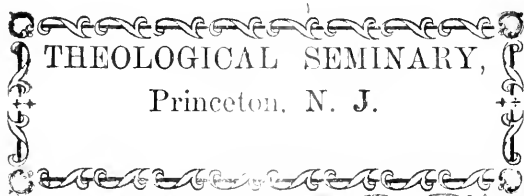


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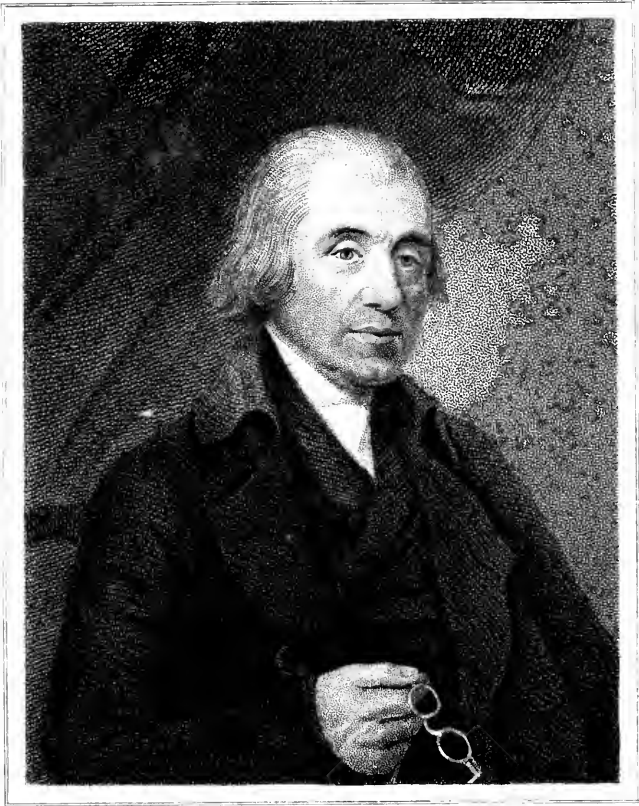
The works of Mr. Archibald  
M'Lean

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MR ARCHIBALD M<sup>r</sup> LEAN

*Late Pastor of the Baptist Church, Edinburgh*

*Published by W. Jones, 7, Tavistock Court Paternoster Row London*

THE  
**WORKS**  
OF  
**MR. ARCHIBALD M'LEAN,**

LATE  
PASTOR OF THE BAPTIST CHURCH,  
**EDINBURGH.**



WITH A  
MEMOIR OF HIS LIFE, MINISTRY, AND WRITINGS,  
BY WILLIAM JONES.

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**IN SIX VOLUMES.**

VOL. VI.

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**WORKS**

OF

**ARCHIBALD M'LEAN.**

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**VOL. VI.**

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MEMOIR OF THE LIFE, MINISTRY, AND WRITINGS  
OF THE AUTHOR.  
SERMONS ON THE DOCTRINES AND DUTIES OF THE  
CHRISTIAN LIFE.



## MEMOIR, &c.



THE practice of writing the lives of such individuals as have been benefactors to mankind, has prevailed so much in every age, that it may now be said to have obtained a kind of universal suffrage which supersedes the necessity of any apology. There are, indeed, important reasons for continuing it, notwithstanding the improper use that has sometimes been made of it, when panegyric is substituted in the place of a faithful record of facts, and the cause of truth sacrificed on the altar of private friendship or of popular applause. For besides the claim which the character of a good man has upon the gratitude of those who have been benefited by his talents, his labours, and his example; we owe it to posterity to preserve from oblivion the memorials that may administer edification or counsel to succeeding ages—"that may give ardour to virtue and confidence to truth."

The writer of this Memoir, cannot but rank it among the greatest privileges of his life, that at an early period he became acquainted with the Author of the following Sermons—that their acquaintance commenced on Christian principles, and was rendered permanent by the "charity which never faileth"—that he derived from it innumerable opportunities of enjoying the benefit of his counsel, either by conversation or correspondence; nor has he any wish to conceal the fact, that, of the little which he knows respecting the best things, he owes much, under God, to his friendly aid. Looking back to the hours of social intercourse, with which he was favoured, at intervals, during a period of five and twenty years; and recollecting those delightful and refreshing sea-

sons of religious converse which are now no more ; how animating is the hope of one day resuming them in a brighter and better world, where all that has hitherto been experienced, and on which memory so much delights to dwell, will be found only as a drop when compared with the waters of the ocean.

*Quis desiderio sit pudor aut modus  
Tam chari capit is ?*



## SECTION I.

*His birth, family, education and earlier history.*

ARCHIBALD M'LEAN was born on the 1st of May, 1733, C. S. at East Kilbride, a small village about eight miles south of Glasgow. His father drew his first breath and passed his youth in the Highlands of Scotland. He was the third in descent from Brolus, eldest son of Duart, the chief of the clan of the M'Leans. About the year 1720, he came to reside in the neighbourhood of Glasgow, and occupied a farm at Kilbride, where he afterwards married a Miss Struthers, the daughter of a respectable farmer, and mother of the subject of this Memoir. His agricultural pursuits, however, proved unsuccessful, and in the course of a few years the family became reduced to considerable straits and difficulties. But as adversity rarely produces much alteration in the breast of a true highlander, several of the friends of his youth continued to visit him, whenever they had occasion to pass through that part of the country where he resided. Among these was an highland Laird, who took notice of young Archibald, and requested his parents would let him go with him to the Highlands as a companion to his own son, a youth about the same age. This request was complied with, and Archy proceeded to the isle of Mull, where he continued

about six months, and learned to speak and read the Gaelic language, an acquisition which he prized in after life on various accounts, and among others, because it enabled him to trace the etymology of many English terms, and to mark the affinity between the Gaelic, the Welch, and the native Irish dialects, which have all one common origin.

The residence of our Author in the island of Mull, afforded him the opportunity of there contemplating nature in its wildest aspect. Several English travellers who have made the tour of the Hebrides, attest the sublime scenery that is displayed in the isle of Mull. Here the mountains of water roll down in torrents from the great Atlantic; and in tempestuous seasons exhibit scenes truly grand and magnificent! Young as Archibald then was, these objects fired his imagination, and at a subsequent period of life he would take pleasure in relating to his domestic circle his amusements in the island of Mull, and the impressions that had been made on his imagination while seated on the craggy cliff, or wandering among the caverns on the shore.\* He was at this time about eight years old, a period when the mental faculties begin to expand; and a contemplation of these sublime objects appears to have produced corresponding conceptions of the power and wisdom of their great Creator, which made a lasting impression on his youthful mind.

On his return from the Highlands he was put to school,

\* "We coasted along Mull till we reached Mackinnon's cave. It is in a rock of a great height, close to the sea. Upon the left of its entrance there is a cascade, almost perpendicular from the top to the bottom of the rock.—The height of this cave I cannot tell with any tolerable exactness: but it seemed to be very lofty and to be a pretty regular arch. We penetrated by candle-light a great way; by our measurement, no less than 485 yards—but as we had only one candle, we thought it dangerous to venture farther, lest, should it be extinguished, we should have had no means of ascertaining whether we could remain without danger. Dr. Johnson said, this was the greatest natural curiosity he had ever seen."

*Boswell's Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides.*

and in a few years acquired a competent knowledge of the elementary branches of education—the reading and writing his mother tongue, arithmetic, and the latin language. In a subsequent period of his life he also became sufficiently conversant with the Greek and Hebrew, to read the word of God in the original; but this was the fruit of his own industry and application, acquired too without the aid of a living teacher. When he afterwards came to reside in Glasgow, he was fond of visiting those places in the neighbourhood which brought to his recollection the days of his youth, and among others, would point out to his friends the schools of Cathcart and Cucaddins at which he was educated. It is to the honour of North Britain to have taken the lead among the nations of Europe in duly appreciating the benefits of education. But a century ago the Presbyterians of Scotland were much more concerned to bring up their children “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” than to bestow upon them those elegant accomplishments on which we of modern times are apt to plume ourselves. The parents of our author early discovered in him an aptness to receive instruction, and while they spared no expence or pains to give him the best education that could be procured, they were commendably attentive to the duty of imbuing his mind with religious principle. I have heard him speak in terms of warm commendation of the Assembly’s Catechism, and urge the importance of teaching it to children with the scripture proofs; and he would instance his own experience in attestation of the good effects resulting from it. He used to say that he was taught it when a boy; and that though when he began to mingle with the world and to have his mind engaged about its vanities, he lost all recollection of his Catechism, it was one of the first things that occurred to him, when he became religious, and he could answer all the questions proposed in it, and adduce the scripture proofs with perfect ease. This he found of great advantage to him in every subsequent part of his life.

While Mr. M<sup>c</sup>Lean was prosecuting his education, the celebrated George Whitfield was in the zenith of his popularity, and in the practice of stately visiting Glasgow among the other towns of Scotland. Accustomed as he was to preach to thousands in the open air, he frequently came to Cambuslang, a village in the neighbourhood where our author resided, which gave him the opportunity of seeing and hearing that extraordinary man, whose person and manner of preaching made a strong impression on his mind, insomuch that it became a favourite theme of comment and of interesting remark with him in the social circle as long as he lived. He would entertain his friends very pleasantly in describing Mr. Whitfield's person and striking manner of address ; in repeating many of his pointed sayings ; and in specifying the effects that were produced upon his audience, which in many instances were truly surprising. Cambuslang was the scene of some extraordinary awakenings in religion under the preaching of Mr. Whitfield of which our author was a witness ; and although at a more advanced period of his life, he gave it as his opinion that there might be much on that occasion which was not genuine, he always honoured Mr. Whitfield for his zeal, and considered him as an instrument of great good to the souls of thousands.

When he had attained the age of fourteen, his parents were desirous that he should fix upon some profession with a view to his future plan of life ; and his fondness for books naturally directed his attention to the printing business. In this choice he was fortunate enough to meet the concurrent wishes of his parents, who considered it quite suited to the natural bent of his mind. In various instances they had perceived in him an ardent thirst for information, with considerable acuteness of intellect, and a strong attachment to books. Accordingly in 1746, he was articled as an apprentice to a printer in Glasgow, by whom he was highly prized and esteemed. This was an employment every way congenial to his disposition. The variety of works which were con-

stantly passing through his hands proved at the same time a source of amusement and information; and he soon made himself perfectly acquainted with every branch of the printing business. His leisure hours were devoted to the study of the languages in which the Scriptures were originally written; and to facilitate his acquaintance with them he constructed several Grammars for his own use, some of which are still extant in the possession of the family. During the term of his apprenticeship, he also applied himself to a course of general reading, and to the particular study of some branches of science connected with Theology, which laid the foundation of that extensive acquaintance with the Scriptures which he ultimately attained. After the expiration of his apprenticeship he continued at the printing business, and having acquired considerable respect as well as eminence in his profession, he was often consulted by authors on the subject of their manuscripts, as a person of correct taste and judgment.

It cannot be satisfactorily ascertained in what year of his life he was brought to the saving knowledge of the truth; but it appears pretty certain that it was under the preaching of Mr. M'Laurin, who was at that time one of the ministers at Glasgow; and there is some reason to think that it could not be long after he entered upon his apprenticeship; for he was a member of a fellowship prayer-meeting of the established church when little more than fifteen years of age. In these meetings he was much admired on account of his modesty and the talent he discovered even at this early age. His fervent piety and exemplary conduct excited towards him the attachment of all the serious people, and he became encreasingly known and respected in Glasgow. Mr. M'Laurin's ministry was evidently very useful to him, and that may account to us for the frequency and the delight with which he was accustomed to converse of this great man. Many of his friends can recollect him mentioning the astonishment with which he used to listen to his discourses while standing like a statue in the pulpit, and pouring out copious streams



of the most sublime doctrine on his favourite topic, "the glories of the cross of Christ." The few writings that Mr. M'Laurin left were also in high estimation with him, and he took every opportunity of warmly recommending them to others. When he first mentioned them to the writer of this Memoir, he made use of the following strong expression: "Every sentence of his Sermon on glorying in the cross of Christ, might serve as a text to preach from!"

