CONGREGATION.

I WILL now say a few things to you, my brethren, of this congregation, touching the duties you owe unto your pastor, who is, I hope, the Lord's anointed unto you. You have, this day, seen with your eyes, his solemn separation to the work of the ministry; and, I trust, it is the answer of many prayers lodged at a throne of grace, in behalf of this event. "Receive him therefore in the Lord, with all gladness." And if you would really profit under the ordinances dispensed by him, I offer you the following advices: "yet not I, but the Lord."

First of all. See that you love, esteem, and reverence your minister. It is natural for us to hearken to the instructions of those we love and value; while on the other hand, we are prejudiced against the best instructions of a person who is the object of our contempt or hatred. Be assured of it, your edification is at an end, when you cease to reverence and love him. It has pleased the spirit of God to adorn the ministers of the word with very distinguishing and honorable epithets. They are the "stewards of the mysteries of God; the lights of the world; the salt of the earth; the angels; the fathers; the overseers; the rulers of the church; the ambassadors of God and of Christ. Let a man, therefore, so account of them, and esteem them very high in love, for their works' sake." I do not say that all persons, of whatsoever character, are to be esteemed and reverenced, if they have the name of ministers; for, if they be unjust stewards, extinguished lights, unsavory salt, fallen angels, unnatural fathers, negligent bishops, tyrannical rulers, and treacherous ambassadors, "God's soul lothes them, and their soul also abhors him," Zach. xi. 8; nor do his people owe them reverence.—But in so far as your minister acts up to those sacred characters (which, I hope, he will, through grace, be enabled to do) you owe unto him not only civil honor, but a religious respect; and "he that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God."

In the next place, submit yourselves unto your minister, and obey them that have the rule over you; for, they "watch for your souls, as they that must give an account; that they may do it with joy, and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you." Be not as them that lay snares for "him that reproveth in the gate, and make a man an offender for a word."—When you repair to the place of the holy, let it be your resolution to "hear what the Lord will speak." Do not merely propose to amuse and divert yourselves; but submit your consciences to the power of the word. Though the authority of church-officers, as the *ambassadors of Christ*, is sneered at by some in these times, yet it is certain there can be no profitable hearing, without a due regard unto it. When, like the hearers of Paul, you receive your minister as an angel of God, and even as Jesus Christ, it will be impossible for you not to pay a suitable deference unto the message he brings, though it should encroach upon your lusts, or reprove particular parts of your conduct.

As touching worldly maintenance, my brethren, you have no need I should say much unto you: for yourselves know, that it is a maxim of our Lord, that "the laborer is worthy of his meat;" and that it is the rule of his apostle, "that as they who served at the altar did live by the altar," so they who preach the gospel should live by the gospel. Brethren, if you should suffer your minister to entangle himself with the carking cares of this life, it were not only an injury done to him, but to your own selves. For, how should he give himself wholly to these things, which are the proper business of his calling, if the cares of this life should be suffered, through your negligence, to divert and perplex his mind? It is true indeed, ministers of the gospel must not be "greedy dogs that can never have enough." What pity is it, if any "give occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme," by betraying a mercenary spirit, or covetous turn of mind. Nevertheless, the minister of Je-

sus Christ can produce (if he were to insist upon it) not only a civil, but a religious right unto his worldly maintenance. Nor can it admit of the smallest doubt, that where there is a real esteem of the gospel, or any profiting by it, "he who is taught in the word, will communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things." But there is no occasion for me to insist upon this.

Let me farther exhort you, my brethren, that ye rather seek to profit by your minister, than to be familiar with him. Do not mistake me; I do not at all mean but you may and ought to be familiar with your minister, and he with you; the meanest of you not excepted. But, there are some who place a great deal more than they should, in being familiar with ministers, never regarding whether their souls are prospering by the means of grace or not; and it is usual for such persons to make them unnecessary visits, to the great wasting of their time. Time is the most precious of treasures; and it is much to be regretted, that we should suffer such large portions of it to lie idle, and without any improvement. But ministers' time is still more precious than any other person's whose work is not so important. And therefore, christian prudence, doubtless, will direct you to make your visits short, when you have not some particular thing to talk about.

Prayer for your minister is another duty I would earnestly recommend unto you. "Brethren, pray for him, that utterance may be given unto him that he may open his mouth boldly, and make known the mystery of the gospel, as he ought to speak." His work is difficult, and there is no doubt but he will meet with various trials and discouragements in the faithful discharge of his office. On this account he is entitled to your prayers for him, always when you pray for yourselves. Besides, if he act suitable to his profession and character (as there is ground to hope will be the case) he will pray for you, and you ought in return, to pray for him. The better it fares with your

minister's soul, your own edification will be the more promoted. When, therefore, you pray for him, you are upon the matter praying for yourselves, and agenting your own cause. There are many unruly and vain talkers, who make no other improvement of the ordinances on which they attend, but to censure or applaud the speaker. As to *praying* for the minister "with all prayer and supplication," they are utterly unacquainted with it.—Alas! they cannot pray for themselves; how can they pray for another! But, my brethren, let it not be so among you. *Pray without ceasing.* When you pour out your spirits to God in prayer, it is likely that God will pour out his Spirit to you in hearing.—See, that for the performance of every duty, ye make constant believing improvement of *Christ Jesus the Lord, whom we preach.* "The Lord make you to increase and abound in love, one towards another."

"And, finally, my brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, that is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified."—AMEN.

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