In 1759, Mr. M'Lean married Isabella, the youngest daughter of Mr. William Moore, merchant in Glasgow, with whom he obtained a small property, sufficient however to enable him to commence business on his own account, which he did the year following, as a bookseller and printer, in Glasgow. He was not indeed very well calculated for the management of a shop, nor for conducting any business which requires an expertness in "the tricks of tradesmen." In all his dealings he was too upright to accumulate riches; nor could he descend to the grovelling maxims of trade, many of which appeared to him irreconcilable with the integrity and simplicity of the Christian character. He was aware of their baneful influence on the mind; and it appears from his letters that the little experience he had in this way, was so far profitable to him that it qualified him for administering counsel to others during the remainder of his life, and for exposing those unjust maxims of trade, which, from the corrupt course of society, are now grown into laws, and too often justified by professors themselves. He, therefore, got completely dissatisfied with business; and having conducted it about seven years he resolved to relinquish it for a stated income, that should be adequate to the support of his family, which now began to increase upon his hands.

In June 1767, Mr. M'Lean quitted Glasgow, leaving his family there, and sailed for London, thinking it more probable that such a situation as he wished to meet with, might be found there than in his native country. The voyage proved uncommonly tempestuous, and the passengers narrowly escaped a watery grave. On his arrival in the metro-

polis, our author addressed the following letter to his beloved partner in life; and as it has hitherto escaped the wreck of time, its interesting nature seems to justify the propriety of preserving it from oblivion.

## LETTER TO MRS. M'LEAN.

My dear Wife,

*London, 13th July, 1767.*

After a tedious, dangerous, and expensive voyage, I have at length arrived at this place: the particulars are as follows.

On Thursday the 18th June I set off from Glasgow; and sailed from Leith on Monday June 29, at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, with a fair wind. On Tuesday, at 7 in the morning, we were off Berwick, with the wind fair—Wednesday off Shields below Newcastle at 9 in the morning, and at night came in sight of Flamborough head—wind still fair. On Thursday morning we were off Hull with a brisk fair gale and about noon, lost sight of land. In the afternoon the wind changed directly against us, so that we were obliged to tack without making much way. Friday morning at 9, we were off Yarmouth—dropt anchor in Leostoff roads, till the tide should favour us, the wind being directly a-head—weighed anchor at 10 at night and made some little progress by tacking with the assistance of the tide. On Saturday morning we were driven back to Leostoff roads and dropt anchor, the wind continuing strong and contrary. We weighed anchor again, by favour of the tide, but dropt it again opposite Aldborough. On Sunday morning weighed anchor again and bore up against a very high wind, but again cast anchor two leagues above Orfordness. At 8 o'clock in the morning a violent hurricane came on, so that the ship would not obey the helm; and as the Captain imagined it would not continue long on account of its violence, he dropt anchor, being unwilling to lose any thing he had gained; but the wind and rain still increasing, the sea rose to a prodigious swell, and being far from land and fully exposed, we were apprehensive the cable would break and that we should be driven back

upon the Ness in the night. The storm was so excessive, that the spray of the waves rose higher than the yard arm, and the rolling of the vessel was so great that every person and thing in it, were tossed about in the strangest manner imaginable. The fore part of the vessel which lay towards the weather was as often below as above the water, and the seas or waves which she shipped a-head frequently ran along the deck to the stern. I often looked out of the cabin hatchway, and in a moment was rendered as wet as if plunged in the sea. All the rest of the passengers were sick, and some of them staring wildly expected every moment to go to the bottom. For my part, I was never touched with sickness, nor was I apprehensive of danger, till I observed the Captain much concerned and the tears starting from his eyes, and then I thought there must be real danger. As there were ships at anchor on every side of us, we were apprehensive that some of them might run foul of us, and therefore the carpenter was ordered to have his hatchet in readiness to cut the cable in case any of the vessels to the windward should fall back upon us.

At 10 at night a vessel broke her cable and appeared to be coming our way, and now we were on the point of cutting our cable; but providentially she came no nearer than a cable's length. At half past eleven at night, our cable broke, and the vessel instantly heeled about, on which the sea and storm beat upon one of the cabin windows. I immediately ran a sheet in it nailing it with my fist without any sense of pain at the time. The whole of the passengers now expected immediate death: some of them moaning, others praying. Some of them entreated me to perform worship; but I told them the thing was improper in the present state of confusion, and desired each of them to commend their souls to God, at the same time telling them that I was not yet without hope of deliverance, for that God who rules the raging of the sea and stilleth the waves thereof, could soon give the winds and sea an effectual rebuke, and say, "Peace, be still."

The other anchor was dropped with all expedition, and the storm still continued. The vessel danced so prodigiously high, and gave such twitches to the cable, that the Captain said, with a heavy sigh, 'she could not stand it long.' Besides, the vessel was exceedingly leaky, and required to be pumped every half hour. I have it, however, to remark to the goodness of God, that I preserved a calmness and serenity of mind even in the view of death; and the thoughts of leaving you and the children constituted my chief reluctance; for it certainly affected me much to think with what concern you would receive the intelligence of my death. However I commended you and them to the merciful protection, and bountiful providence of our gracious God and compassionate Father.

At break of day we were somewhat encouraged, as we could then see about us; but at 8 o'clock on Monday morning, the other cable broke; and now having lost all our cables we were reduced to the necessity of driving before the wind. The passengers entreated that the vessel might be run on shore, which they thought gave them the only chance for life: but the Captain unwilling to lose the vessel, was for standing off to sea: but to do that, our stock of provisions was insufficient. As the vessel was now driving before the wind we were afraid of running foul of some vessels to leeward, before we could get the broken cables hauled in and sail struck; but God in his providence prevented it. Having struck sail we bore back to Yarmouth roads—and arrived off Leostoff, on Monday morning at six o'clock, where we hoisted a flag of distress. A boat immediately came off from the shore with eight men, who risked their lives for our relief. In about an hour we got an anchor on board, and myself and fellow passengers went ashore in the boat which brought the anchor. We remained at Leostoff that night, and on Tuesday set off for London by land, having 120 miles to travel—and we arrived here on Friday at 3 o'clock in the afternoon.

A. M.

## SECTION II.

*His baptism, settlement at Edinburgh, and call to the  
Pastoral Office.*



MR. M'LEAN'S parents were members of the Presbyterian church of Scotland, and trained up their son in a veneration for that national establishment of religion. It has already been mentioned also, that he was brought to a saving acquaintance with the truth as it is in Jesus, under the preaching of Mr M'Laurin, a minister of the established church; he consequently entered into the communion of that church, and continued several years a very zealous member of it. He regularly attended the fellowship or prayer-meetings, and strictly conformed to all the institutions of the Presbyterian plan of church government. Mr. M'Laurin died in 1754, at which time our Author was about the age of twenty one. It does not appear whether he continued to hear his successor, Professor Finlay, or not: but we know that, sometime afterwards, he sat under the ministry of Dr. Gillies in the College church. He has been often heard to speak in warm terms of the happiness he enjoyed during the time he was in connection with the established church, in which there were then many pious persons who held frequent meetings for prayer and religious instruction, and who were living examples of the power of godliness, both in their families and in the world.

He was first led to call in question the propriety of all national establishments of Christianity, by reading Mr. John Glas's "Testimony of the King of Martyrs." This publication he always regarded as "a most judicious and scriptural

illustration of the good confession which our Lord Jesus Christ witnessed before Pontius Pilate, concerning his Kingdom, as distinguished from the Jewish Theocracy, the kingdoms of this world, and the false churches that now bear its name."\* In consequence of this change in his view of things, he, in 1762, withdrew from the communion of the national church, and united with a small society of the Glasites, who, at that time were the only Independents in Glasgow. His continuance with them, however, was of short duration; for, in the following year, he left them, on a case of discipline, in which he could not conscientiously agree with the church. †

At the time that Mr. M'Lean withdrew from the Glasites, a Mr. Robert Carmichael left them also. This gentleman

\* Letters to Mr. Glas, on Baptism, LETTER I. in M'Lean's Works, Vol. III. p. 19.

† It has been generally supposed that Mr. M'Lean separated from the Glasites on the question of Baptism; but the fact is not so. The following is the account which he himself gave of that affair to the writer of this Memoir. A case of discipline arose in the church, in which a particular individual appeared to him to be *sacrificed out of deference to a ruling faction!* The case was difficult to manage; and Mr. Glas, who was too fond of meddling with the affairs of all the churches in the connection, was sent for to preside on the occasion. Siding with the dominant party, the discipline was brought to a speedy issue. As Mr. M'Lean perceived no hope of stemming the torrent, or of withstanding the influence of Mr. Glas, he arose from his seat, and retired to the extremity of the Meeting. When the affair was ended, Mr. Glas called out "Come here, M'Lean: what is the matter with you?" The answer was, "Sir, I do not agree with the church in this discipline—I consider them altogether wrong."—"Well," said Mr. Glas, "think further on it; and when you have done so, write me your mind." Mr. M'Lean did so; he wrote him a very long letter, of which Mr. G. thought proper to take no notice! I have also heard him say, that Mr. James Duncau, one of the members of the church, who afterwards became a Baptist, and was for many years one of the Elders of the Baptist church in Glasgow, wept like a child when he (Mr. M'Lean) left the Glasites, which may shew us the high estimation in which he was held among his brethren at this early period of his life.

had been an Antiburgher minister at Cupar-in-Angus ; but adopting congregational views of church government. he seceded from that body of professors and connected himself with the friends of Mr. Glas. When the separation from the latter had taken place, *and not before*, the subject of baptism presented itself to the consideration of Mr. M'Lean and his friend. They were now entirely unconnected with any religious denomination, and in the condition of persons "separated from their brethren," Gen. xlix. 26. and Deut. xxxiii. 16. Contemplating their future prospects, Mr. Carmichael one day said, "What think you of the subject of baptism?" This took place in the year 1763, about which time the latter received a call from a society of Independents in Edinburgh, and was upon the point of removing from Glasgow, to become their pastor. Mr. M'Lean promised to take the subject into consideration and transmit his thoughts to him fully on the point. He accordingly drew up a long letter, dated July 2d, 1764, in which he went through the whole of the New Testament Scriptures on this head ; and, as he used to say, "laid before his friend the whole subject as clearly and plainly as ever he could have done at any subsequent period of his life." He had at this time, as he told me, never read a line that was written on the subject by any Baptist ; his plan was, to take the New Testament in his hand and go through every page of it with fixed attention, noting down whatever he found in it respecting baptism, and particularly remarking whether any mention were made in it of the baptism of infants. The result of the whole was that he became a decided Baptist on principle, and in the issue the means of leading many hundreds of others into similar views of the subject.

This letter, however, did not immediately satisfy Mr. Carmichael ; for after receiving it he baptised the child of his co-pastor. In about a year afterwards he came to be fully convinced that Mr. M'Lean's views of this subject were agreeable to scripture, on which he declared his sentiments

to the church under his pastoral care, five of whom avowed themselves of his mind on the subject. At this time there was no society of Baptists in Scotland, nor an individual in the country known by them, to whom they could apply for baptism in a scriptural way. After some time spent in consultation, a letter was addressed to Dr. Gill, informing him of their situation and requesting him to come down to Scotland and baptise them; but that was found to be altogether impracticable.\* It was then resolved that Mr. Carmichael should go to London; and be baptised by Dr. Gill, which he accordingly was, at Barbican, Oct. 9, 1765, and on his return he baptised the five persons above mentioned, and also two others. A few weeks after this, Mr. M'Lean, who now resided at Glasgow, went over to Edinburgh, and was baptised by Mr. Carmichael. Mrs. M'Lean was at this time a member of the church of Scotland; and when, on her husband's return to Glasgow, she was told he had become a Baptist, she declared that she could not have been more sorry if he had become a Roman Catholic! It was not long, however, before she herself joined the Baptists, and continued a most exemplary and useful member with them till her death.

A Baptist church was now formed in Edinburgh, of which Mr. Carmichael was the sole pastor. The number of members did not exceed nine. Mr. M'Lean was at a distance of more than forty miles from them; but they had frequent correspondence, and he occasionally visited them. He was held in high estimation by his brethren on account of his character and talents; and they ardently wished for his settlement among them in Edinburgh, but there did not at the moment appear any opening in providence for him there, sufficient to warrant his removal. In 1767, as we have already seen, he went to London; where he continued at his printing business until the month of December, when an application having been made to him to become the overseer

\* See APPENDIX, Letter No. I.



of the extensive printing concern of Messrs. Donaldson and Co. in Edinburgh, he acceded to the proposal, and quitting the metropolis, settled there with his family, to the great joy and satisfaction of his friends.

He now stately assembled with the small church in Edinburgh, in the capacity of a private member; but, in June 1768, he was chosen colleague to Mr. Carmichael, and the following are the circumstances which led to this event. Mr. Carmichael happened to be taken suddenly ill on a Sabbath morning, and the church had assembled for worship before any intimation could be given of the circumstance. In this dilemma, some of the members proposed that Mr. M'Lean should give them a discourse, to which, with some reluctance, he consented; and while his brethren were engaged in singing the first hymn, he fixed his attention on 1 Cor. iii. 11. "For other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." This was his first regular discourse to the church. He divided his subject into two branches, but the time did not permit him to discuss more than the first of them. Mr. Carmichael was so far recovered in the after part of the day as to attend in his place; but the church were so pleased with what had been said to them in the forenoon, that they requested Mr. M'Lean might be allowed to finish his subject, which he accordingly did; and soon after he was chosen to the pastoral office as Mr. Carmichael's colleague, June 1768.

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### SECTION III.

#### *Rise and Increase of the Baptist Churches in Scotland.*



SOON after Mr. M'Lean had been baptised, and previous to his leaving Glasgow, he was strongly solicited by his brethren at Edinburgh to write an answer to Mr. Glas's "Dissertation on Infant Baptism." This tract was boasted of, by the friends of Mr. Glas, as *unanswerable*: and it must be admitted that there was a sufficient portion of ingenious sophistry displayed in it to perplex a simple reader who looked no farther than the surface of things. Mr. Glas's great argument is, that "the denial of Infant baptism arises from our making the salvation by baptism to lie in something else than the thing signified in that ordinance; even that which distinguishes the adult Christian from his infant." And hence he deduces an inference which the Glasites have ever since considered in the light of an axiom, or self-evident truth, namely, that "to deny Infant baptism is to deny that salvation is of grace." Referring to this vaunted weapon of the Scotch Pædobaptists, Mr. M'Lean, in one of his letters to Mr. Carmichael, smartly remarks; "If Mr. Glas were an apostle, this dogma of his would certainly have decided the question, for I confess it is a blow at the root of all I have advanced in this letter: but as he is only an Independent Archbishop, I hope we may be allowed to judge for ourselves, what we believe or do not believe, notwithstanding our denying Infant Baptism." He, therefore, yielded to the urgent request of his brethren, and in the year 1766 wrote his Letters to Mr. John Glas, in answer to his Dissertation on Infant baptism. Before the Manuscript went into the hands

of the printer, it was submitted to the inspection of Dr. Gill, who returned it with a few trifling remarks, some of which Mr. M'Lean hesitated to introduce. †

The Letters to Mr. Glas appeared early in the year 1767, and, as may be supposed, they excited considerable attention. A publication in behalf of the scripture ordinance of baptism was then a perfect novelty in Scotland. Various tracts had appeared from time to time on the other side of the question; but this was the first direct attack upon Infant baptism which had been made in that country; and it drew the attention of many. The church in Edinburgh now encreased considerably; and the Baptist profession began to extend to Glasgow, Dundee, Montrose and other towns of Scotland. In the year 1769 several persons came from Glasgow to Edinburgh and were baptised. Not long afterwards several others in that city adopted the principle of believer's baptism, and applied to Mr. M'Lean to come over to Glasgow, with the view of setting them in order as a church, with which he complied, Neil Stuart being appointed to the pastoral office among them. This was the origin of the first Baptist church in Glasgow. On this occasion Mr. M'Lean baptised several other individuals there who made application to him. The river Clyde flowing past that city made it very convenient for the purpose of administering the ordinance of baptism. On the appointed day, the novelty of the thing excited considerable curiosity, and thousands of persons assembled in the large Green at a place called the Herd's house, on the banks of the river, to witness the strange scene! Mr. M'Lean was indeed well known in that city, and highly respected. As soon as he made his appearance on the Green, the people opened up a way for him and the candidates for baptism, who having made the necessary preparations, proceeded with great solemnity to the river, where he administered the ordinance to them, during the whole of

† See APPENDIX, Letters II. and III.

which the multitude behaved with the utmost propriety and decorum. It is generally supposed that he was the first person who administered the ordinance by immersion, on a profession of the candidate's faith at Glasgow.

In the same year (1769) some persons who resided at Dundee came to Edinburgh to be baptised; and strongly solicited Mr. Carmichael to go and preach at that place as there was a prospect of considerable success. He accordingly went, and during his stay there baptised several who were earnestly desirous that he should continue among them as their pastor. Repeated applications having been made to him and to the church in Edinburgh, their request was at length complied with, and in May 1769, Mr. Carmichael removed to Dundee. The church there was soon after set in order, and in a little time Mr. Thomas Boswell was chosen as his colleague in the elder's office. As Mr. M'Lean was now left alone in that office at Edinburgh, the church called Mr. Robert Walker, (a surgeon of some eminence) to be joint elder, or pastor, with him, and thus both the churches were supplied with a presbytery.

In 1770, a small society of christians at Montrose, unanimously adopted the scriptural view of baptism, and application was made to Mr. M'Lean to come and baptise them. Most of them had been connected with the Glasites, and were still tenacious of their peculiarities, with which they understood the Scotch Baptists did not agree. This gave rise to a correspondence of some length between our Author and them; but after several letters had been exchanged, they yielded the points in dispute, on which he proceeded to Montrose and administered the ordinance of baptism to them on a profession of their faith. They were immediately formed into church order, Mr. John Greig being appointed their elder: afterwards Mr. David Mill, and Mr. Thomas Wren were chosen into that office.

At this time the Baptist profession in Scotland seemed to prosper in every quarter; but it was not long before several

distressing occurrences took place, well calculated both to humble and try them. Mr. Carmichael lost his colleague by death in 1772, and his own health was in a very declining state. He was frequently seized with a profuse spitting of blood, and his affliction became doubly augmented by the unworthy conduct of several of the members of the church under his pastoral care. These things grieved him exceedingly and proved very discouraging, so that his health rapidly declined, and incapacitated him for discharging the duties of his office among them. He therefore expressed a desire to return to Edinburgh, where he soon afterwards died, about the beginning of March 1774. He was evidently a person of considerable gifts, of fervent and unfeigned piety, as will be abundantly evident from the perusal of a single letter of his, which I subjoin in the APPENDIX to this Memoir\*, and his death was a great loss to the churches in their infantine state.

The spirit of genuine christianity will no doubt always prompt its friends to take pleasure in beholding the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom in the world; but it has not often happened that the rapid increase of a particular church has proved beneficial to its peace and prosperity. A society that has been hastily gathered has often been more hastily scattered. A number of young inexperienced, and undisciplined members, unless their influence be counteracted by an equal proportion of such as are possessed of age, sobriety and prudence, will not be long preserved in peace, order, and harmony; and the history of the Scotch Baptist churches fully verifies the truth of these remarks. Mr. M'Lean knew it to his painful experience. Factions arose even in the church of Edinburgh, whose conduct was a source of deep distress to his mind; and in several of the other societies connected with them, painful things occurred about this time, which, on account of the lively interest he took in all their

\* See APPENDIX, Letter IV.

concerns, and from his being continually applied to for advice and assistance, must unavoidably have proved very distressing to him. Two successive divisions had taken place in his own church which had greatly reduced their number. The leading member in the minority having engaged the place in which the church stately assembled for worship, Mr. M'Lean and his friends had no alternative but to retire from it, and were reduced to the necessity of meeting for worship in his own house during an interval of nearly three years, until the parties again united. In Glasgow, Dundee, and Montrose, the state of the profession was equally discouraging and painful; but even these afflictive dispensations had their use: they necessarily induced a more careful and diligent examination of the Scriptures as the rule of their faith and practice; enhanced their experience both of the corruption of human nature and of the power and excellency of the truth itself; and they were ultimately over-ruled by Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, and made to subserve his own glory and the increase of his kingdom in the world.

The church in Edinburgh soon after this time began to increase rapidly. In the year 1777, he published "A Defence of Believer's Baptism," in answer to a pamphlet which had recently made its appearance at Glasgow, in behalf of Infant sprinkling. This drew the attention of many persons to the subject: the controversy got access into a Pædobaptist congregation at Edinburgh; and soon afterwards six of their number came off, embraced baptism, and were added to the church. In the space of six months nearly twenty more followed their example, among whom was Henry David Inglis Esq. the grandson of the celebrated Colonel Gardiner.

Mr. M'Lean continued to superintend the extensive concerns of Donaldson's printing office for eighteen years, namely from 1767 to 1785, and this must necessarily have been a period of extraordinary exertion to him, in every point of view. The increase of the church in Edinburgh, and we may add the spread of the Baptist profession in different parts of Scot-

land also, unavoidably entailed upon him a large portion of additional duty in the pastoral office, and called for augmented exertions in various respects. Sustaining the station of leader of the denomination, he had to conduct a pretty extensive correspondence, which must have occupied no little time, and which demanded no inconsiderable expence of thought and study. His ministerial duties at home were attended to with the utmost assiduity; though during all this period, he received no pecuniary compensation for his services from the church; on the contrary, indeed, he contributed much to the support of the profession, and thus set an example to the flock of that liberality, disinterestedness, and love to Christ's name which the apostles of our Lord so strongly inculcate upon Elders or ministers of the word. As he did not take the oversight of them for the sake of "filthy lucre," so he could adopt the noble appeal of the great apostle of the Gentiles and say, "Ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that belong to me. I have set an example to other pastors how that so labouring they ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." In Mrs. M'Lean, he was blessed with a consort whose spirit and disposition were perfectly congenial to his own turn of mind. She was naturally generous, open-hearted, and given to hospitality. The consequence was that their house was free to all the poor country members, in lodging and entertaining whom they took great pleasure, though it unavoidably pinched them in their circumstances and abridged the comforts of the family. By this noble and disinterested conduct, he certainly laid the denomination at large to which he belonged, and the Edinburgh church in particular, under great obligations. His stated income was but small, probably much less than most of his brethren imagined; but he was singularly modest and reserved in every thing that respected himself: and when the expences of house-keeping increased, he chose rather to become a boarder, when his

salary would not enable him to sustain them, than to be burdensome to the flock under his charge.

An unhappy dispute which had arisen in the church of Edinburgh, about the end of the year 1777, relating to the doctrine of Christ's Sonship, deprived Mr. M'Lean of the assistance of his colleague, Mr. Robert Walker, in discharging the duties of the pastoral office: but in March 1778, Mr. William Braidwood, who had been the elder of an Independent society at Edinburgh, embraced the Baptist profession, joined the church under Mr. M'Lean's ministry, and in the following year was chosen joint-elder with him. Thus the church again possessed a presbytery, and became increasingly prosperous. In October 1784, Mr. H. D. Inglis, was appointed an additional elder of the church in Edinburgh; so that from this time to the period of the much lamented decease of the latter, in 1806, an interval of more than twenty years, this society was eminently blessed with the singular advantage of having three able pastors, to labour in the word and doctrine, and to conduct the affairs of the house of God. Thus auspiciously circumstanced, the church enjoyed as much internal peace as is probably to be expected in the present imperfect state of knowledge and sanctification; "they walked in the fear of the Lord, enjoyed much of the consolations of the Holy Spirit, and were both edified and multiplied."

The affairs of the church in Glasgow had at this period, fallen into a very deplorable state. About the beginning of the year 1776, they had adopted the Sebellian error, denying the personal distinction in Deity; and as every slight departure from the simplicity of the truth only paves the way for others of still greater magnitude, they, in a little time, deteriorated into Socinianism. Much pains was taken by Mr. M'Lean and his Edinburgh brethren to reclaim them to the way of truth; but, failing of success, the church in Edinburgh separated them from their fellowship, and relinquished all connexion with them. In January 1778, however, the distinguishing sentiment of the Baptists, got access into an Independent church



in that city, under the pastoral care of Mr. Robert Moncreiff, and the result was that himself and nine of his brethren, becoming convinced of the propriety of the baptism of believers on a personal profession of the faith, applied to Mr. M'Lean to come over and baptize them, which he accordingly did, and set them in church order, Mr. Moncreiff being appointed to the pastoral office.

Mr. MONCREIFF was descended from a family of great respectability in Scotland, and the present Sir Henry Moncreiff Wellwood was his elder brother. The talents which he possessed were of no ordinary cast; and under his powerful ministry the Baptist cause in Glasgow speedily resumed an entirely new aspect. His popular talents and striking manner of delivery drew the attention of a great number of hearers; and his amiable deportment conjoined with a most exemplary conduct, tended much to conciliate all classes and disarm the disaffected of their prejudices. In the course of eight or nine years the church rapidly increased; most of those persons who had unhappily been subverted by their leaders and seduced into Socinianism, were now recovered from the error of their way and restored to the communion of the church; and Mr. James Duncan, bookseller, in Glasgow, who had originally been among the Glasites \* was chosen fellow elder with Mr. Moncreiff. The latter, however, in the winter of 1787 was attacked with symptoms of consumption, which rapidly increased upon him. His physicians recommended a removal to the South of France, and the importunity of his friends induced him to comply with their advice. His last public interview with the church exhibited an extremely affecting scene, which is still fresh in the recollection of many. He addressed them in a short discourse from 2 Cor. xiii. 11. "Finally brethren, farewell: Be perfect; be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace: and the God of love and peace shall be with you." The greater part of the church were in

\* See the note, page 20.

tears, sorrowing most of all for the hints he gave, and the fears they had, that they should see his face no more! He set out, accompanied by his wife, and a medical attendant; but having arrived at London it was not thought advisable that he should proceed on his journey farther than Lyme in Dorsetshire, where he finished his course and was interred in April 1788. He was a faithful, zealous, and active servant of the Lord Jesus, and the loss of him was deeply felt and lamented, both by the church under his pastoral care, and indeed by the whole denomination.



## SECTION IV.

### *The Scotch Baptists not Sandemanians.*



AN opinion has very generally prevailed among the dissenters throughout England, that Mr. M'Lean, and those with whom he walked in church fellowship, differed from the Sandemanians in scarcely any thing but the subject of Baptism: and as no small portion of obloquy has hitherto attached to them on that account, I feel myself called upon, from a regard to truth and justice, though not one of their number, to endeavour to set the public opinion right on this subject. It is not perhaps very difficult to account for the erroneous judgment that is formed of them in the case now mentioned. Mr. M'Lean himself, as we have already seen, was connected with the Glasites one year; several of the Sandemanians in Scotland and some in England, in consequence of reading his writings became Baptists and joined the Scotch Baptist churches; there is also some similarity between them respecting both the doctrine of the gospel and the order of a christian church, though that is not so great as is commonly imagined. But that which has done most to mislead the public mind in this country, and to confirm them in their mistake, is the extremely unfair and disingenuous conduct of the late Mr. Andrew Fuller, of Kettering. This gentleman's controversy with Mr. M'Lean, on the nature of faith and repentance, is too well known to require any particular explanation in this place. Finding himself unable to meet his opponent on the fair and legitimate ground of controversy, after a silence of

*eight or nine years*, he came forward with a small volume entitled "Strictures on Sandemanianism," in twelve Letters to a friend. And though in that publication he wished his readers to understand, that he "had no mind to write a particular answer to Mr. M'Lean's performance," p. 2. and though in undertaking to examine "the System," of Sandemanianism, "he does not conceive of every one as embracing this doctrine (or System) who in some particulars may agree with Mr. Sandeman, for *in that case he should be reckoned to embrace it*," p. 14. he nevertheless, throughout his whole volume, takes special care to identify Mr. M'Lean with that System, and to make him amenable for his due proportion of the evil which, in his prejudiced judgment, attaches to it.

Although Mr. M'Lean was too far advanced in life, and at the instant the "Strictures on Sandemanianism" appeared, was so intently occupied in writing his invaluable Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews, as to be unable to defend himself against his opponent's insidious attack; he has fortunately left behind him a manuscript in his own hand writing, in which he has fully and explicitly stated wherein he did not agree with the Sandemanians; and though this paper was drawn up at least twenty years before Mr. Fuller's "Strictures" appeared, and consequently could have no reference whatever to them; I feel a pleasure in introducing it in this place, which I shall do without the smallest alteration, and under the confident persuasion that every unprejudiced mind will allow it to be a satisfactory justification of himself from the charge of being a Sandemanian.

"We highly disapprove in many respects of the spirit and manner in which the Glasites, or Sandemanians, oppose what they call *Pharisaism*. It is freely admitted that religious pride or self-righteousness is natural to the human heart, and that nothing is more opposite to the grace of the gospel, or more hateful in the sight of God. The ancient Pharisees trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and

despised others ; but Jesus tells them that the publicans and harlots should enter the kingdom of heaven before them. We cannot therefore be too much upon our guard against this dangerous disposition, which covers itself under the most deceitful and specious appearances, and can find its account as much in the profession of Christianity as of Judaism. But we ought to beware, on the other hand, lest our zeal against Pharisaism should lead us into a rash and unwarrantable judging of others, or into such liberties in our own conduct, as are unsuitable to the gravity, strictness, and holiness of the Christian profession : and in both these respects we think the Glasites have erred.

“ Mr. Sandeman has laid down a rule for discovering Pharisees under the Christian form, so as to prevent their being mistaken for sincere Christians, which is this ; “ When they see the Christian union fairly take place without them, and themselves rejected and boldly excluded ; then you will have no occasion for laboured descriptions to characterise Pharisees ; for you will clearly see their enmity to Christ manifesting itself by the most striking facts, in its ancient form.”\* I have no objection to this touchstone in a general view : but when we enquire where this Christian union takes place to the exclusion of the Pharisees, the Glasites will tell us, that it takes place only among them. So that the rule comes just to this, That all the religious, who in any respect find fault with the Glasites, are undoubtedly Pharisees, and influenced by enmity to Christ. This rule for detecting Pharisees appears to us not only very uncertain and unsafe, but pharisaical also.

“ A strict and serious religious appearance is in their opinion an undoubted sign of a Pharisee. The ancient Pharisees, they observe, had a great shew of piety and devotion, and were the strictest sect among the Jews, yet were most severely censured by our Lord as hypocritical and self-righteous ; therefore they think themselves sufficiently warranted to cou-

\* Letters on Theron, &c. Vol. II, page 348, 349.

clude, that every appearance of religious strictness must necessarily proceed from the same principle.—But we cannot admit that such an appearance is either bad *in itself*, or the natural and necessary effect of bad principles. The outward appearance or religious deportment of Jesus Christ and his apostles was grave, serious, strict and devout in the highest degree; yet they were entirely free of all that ostentation, artificial grimace, and regard to the traditions of men which they condemned in the Pharisees, Matt. vi. 2, 5, 16. chap. xv. 3, 9. The Christian religion is a singularly strict, holy and heavenly religion, and therefore its genuine appearance in any must necessarily be so too. This therefore is a very indiscriminate and erroneous rule of judging, and wherever it is adopted must produce many bad effects, as it evidently does among that people, some of which I shall mention.

“ It leads them to form the most rash and uncharitable judgment of others, especially of the stricter sort. The more serious and devout any appear, and the nearer they approach to the rule of God’s word (unless they agree with them in every thing) the more unfavourable is their opinion, and the more severe their censure of them; so that they do not scruple even to affirm, that such worship a false God, and “ that the Christ whom they serve, and the Christ whom the churches (*i. e.* the Glasite churches) profess to serve, stand some way in opposition to each other \*” Are they perfectly certain that this is none of that evil judging which the Scriptures so much condemn, and of which the censorious and self-righteous Pharisees were so guilty? Matt. vii. 1—6. Rom. xiv. 4, 10. 1 Cor. iv. 5. James, iv. 11.

“ It frequently excites in them a profane spirit of ridicule and contempt. Whatever apology they may frame for their rash and indiscriminate censure of the stricter class of professors, surely their sneering and scoffing at such cannot well be reconciled with a benevolent and serious concern for their

\* Ferrier’s Preface to the Testimony of the King of Martyrs, p. 24.

souls. If the case of such be so awfully dangerous as they represent it, it ought to draw forth their pity and deep concern: But in place of this it excites their laughter and scorn. The religious, the serious, the good, the holy, the godly, the devout, &c. are words scarcely ever mentioned by them, but as terms of contempt and derision. This humour often betrays them insensibly into scoffing even at religion itself. Good dispositions, grace in the heart, spiritual enjoyments, frames, experience, &c. they deride in too indiscriminate a manner, though there can be no true Christianity without them. To use the things of religion as terms of ridicule is to ridicule religion itself; yet it is amazing to observe how much they chime in with freethinkers and infidels, in their manner of treating these things, so that a stranger to their peculiar sentiments would be apt to consider them as influenced by the same profane spirit. But if they are not ashamed of such company, they should consider that the ancient Pharisees also used mockery and derision, which was a very natural expression of their high opinion of themselves and contempt of others, Luke, xii. 15. chap. xxiii. 35.

“ Another effect is, that under the notion of avoiding what they call Pharisaism, they frequently slide into the opposite extreme of laxness, and conformity to this present world in many respects. Family prayer they admit, “ seems necessary for maintaining the fear of God in a family;” yet whether it be that they “ can find no express precept or precedent for it in Scripture, or that they observe this particular strenuously insisted on by many self-righteous or superstitious motives,”\* it is certain that they do not universally practice it. The first-day Sabbath they also acknowledge, but are so careful to avoid all pharisaical strictness in observing it, that they frequently use pretty much freedom on that day, and their conversation is to often rather trifling and amusing than spiritual and edifying.

\* Plain and full account of the Christian Practices, &c. page 14, 15.

“ They also oppose the gravity and moroseness of the Pharisees, by giving way to a degree of levity and dissipation. “ We judge it absolutely necessary, “ say they,” to avoid the spirit and practice of the ancient Pharisees, in making more sins or duties than the Scripture has made—We dare not make laws where Christ has made none ; nor dispense with any he has given us. Therefore as we cannot find where diversion, public or private, is forbidden, we account any amusement lawful, that is not connected with circumstances really sinful.\*” As this is expressed in general terms and with studied caution, I shall specify a few of their diversions, that you may judge for yourself whether they are connected with circumstances really sinful or not.

“ Attending the play-house is a favourite amusement with some of them, their pastors not excepted. They seem to have as remarkable a sympathy with the stage as antipathy against the pulpit ; and more than once in their published writings have retaliated the attacks made on the former upon the latter. † But, setting the pulpit out of the question, if there is any thing inconsistent with Christianity exhibited on the stage, it can be no lawful amusement for a Christian ; if attending it occasion the improper expence of time and money, and set a bad example to others ; then it must be connected with circumstances really sinful.—They also divert themselves with balls, routs, and other merry-makings, accompanied with music and dancing. Sometimes they act plays in one another’s houses, and perform a number of low harlequin tricks and ridiculous buffooneries which I do not chuse to mention. Their company of light-horsemen was another fund of diversion to them in the mock-military way, but I believe it has now fallen much into disuse. They also indulge themselves pretty freely in jesting upon very improper subjects, some of them not very agreeable to modest ears.

\* Plain and full Account of the Christian Practices, &c. page 15,

† Letters on Theron, &c. Vol. II. page 241—243 note.



“ But they plead, that “ the Scripture hath no where forbidden such diversions, and that they dare not make laws where Christ has made none.” It cannot reasonably be expected that the Scripture should particularise by name, every foolish diversion which the levity or insobriety of men might devise. It is sufficient that such things are prohibited in general terms, and appear inconsistent with the genuine spirit of Christianity. Some of the forementioned diversions are evidently *ravellings*, which are expressly forbidden, Gal. v. 21. 1 Pet. iv. 3. So is *foolish talking and jesting*, Eph. iv. 29 chap. v. 4. Col. iv. 6. The most innocent of them fall clearly under the imputation of *levity*, and so are forbidden in all the Scripture exhortations to *gravity* which is its opposite, 1 Tim. iii. 4, 8, 11. Tit. ii. 2, 7. Jesus and his apostles never made use of such methods in opposing the Pharisees; and if Christians are called to imitate their example, it amounts to a prohibition of such things. They have therefore no occasion to make laws where Christ has made none. The laws prohibiting such fooleries are already made to their hand, and sufficiently clear, were they only disposed to attend to them. The whole spirit and genius of the religion of Jesus forbids them. They are opposite to that spiritual mindedness and crucifixion to the world which the gospel enjoins; tend to grieve the Holy Spirit, and mar men’s intercourse with God; and do not consist with that watchfulness and sobriety with which Christians should wait in readiness for the coming of the Lord. How would they like to be summoned from the play-house, the balls, &c. to the judgment-seat of Christ? Could they expect in that situation to have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming? Besides, do not such indecent levities in singular professors make the way of truth evil spoken of, and lay a stumbling-block in the way of others? We do not think that all amusements whatever are absolutely unlawful, or that Christians should be morose and melancholy. No; the gospel affords them a sufficient ground of cheerfulness

and joy; but will any from his conscience seriously affirm that such things as have been mentioned are, I will not say genuine expressions of spiritual mirth, (James, v. 13.) but even so much as consistent with it?

“ It may be thought strange how people who disclaim all certainty of their own salvation, can take pleasure in levities, and not rather be under the influence of *painful desire and fear* until they obtained it. It cannot well be supposed that such as are duly concerned about the salvation of their souls, can be very merry, or ever easy, whilst they remain entirely uncertain as to their state; or, on the other hand, that those who are happy in the enjoyment of the love of God, will have much relish for such kind of entertainments. It is hard to believe that it arises from tenderness of conscience, “ not daring to make laws where Christ has made none;” neither will a misguided zeal against Pharisaism fully account for it. It belongs to them to judge themselves, and solve this difficulty the best way they can to their own satisfaction; but it is a certain truth in itself, let it apply to whom it may, that when men have not a proper relish for, or enjoyment of the comforts of the gospel, they will very naturally seek for happiness in something else.

“ There are various other branches of conformity to the world which the Glasites are not very careful to avoid. I shall mention only what relates to the *pride of life* which the apostle opposes to the love of the Father, 1 John, ii. 16.

“ All that honour, pre-eminence or respect, however distinguishing, which is either expected or given, merely on account of birth, wealth, or a fashionable appearance, is nothing but the claim of pride on the one hand, and the prostituted tribute of meanness or servile flattery on the other, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage. All Christ's disciples, the rich as well as poor, are forbidden to strive who should be greatest in this world, Mark, ix. 33—36. He who will be greatest or chief among Christ's subjects, must be their minister or servant; even as the Son of man

came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many, Matt. xx. 25—29. They are all without exception to be subject one to another, and to be clothed with humility, 1 Pet. v. 5. in honour preferring one another, and in lowliness of mind esteeming others better than themselves, Rom. xii. 10. Philip. ii. 3. And as they are not to honour themselves but one another, so they must not in this prefer the rich to the poor, which is that respect of persons so highly condemned by the apostle, even in an instance of civil respect, as being inconsistent with the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ, the royal law of love to our neighbour, and the conduct of divine grace in choosing the poor of this world, James, ii. 1—10. Christians are indeed not only enjoined to honour all men, 1 Peter, ii. 17. but also to render peculiar honour to whom honour is due, Rom. xii. 13. such as to magistrates, masters, parents, instructors, benefactors, &c. because in such *relations* and *offices* they bear some resemblance of God, are really our superiors, and even gratitude, justice, and the welfare and good order of civil society require it. But neither birth, riches, nor a genteel appearance are any of the scripture grounds of distinguished honour, nor are their opposites any just cause of disrespect among Christians; and wherever regard is paid to such distinctions among the disciples of Christ, it will infallibly promote the love of this world, gratify pride and vanity, excite emulation, jealousy and envy, and divide them, in point of affection, familiarity, and intercourse, into two parties, the rich and the poor, or the fashionable and the vulgar, in which case the characteristic genius of their profession, and the true spirit of their union as the body of Christ, is in a great measure gone. Perhaps the Glasites are less culpable than the national professors in this branch of conformity to the world; but it is certain that it has too much place among them, and I question much if they fully admit the principles of the New Testament upon this subject.

“Another article of the pride of life, and which is subservient

to the former, is gaudy and costly apparel. Christians of all ranks are, in the most express terms, absolutely forbidden to adorn themselves with broïdered or plaited hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; and in place of all such gaudy ornaments, which are the undoubted indications of wantonness, pride or vanity, they are commanded not only to adorn their minds with the opposite dispositions, but also their bodies with *modest apparel* becoming that inward adorning, 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10. 1 Peter, iii. 3—5. Women especially are addressed on this subject, as being in general more addicted to that particular species of folly than men. The Glasites, however, pay little regard to this exhortation, but join issue with the sophistical reasonings, maxims, and practice of the world in this particular, and some of them even exceed their equals in the world in the finery and gaudiness of their dress. They consider it as pharisaical and self-righteous to be scrupulous on this head, and affirm with great confidence that there is no religion in dress. Yet the apostle exhorts Christians, “Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” 1 Cor. x. 31. If to aim at the *glory of God* be a religious principle, and if *whatsoever we do*, even the most common and ordinary action in life, must have this for its end, surely the dressing of our bodies ought to be regulated by the same religious principle; and as the word of God gives particular directions on this head, it must be religion to obey them, and irreligion to disregard them.

“Whilst they conform so much to the world under pretence of avoiding the spirit and practice of the ancient Pharisees, it might be of service to them to attend to the example of the apostle Paul, which he sets before Christians for their imitation, Phil. iii. 7—16. “But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righ-

teousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."— Here we see he truly threw off the Pharisee, renouncing all his own righteousness in point of acceptance with God, and placing all his hope of salvation in that divine righteousness which is through the faith of Christ. But was this attended with more lax and superficial views of the obligations, importance and necessity of personal holiness, or with using greater liberties in conforming to this world? Quite the reverse. In renouncing his own righteousness, he also renounced the earthly life, with its pleasures, riches, and honours; and with the greatest ardour of desire, and the most vigorous exertions, like one in a race, he presses after conformity to, and fellowship with Christ in his death and resurrection, that so he might catch hold of the prize, the unfading crown of glory which was set before him: his words are—"That I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead: not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded," &c. This example of the apostle is a perfect contrast to the conduct of the pharisaical judaizers of his time who minded earthly things; and it is no less opposite to some of the modern methods by which the Glasites oppose them.

"Notwithstanding their great outcry against Pharisaism and self-righteousness, I have already shown in some instances that they do not stand altogether clear of it themselves. As pride frequently opposes pride, so may a self-righteous spirit

oppose Pharisaism. If it be self-righteous to judge, condemn, and despise others, there are few religious parties who have ever exceeded them in this. A favourable opinion of the christianity of any who are not of their communion, they affirm to be “that unclean spirit called *Catholic Charity*, which the father of iniquity, who was a liar from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, has propagated.”\* Even such societies as appear “to hold the very same doctrine, and to observe something like the same order” with themselves, but who do not think proper to join them, they consider as only “professing in words,”† as in “an error at bottom about the faith,”‡ and as “serving another Christ.”§—Again, if it be self-righteous to have a pretty good opinion of themselves, they are not deficient in this. Take their word for it, and they are the only true churches of Christ upon earth. They “keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus :”|| among them brotherly love, self-denial, bearing the cross, laying up treasures in heaven, &c. “are carried into practice agreeably to the literal binding words of Scripture.”¶ In short both in Britain and America, they “continue unto this day, observing all things whatsoever Christ hath commanded.”\*\* There are few of those whom they call Pharisees, that would venture to speak more highly in their own favour. But as it is natural for people to think more highly of themselves than they ought to think, self-commendation is not much to be depended on. In the present case it has rather exceeded the truth, as has already been evinced in several instances, to which others might have been added, but I spare them.—Lastly, if it agrees with the spirit and practice of the ancient Pharisees, to “make laws where Christ has made none, and

\* Ferrier's Preface to the Testimony of the King of Martyrs, p. 50.

† Ibid. p. 23.

‡ Ibid. p. 27, 28.

§ Ibid. p. 24.

|| Ibid. p. 22.

¶ Ibid. p. 12, 30, 31.

\*\* Ibid. p. 13. Plain and full Account of the Christian Practices, &c. p. 31.

to dispense with any he has given," they are not altogether free of this neither. Among the *former* may be reckoned the human invention of sprinkling infants, the second absolution, their view of the husband of one wife, the imposing of hands upon members at their reception, &c. some of which make the commandments of God of no effect.—Among the *latter*, the command to baptize disciples, the prohibitions of rash judging and evil speaking, of foolish talking and jesting, of revelling, respect of persons, gaudiness in dress, &c. are laws pretty freely dispensed with among them; at least, they are not "carried into practice agreeably to the literal binding words of Scripture;" and, perhaps, even several things which they profess, such as brotherly love, self-denial, taking up the cross, not laying up treasures on earth, &c. are not quite so fully observed by them as the literal binding words of Scripture require.

"But here again they are before hand with me; for as there are few who have such high and exclusive pretensions to genuine christianity, so none can outstrip them in the humiliating language of self-abasement, wherein they level themselves with the very vilest of the vile. Mr. Ferrier, after having gloried over all other religious parties, whom he calls "empty and fruitless professors," and extolled his brethren as "observing all things whatsoever Christ has commanded," as if he had all at once reversed his ideas, proceeds thus; "It deeply concerns them (the Glasites) to think seriously what *they themselves* are about, knowing that on no account, in no respect whatever, have they any ground to glory over these professors, or over the vilest of mankind—No reason whatever have they to claim any nearness to God, or any preference in his sight, more than the basest of mankind: when, either as churches or individuals, they review their conduct, instead of pretending (as is falsely said of them) to any thing like perfection or infallibility, they, in every light, find their transgressions staring them in the face; yea, they see themselves, in

many respects, far more guilty than such as never have been in a church of Christ at all.”\*

“ They have indeed no ground to glory over the vilest and basest of mankind (*i. e.* the most abandoned characters among those who know not God) either in point of justification or christian attainments; the *first* being entirely on account of the worth of another; and as to the *last*, “ who made them to differ? and what have they that they did not receive?” 1 Cor. iv. 7. But if they have “ no reason whatever to claim any *nearness to God* more than the basest of mankind,” which (as it alludes to Psal. cxlviii. 14. Eph. ii. 13, 17.) imports that they are yet afar off, having no hope, and without God in the world, Eph. ii. 12. then, it must be owned that “ it deeply concerns them to think seriously what *they themselves* are about;” for, in this case, they must be hardened even beyond the vilest of mankind, if they do not “ see themselves far more guilty than such as have never been in a church of Christ at all,” I will not say for misimproving that privilege, but even for having the least pretensions to the christian name, far less such high and singular pretensions. I charitably hope, however, that this is one of those overstrained confessions which are so common among that people; for though I have pointed out some evils among them which stand much in need of reformation, yet I dare not agree with their teacher in unchristianising them altogether by the lump. Though they should give me no thanks for it, but ascribe it to “ that unclean spirit called *Catholic Charity*,” I must still say, that I sincerely believe there are real Christians among them.

“ But what if after all Mr. Ferrier means no such thing as his words plainly import? Only a little before, he had spoken most highly of his brethren, preferring them to all other religious parties whatever; it cannot therefore be supposed that here he *seriously* means to sink them below even the very

\* Ferrier's Preface, &c. p. 32.



vilest and basest of mankind; *i. e.* the most abandoned infidels. I question much if either his own convictions or theirs *really* correspond with such a confession; or if either he or they would choose in *earnest* to be considered in the light wherein he has placed them. Nay, I am not very sure if they will thankfully receive even the few animadversions contained in this letter, however just. It will be well if, instead of thanks, I do not meet with something in the spirit of that ancient rebuff, "Thou was altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us?"

"But what then does he mean by such a humiliating confession? One evident end of it is, to elude the charge of Pharisaism or self-righteousness, to which their high opinion of themselves and contempt of others so much expose them; so that it turns out to be a display of their singular humility, and how far it exceeds that of all other professors. The ancient Pharisees *falsely* imagined themselves the purest and holiest of mankind, whilst they made void the commandments of God by their traditions; but the Glasites, who profess to be the only true churches of Christ, who keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus, (Rev. xii. 17. chap. xiv. 12.) are yet so exceedingly humble and self-denied, that they look upon themselves as the very vilest and basest of mankind. Though there are others who disclaim as well as they any ground of glorying over the vilest of mankind; yet still they believe that they have obtained mercy, and that though they were *formerly* enemies and afar off, they are *now* reconciled and made nigh by the blood of Christ. But the humility of the Glasites permits them to make no such distinctions; for though they profess to have the blood of Christ as the *only* ground of hope, yet "no reason whatever have they to claim any nearness to God" upon that ground, "more than the basest of mankind," who either know it not, or reject it as a common thing. And though they in general admit that the Scripture speaks much of the change which the gospel produces on all those who really believe it; yet they disclaim any

alteration to the better either in their hearts or lives; and that not in the way of serious regret, but to contrast their humility with the pride of the Pharisee, who said, "God I thank thee, that I am not as other men are." Nay, I am much mistaken if they will not say amen to the following prayer, "Lord, may we ever be kept from seeking to find any good thing in ourselves to distinguish us from the worst of mankind!" though it be the direct opposite of the apostolic prayers for the churches, see Phil. i. 9—11. 1 Thess. iii. 12, 13. 2 Thess. i. 11, 12. Heb. xiii. 20, 21. It is impossible they can seriously mean that personal holiness or conformity to Christ is needless, far less pernicious to a Christian; nor can I believe they mean absolutely to deny that they themselves are Christians; there is ground therefore to conclude, that such verbal self-abasement is little else than an affectation of singular humility.

"I shall only farther observe, that they are strongly marked by a narrow *party spirit*. By this I do not mean a strict and conscientious regard to all the truths and institutions of the gospel, and a separation from all such as do not agree with them in these. Christ hath circumscribed the terms of visible fellowship by the open rule of his word, so that Christians are obliged, upon the catholic principle of subjection to him, to separate from all such as do not conform to that rule. The visible unity of saints requires they should be agreed in all things wherein they are commanded to walk together as a body. A society united upon the professed principle of dispensing with any of the known laws of Christ, or of forbearing one another in the neglect of them, is a daring combination against his authority. He has given us his institutions to keep or observe, not to forbear or dispense with in favour of any. But it ought to be remembered, that many who are *really* united to Christ, and to one another in him, cannot warrantably unite in *visible* fellowship in this world. This arises from their not discerning one another, or, if they do, from their not being of the same mind as to some things

which are necessary to their visible communion. This consideration ought to enlarge our minds, and lead us to extend our favourable opinion beyond the narrow circle of the particular communion to which we belong; and in proportion as we discover any approaching to the rule of God's word in their principles and practice, in the same proportion ought we to esteem and love them, though they should not see it their duty to join, or agree with us in every thing. Indeed, this is no more than a necessary consequence of our love to the truth itself. Yet this is what the Glasites call *Catholic Charity*, and brand with the most odious epithets. Some of them cannot but remember (though they are obliged to deny it) that they knew the truth, and were relieved by it, before they were enlightened in any of the things peculiar to the Glasites; yet they acknowledge none as Christians who are not connected with them; and have the keenest opposition to such as make the nearest approach to their principles, unless they agree with them in every particular. Now this is what I call a *party spirit*. This contracted spirit leads men to lay greater stress on the peculiarities which distinguish them from other Christians, than on the things wherein all Christ's people are one, and whereby they are distinguished from the world. It makes them see with envy, and so disposes them to disparage, every appearance of Christ's kingdom among others, as a kind of rivalry which lessens their own importance and exclusive pretensions; whilst, on the other hand, it permits them to put up with a very superficial form of godliness in their own connections, provided such are but zealous enough for the peculiarities of the party.

“ Thus I have laid before you some particulars wherein we differ from the Glasites, and also pointed out several things in their spirit and practice of which we greatly disapprove. I am confident that I have not positively stated any thing against them, which is not supported either

by their own approved writings, or by undeniable facts which have frequently fallen under my own observation, or been communicated by persons of candour and veracity, who have had the best access to know; and I am certain that the Glasites themselves must be conscious, that I have not by far exhausted the facts which might be adduced in support of these animadversions. As to constructions or inferences, you are desired to lay no greater stress upon them than as they appear to your own judgment fully warranted by the premises.

“As it would be unjust to charge a whole community with the faults of individuals which they did not allow, but were endeavouring to rectify by a proper use of the discipline, I have avoided mentioning any thing that is not either generally avowed, or at least openly tolerated among them, so as to constitute a pretty striking feature of that party. I hope, however, there are some among them who are sincerely grieved with such things, and that nothing makes them conceal their dissatisfaction, but the want of courage or ability to withstand them, or the fear of being cut off from what they esteem the only christian communion upon earth.

“Notwithstanding all I have advanced against that people, I can assure you, if I know any thing of my own heart, that I do not bear them the least ill-will. On the contrary, they still possess much of my esteem, as having been the first in this country who have been honoured to contend for our Lord’s good confession concerning his kingdom, and to exhibit the primitive order, discipline, and (excepting baptism) ordinances of his house, at least in their writings, to which I acknowledge myself indebted in several things.

“But as they have in general much fallen off from the true spirit of the Christian religion, and the joyful personal hope which attends it, and have not only degenerated in a great measure into a lifeless form, but connected with a profession of the doctrine of the kingdom of heaven the most glaring conformity to this present world, whereby many have been prejudiced against that good profession; therefore I think my-

self sufficiently justified in this weak attempt to separate the chaff from the wheat, and vindicate the cause of truth from the corruptions of its professed friends, which could not well be done without admitting and censuring these corruptions. My aim is also to reach conviction to themselves: for though there is nothing of this kind to be looked for either from the native goodness of the human heart, or the ability of the writer, yet with God all things are possible, and he can make use of the weakest instrument. Another end I have in view, is to clear ourselves of the blame which has been thrown upon us on their account, by some who have had no other way to confute the principles which we hold in common with them from the word of God: for though these principles stand independent of men's characters or conduct, yet the consistent profession of them does not.

“ To conclude, though it is proper we should declare our disapprobation of their conduct, yet it would ill become us to make that the subject of diversion and ridicule, which affords such cause of deep regret and serious lamentation. And when we also consider how liable we ourselves are to turn aside, instead of glorying over them, it should lead us to take warning by their example, to watch and pray that we enter not into temptation, and not to be high-minded but fear.

I am, &c.

Thus far Mr. McLean, on a subject which no person better understood than himself. For, living as he did, almost all his days, surrounded by that class of professors, and having continual opportunities of access, both to their printed writings and also to be a spectator of their conduct and deportment in the world, he was every way competent to give an opinion respecting their principles, spirit, and consistency. It is quite unnecessary, therefore, for his biographer to add any thing to the sketch which he has drawn of that people, or to vindicate himself from the unfounded accusation of ranking amongst them.

## SECTION V.

*Some Account of Mr. M'Lean's Writings.*



ABOUT the year 1785, the exertions which the station the great head of the church had manifestly called him to fill, were perceived by his brethren to be greater than his constitution would sustain. He was much afflicted with diseases of the stomach, arising from his studious habits, his sedentary life, and close application to writing. An ardent concern for the glory of Christ, and the prosperity of the various societies with whom he stood connected in the bonds of the gospel, engrossed his chief attention, and so absorbed it, that he seemed to grudge the time allotted for his ordinary meals, and he seldom went to rest before one o'clock in the morning, as he found himself more fitted for study at night than during the bustling hours of day. In this way, indeed, he generally passed the last thirty years of his life, for the most part in his study, depriving himself of the pleasures of society, and even in his old age sacrificing many of the comforts of life, that he might promote the edification of his brethren and further the cause of primitive Christianity in the world.

The spread of the Baptist profession in various parts of Scotland, and the discriminating principles of the churches formed upon the plan of those of the Scotch Baptists having extended also to various parts of England, occasioned numerous applications at this period to Mr. M'Lean, not only for information by letter on points of difficulty that arose among them, but also for visits, to set societies in order, and ordain

Elders over them in the work of the Lord. As his engagements in Mr. Donaldson's printing office precluded the possibility of a compliance with the greater part of these applications, and as the church in Edinburgh was now respectable in point of number, they urged it upon him to give up his secular employ, and accept such a salary from them as their ability enabled them to raise him. His moderate wishes and contented state of mind, made him easily satisfied in this respect, and his anxious desire to spend and be spent for the good of others induced a cheerful compliance with the proposal of his brethren. He had laboured among them nearly twenty years without receiving any temporal emolument; but as his whole time and labour was henceforth to be devoted to the duties of the pastoral office, the visiting of distant societies, and the good of the profession in whatever way that object should appear practicable; he consented to accept a salary from the church of *sixty guineas per annum*, at which sum it continued for several years; and though, when an extraordinary rise in all the necessaries of life took place, it was gradually augmented, yet it never exceeded *a hundred guineas*, which was the sum he was in the receipt of at the time of his decease.

Having his hands, however, thus as it were set at liberty, he began to look around him, and to consider how he might best promote the extension of the kingdom of his divine Master in the world; and from this period we begin in a more especial manner to trace his history as an author. It is true, indeed, as we have seen in a former Section, that he had once and again already stepped forward in vindication of his discriminating principles as an Antipædobaptist. His eleven Letters to Mr. Glas appeared in 1767, and were followed about ten years afterwards with "A Defence of Believer's Baptism," in 1777. But without stopping to furnish any more detailed account of these publications, we shall now endeavour to pursue his literary history from this period to the hour of his dissolution.

Perceiving that a disposition was prevalent both in Scotland

and England to identify the Scotch Baptists with the Sabbatarianism, and that an unmerited degree of obloquy attached to himself and friends on that particular account, which had an unhappy tendency to prejudice the minds of many against them, and consequently impede the progress of their principles; the first thing to which Mr. M'Lean devoted his attention, was the writing of the manuscript which forms nearly the whole of the preceding Section of this Memoir. It was drawn up in the form of a Letter to a friend, and actually given into the hands of a printer with a view to its publication; but on more mature deliberation it was withdrawn *for the present*, the author fully intending nevertheless to lay it before the public at a future time. That time, however is only *now* arrived; and as it is never too late to rectify errors and remove prejudices, let us hope it may yet have its salutary effects on those who give it a candid perusal.

In 1786, our author published his invaluable treatise entitled, "The Commission given by Jesus Christ to his Apostles, illustrated." The work is judiciously divided into three parts—the first being occupied in stating and explaining what the Gospel itself is, or the doctrines which the Apostles taught the nations—the second is appropriated to a consideration of the article of baptism: the manner of its administration, the proper subjects of that divine ordinance, and especially its doctrinal import—the third exhibits a compendious view of the nature of the kingdom of Christ, with its peculiar laws and institutions, included under the "all things" which the apostles were commissioned to teach the disciples to observe. It is perhaps not going too far to say of this publication, that there is nothing in the English language which exhibits so scriptural a view of primitive Christianity as this small volume. It is so completely in unison with the scope of the New Testament, the writings of which, whether by Evangelists or Apostles, our author has happily brought to bear upon every part of his subject, and laid them under contribution in the way of illustrating it, that it carries an irresistible conviction to



the mind of the reader, and it would be difficult to name a book which has obtained more unqualified commendation. The work has gone through three editions, and probably done more to recall the attention of Christ's disciples to that kind of Christianity which was propagated by himself and his apostles, and that is found pure and unadulterated only in the writings of the New Testament, than any human production now extant. The *second* edition of it, with some corrections and enlargements, appeared in 1797, and a third in 1804. It now constitutes the first volume of his works, in 6 vols. 12mo.

About this time also, Mr. M'Lean drew up an "Essay on the Calls and Invitations of the Gospel,"\* which was inserted in the *Missionary Magazine*. It is the immediate design of this Essay to shew that the Gospel not only contains a declaration of facts concerning the person and work of Christ, but that it also includes the most kind and gracious invitations, calls, and exhortations to unbelievers to partake of the blessings of salvation, all which are founded on that declaration of facts. This was presenting the subject in a point of view at that time quite novel to the religious public, and as it appeared anonymously, it drew forth a string of animadversions from one of his own friends, who thought it necessary to vindicate the sovereignty of divine grace in the salvation of perishing sinners, against a sentiment which appeared to him irreconcilable with it. It is remarkable that until this Essay appeared, this endearing and encouraging view of the Gospel seemed to be wholly lost sight of by all the leading Calvinistic Divines of the age. In vain do we look for any trace of it in the writings of Dr. Gill or Mr. Brine—the oracles of the last century. Neither is it to be found in Mr. Booth's *Reign of Grace*, though that omission was afterwards supplied in his "*Glad Tidings to Perishing Sinners*." Even Messrs. Glas and Sandeman, who, Mr. Fuller admits, had done great

\* WORKS, Vol. II.

service to the world by rectifying many popular errors prevalent in their day, strangely overlooked the calls and invitations of the Gospel. Our author, therefore, republished his Essay in an octavo pamphlet, and subjoined to it a Reply to the Animadversions that had been made upon it, thus placing the subject in that luminous point of view, that it gave a new turn to the preaching of numbers both in Scotland and England, while it drew forth testimonies of approbation from several distinguished authors, particularly the venerable John Fawcett, of Ewood Hall, author of the Devotional Family Bible, who in one of his smaller pieces, bestows upon it the warmest commendation, expressing his very grateful acknowledgments to our author for this able fruit of his pen.

At an early period of his ministry, a dispute had unhappily arisen in the church under his pastoral care, on the subject of Christ's Sonship, which terminated in the separation of his colleague, Mr. Robert Walker, with several other members of the church. This event was in itself a source of much distress to Mr. M'Lean, who did every thing in his power to prevent the church being embroiled in a dispute upon what ought to be a matter of forbearance among brethren; but his regret and mortification were greatly heightened by the publication of a pamphlet, eleven years after the occurrence had taken place, intitled "A Defence of the Doctrine of the Trinity, and *Eternal Sonship of Christ*," by his former colleague. As this piece contained much misrepresentation of what had actually occurred, and as the argumentative part was extremely vulnerable, our author was prevailed upon, by the repeated solicitation of his friends, to take up the subject; and consequently, in 1783, he published "A Letter on the Sonship of Christ, originally addressed to some of the members of the Baptist church in Edinburgh: to which is added, A Review of Dr. Walker's Defence of the

Doctrine of the Trinity, and Eternal Sonship of Christ.\* Besides stating, with his accustomed clearness and precision, what he conceived to be the doctrine of the New Testament regarding the Sonship of Christ, which he refers wholly to his *incarnation* and *resurrection* from the dead, to both of which the Scripture applies the term *begotten* and assigns them as the reason why he is called "the Son of God," Matt. i. 20. Luke, i. 35. Acts, xiii. 33. Col. i. 18. he enters very critically into an examination of the eternal generation scheme, as held by Dr. Owen, Waterland and others, and has probably produced the most satisfactory confutation of it, that is extant in our language. His "Review" of Dr. Walker's pamphlet affords abundant evidence that, when called to it, he could handle a piece of metaphysics with no common dexterity—that he could grapple with the unwieldy or he could chase the subtle. The production of his opponent, indeed, shrunk into contempt under his hand. His pamphlet was noticed in the Monthly Review, Vol LXXX. for 1789, in the following terms; "Mr. M'Lean writes like a man of sense and discernment, and seems without doubt, to have the advantage of his antagonist. We must own ourselves astonished at the phraseology sometimes employed by those who plead for what is termed *eternal generation*, and can consider it as little short of profane." p. 90.

Mr. M'Lean was considerably engaged about this period in visiting various places in Scotland and England, where the principles of the Scotch Baptists had gained access, and in forming societies and aiding the regulation of their affairs. He rarely omitted an *annual* journey into England, during which he visited London, Hull, Beverley, Chester, Nottingham, Liverpool, &c. &c. in all which places, he had brethren who highly prized his visits, and were always solicitous to

\* WORKS, Vol. III. p. 265, &c. In republishing this pamphlet, however, he has divested it entirely of its controversial form, and wholly omitted the "Review" of Mr. Walker's performance.

obtain them. On one of these occasions, a printed Sermon was put into his hands, at Hull, entitled "The faith of the operation of God," by a Mr. S. Barnard of that place. As he considered the principles of that discourse to be extremely unscriptural, and the tendency of the doctrine maintained in it to make men undervalue the gospel and all it reveals as of little or no consequence to their salvation, and to lead them to seek for a foundation of hope in some operation within them distinct from the influence of the truth, or some mystical principle wrought in their hearts by a spirit which does not speak in the scriptures; he delivered Two Discourses in opposition to it, during his visit at Hull; and after his return home, published them (1791) under the title of "The belief of the Gospel Saving Faith."\* The two Sermons were however cast into one, and an Appendix subjoined, containing a refutation of the principles advanced in Mr. Barnard's Sermon. This pamphlet has since been reprinted in a detached form and well deserves the consideration of every enquirer after truth; for on no one article has so much false doctrine been propagated, as upon the simplest of all subjects, the nature of faith. It may be added, also, without arrogance or being thought guilty of panegyric, that there is no writer of his age to whose labours the Christian church is under greater obligation than to our author, for the successful manner in which he has exposed and confuted the many strange and absurd hypotheses that have been advanced on this subject, and for placing it in the clear light of the New Testament.

I do not find that Mr. McLean published any thing of consequence from this time till 1797, when a new and enlarged edition of his Illustration of Christ's Commission made its appearance. The principal additions are to be found in the Preface, where he introduced an epitome of the evidences of Christianity, and in the concluding part of the volume, where he glances at the fulfilment of the prophecies and promises

\* WORKS, Vol. IV.

which relate to Christ's kingdom, from the times of the apostles to the final consummation of all things. Though in the first edition of the book, he had not entered much into the subject of Christ's reign on the earth, it was not difficult to collect from what he did say, that he then inclined to the opinion that Christ's reign on this earth, during the thousand years, which are commonly termed the period of the Millennium, would be *personal*. He had however, at that time, considered the subject only superficially; but circumstances subsequently arose in his own immediate connection, which induced him to give it a more careful examination, and the result was a complete conviction, that the notion of our Lord's personal reign is wholly untenable—and consequently in the second edition of the "Commission illustrated," he has ably advocated the doctrine of Christ's *spiritual* reign, or the universal extent of his kingdom, and the prevalence of his religion during this period. The other enlargements made to this work, are to be found in one or two long notes on the subject of Faith, the object of which is to defend himself against some strictures which Mr. Fuller had passed on his particular view of it, in the course of a private conversation they had had at Kettering, and which ultimately led to a controversy of which I shall have occasion to speak more particularly hereafter.

Two years afterwards, in 1799, he published "A Dissertation on the Influences of the Holy Spirit: with a Defence of the Doctrine of Original Sin, and a Paraphrase with Notes on Rom. v. 12. to the end of the chapter."\* This pamphlet was occasioned by a defection from the faith once delivered to the saints, in the person of a young man who had been called to the pastoral office in a small society at Beverley. The individual referred to not only denied the necessity of divine influence to convert, and sanctify the heart, but he also called in question the derivation of a corrupt nature from Adam; maintaining that men come into the world perfectly pure and

\* WORKS, Vol. II.

innocent; with a variety of other extravagant sentiments equally repugnant to divine revelation. The propagation of these principles in the church over which he was placed, instantly spread an alarm among them; and our author was strongly importuned to visit Beverley, with the hope that he might check the progress of this heresy, and reclaim the unhappy subject of it. He complied with this request; but his visit, though a second time repeated, was not attended with all the success that was hoped for, and the church there was ultimately reduced to the necessity of excluding its pastor. Mr. M'Lean drew up this treatise on the occasion now mentioned, and afterwards published it at the request of his friends.

In 1802, he published "A Reply to Mr. Fuller's Appendix to his book on the Gospel worthy of all acceptance; particularly to his doctrine of antecedent holiness, and the nature and object of justifying faith." As the biographers of the late excellent Secretary to the Baptist Missionary Society have dwelt with some minuteness on this controversy, and have no doubt done their utmost to place the subject in the most favourable point of view, which it was possible for them to do, as it respects Mr. Fuller, there can be no reasonable objection to the friend of Mr. M'Lean giving a simple statement of facts on the same subject, according to the view he has of them.

In the year 1794, while Mr. M'Lean was upon a visit to the writer of this Memoir, the latter put into his hands Mr. Fuller's "Calvinistic and Socinian Systems examined and compared," which he read with considerable interest; and the satisfaction he derived from it induced him to enquire for some other productions of that author's pen. Among these was his treatise entitled, "The Gospel of Christ worthy of all acceptance," which afforded him equal pleasure, particularly from finding that the view of faith which Mr. Fuller contended for throughout that volume was precisely the same that he himself held, and had published in the first edition of his

“Illustration of Christ’s Commission.” Thus prepossessed, he formed the determination of introducing and cultivating a correspondence, and with that view wrote to Mr. Fuller, on the subject of the Baptist Mission to India. To this Letter a very courteous answer was returned,\* and a reciprocal exchange of letters ensued,† which in process of time led the parties to wish for a personal interview. Accordingly in the Autumn of 1796, our author having occasion to pass some time in the Staffordshire potteries, visited Mr. Fuller at Kettering on his way to London,‡ and passed three days with him. Among other topics of conversation which turned up, that of faith was introduced, and some remarks which Mr. Fuller dropt, led our author to perceive that he had somewhat departed from the simple view of it which he had maintained in the first edition of his “Gospel worthy of all acceptance.” In the course of this discussion which turned upon the distinction between faith, hope, and love, 1 Cor. xiii. 13. Mr. M’Lean argued that his friend’s present view of faith, which included in it the exercise of the will and affections, must go to destroy that distinction, by confounding faith and love. In answer to this it was asked “does not hope imply *desire* and desire imply love?” “Yes, said Mr. M. hope is a modification of love.” “Then, said Mr. Fuller, you have given up your argument.” A moment’s reflection convinced our author that in terming hope a modification of love, he had inadvertently conceded to his opponent what he ought not to have conceded; but as his object in visiting Kettering was not to dispute with Mr. Fuller, but to cultivate intimacy and friendship, he declined following out the argument, and promised to transmit his thoughts in writing as soon as he reached home. He accordingly did so, but Mr. Fuller had seized with avidity the unfortunate concession, and in letters to several of his friends both in England and Scotland proclaimed a complete victory over his opponent.

\* See the New Evangelical Magazine, Vol. II. p. 39.

† Ibid. p. 76. 100.      ‡ Ibid. Vol. I. p. 326.

Mr. M'Lean saw some of these Letters and was informed of others: and being then upon the point of publishing a *second* edition of his treatise on "Christ's Commission," he threw in two additional *notes*, in which *without naming Mr. Fuller*, he adverted to his arguments in defence of his novel idea of faith, and gave such an answer to them as appeared to him necessary for defending his own sentiments, and counteracting the dangerous influence (as he imagined) of his opponent's. Mr. Fuller felt the full weight of this, and in 1801, published a *second* edition of his "Gospel worthy of all acceptance, with corrections and additions; to which was added, an APPENDIX, on the question, whether the existence of any holy disposition of heart be necessary in order to believing in Christ." This gave rise to our author's "Reply," which made its appearance in the following year; and in which, in the opinion of many competent judges, he had a manifest superiority of scriptural argument.\* Were it indeed necessary to adduce evidence of this fact, I apprehend the proof might be found in Mr. Fuller's own subsequent conduct. See the Theological Repository, printed at Liverpool, 1803, Vol. VI. p. 1—14. or New Evangelical Magazine, Vol. I. p. 330.

From the mention of this controversy with the late "Secretary," though not in strict chronological order, I pass on to

\* Dr. Ryland in his Memoir of Mr. Fuller, p. 417—434, has printed a long letter of Mr. Fuller's to Mr. M'Lean; and appears to lay considerable stress upon it in relation to this controversy. But it should not be overlooked, that the letter in question was written *four years* before Mr. F. published his APPENDIX which contains every thing in it that was immediately *ad rem*, and has consequently been answered in Mr. M's REPLY. As Dr. Ryland has avowed his coincidence with Mr. Fuller's unscriptural views of this subject, I hope that "I who always was equally averse with my dear departed friend to the sentiments he opposed," may be allowed thus to attest my agreement with him, and to "avow without scruple that I consider them both in these points to have been mistaken."



notice my author's "Review of Mr. Wardlaw's Lectures on the Abrahamic Covenant, and its supposed connection with Infant Baptism," which made its appearance in 1807. Mr. Wardlaw is a young minister of very promising talents, which he has lately employed with great success against the Socinians; and his effort to prop the drooping cause of Pædobaptism, by his Lectures on the Abrahamic covenant, may be regarded as the last able attempt that has been made on that side of the question. His opponent in the "Review of his Lectures," gives him "credit for his abilities, and admits that he has put as plausible a face upon infant-baptism, as an untenable cause could possibly admit: and though he has grounded his arguments chiefly on the principles of the Jewish constitution," yet, he avows his persuasion, that, "if Infant baptism were out of view, he would not pursue the same strain of doctrine on any other subject." Mr. Wardlaw, I believe, still retains his Pædobaptist profession; but I remember to have heard Mr. M'Lean remark (with a smile) that Mr. Haldane avowed himself a Baptist in about eight days after the publication of the "Review of Mr. Wardlaw's Lectures," in which he was followed probably by some hundreds of his friends of the Tabernacle connection.

The only remaining controversial piece of our author's which I shall detain the reader by the mention of, is his "Strictures on the sentiments of Dr. James Watt and others, respecting a Christian church, the Pastoral office, and the right of private brethren to administer the Lord's Supper," which appeared in 1810. The principles opposed in these Strictures, are, that two or three believers constitute what the Scriptures call a Church—that they are competent to do every thing without pastors which they can do with them—and consequently, that there is no work or function peculiar to the pastoral office. The writing of this pamphlet was not only an exercise of much self-denial to Mr. M'Lean, inasmuch as he had to appear publicly in print against individuals with whom he was walking in Christian fellowship—a thing

that had never before happened to him ; but it was also attended with circumstances peculiarly distressing. These wild and extravagant notions, which are utterly subversive of all order and regularity in Christ's house, had been adopted and successfully propagated in most of the churches with whom he stood connected, by a few leading individuals ; and as they were firmly opposed by the more judicious and soberminded, it issued in a schism which ultimately shook several of the churches to the very center. So heated indeed were the leaders in this novel theory of church order, that argument was wholly thrown away upon them, nor would they have listened to the eloquence of an angel in opposition to their favourite hypothesis. Experience, however, often effects what argument is incapable of doing : and the mischievous consequences that have resulted, has already opened the eyes of many to that desolating scheme. It is now ascertained to the satisfaction of many who were once enamoured of the new plan, that if the Lord's Supper be taken out of an organized body, and the administration of it detached from the pastoral office, there is no consistent medium at which to make a stand ; and you will be compelled to reduce it to the instance of a solitary individual taking it alone, like the *Viaticum* of the Romish church.

About the year 1805, Mr. M'Lean, having arrived at the age of seventy, was strongly urged by some of his friends who were aware that they could not now reasonably expect his continuance with them many years, to publish an uniform edition of his works, to which he consented, intending to add to those already before the public, several other treatises which were either prepared or projected, and particularly a " Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews." This last mentioned undertaking had for a number of years occupied a leading place in his intentions. He had bestowed much time and pains upon it in his studies—two or three distinct courses of lectures had been delivered on that important portion of the sacred writings to the church under his pastoral care, which had

excited the strongest prepossessions in its favour, throughout the circle of his acquaintance, whenever it should make its appearance—and in order to confer upon the work all the accuracy and perfection of which he was capable, he revised and re-wrote the copy three different times. In the plan and execution, however, of this edition of his works, there always appeared to the writer of this Memoir, a defect of judgment which was greatly to be lamented, and the author himself lived bitterly to bewail it. In the course of a few years, the art of printing, particularly in London, had undergone great improvements which were wholly disregarded by those who undertook the publication of this uniform edition; and having unfortunately set out upon a wrong plan, there remained no possibility of retrieving the error. Instead of issuing proposals for presenting the public with a handsome edition of his works, in five or six *Octavo* Volumes, corresponding to the improved taste of the age, the prospectus, contrary to the author's own better judgment, announced seven or eight (paltry) *Duodecimo's*, a thing which he never ceased to regret, when it was too late to rectify it; and as if that were not in itself sufficiently mortifying, the mechanical part of the undertaking—the paper and print, were still more censurable than the other parts of the plan. The result of the whole was, that though, after embarking in the undertaking, Mr. M'Lean found himself in honour bound to persevere and complete it, he had little satisfaction in it, and the work dragged on heavily through the last seven or eight years of his life, nor had it attained its completion when he was called away from all further active services about it.

It may not be amiss, however, to specify the contents of the six volumes which are now before the public, especially as some valuable pieces were introduced by the author, which have not been adverted to in this Section of the Memoir. VOL. I. comprises the “Apostolic Commission Illustrated.” Vol. II. An Essay on the Calls and Invidiations of the Gospel, with a Reply to some Animadver-

sions made upon the Essay—A Dissertation on the Influences of the Holy Spirit—Defence of the doctrine of Original sin—The Imputation of sin and righteousness, being a Paraphrase with Notes on Romans v. 12. to the end—A Dialogue between a Seceder and a Baptist, concerning the extent of the Gospel promise—and The Distinction and Consistency of Justification by Faith and Works; shewing the agreement of Paul and James on that subject. VOL. III. Letters to Mr. Glas in answer to his Dissertation on Infant baptism—A Defence of Believer's baptism as opposed to Infant sprinkling—Some Strictures on Mr. Carter's Remarks, in a letter to Mr. W. Richards of Lynne—A Letter to a correspondent, shewing that all the arguments for infant baptism are rendered null by the Pædobaptists themselves; and that there can be no positive divine Institution without express Scripture precept or example—Baptism must precede visible church fellowship—On the Divinity and Sonship of Christ—and The Evidence, import, and influence of Christ's resurrection. VOL. IV. consists entirely of Sermons on various important subjects, viz. The belief of the Gospel Saving faith—the Parable of the Sower—the Scripture doctrine of divine grace—the Economy of Redemption—the preferable happiness of being with Christ—the doctrine of Reconciliation—the Truth of the gospel Testimony and Promises—the great Object and end of the Prophetic Dispensation—and the Subjection of all nations to Christ. VOL. V. and VOL. VI. The Paraphrase and Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews. At the end of the sixth Volume, is added an APPENDIX, containing five distinct Essays or Dissertations, intended to illustrate more copiously than could be properly done in the Commentary, some important topics which had come under discussion. No. 1. Is on the double sense of Prophecy. No. 2. On the Administration of Angels previous to Christ's resurrection and exaltation. No. 3. On the commencement of the exercise of Christ's office as High Priest. No. 4. An Illustration of Heb. xii. 6—11. and No. 5. An Illustration of Heb. xii. 28, 29.

From what hath been already said respecting the care and labour bestowed by Mr. M'Lean on this " Commentary on the Hebrews," it may naturally be inferred that the work ought to possess superior merit; and that it does so no competent judge will deny. Though all his writings are valuable in my estimation, yet were I to make a preference it would certainly be in favour of this illustration of that grand portion of the sacred writings. The work has every thing to recommend it, that is calculated to do so. The grandeur, extent, and importance of the subject are undeniable; and in the discussion of it, the whole compass of Christian doctrine necessarily comes under consideration. I have heard him remark that the study of the Epistle to the Hebrews had done more to enlarge and expand his views of the economy of Redemption (a theme which angels contemplate with wonder and amazement) and also to establish his mind in the firm belief of it, than any other subject to which he had ever devoted his attention. It is true that Dr. Owen, Messrs. Peirce and Hallett, Macknight and others have trodden the ground before him; and though he did not disdain assistance from any of those authors, yet his plan and execution are so different from any and indeed from all of them, that the praise of originality cannot without injustice be refused him. The excellency of the publication consists not only in the success with which he has traced the inspired writer in all his positions and reasonings—followed him in every distinct idea, unfolding its import and illustrating its meaning, to the best of his ability, (for in the Preface to his Paraphrase he disclaims the supposition of having produced a faultless work) but also in the singularly condensed and compressed state in which all this is at the same time effected. But certainly in the talent of uniting simplicity with vigour, and conciseness with perspicuity, he has no rival in the English language. Dr. Owen's Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews, has lately been reprinted in Seven Octavo volumes, any one of which contains more reading than the whole of Mr. M'Lean's work on the same subject; yet, for every *useful* purpose, there is no comparison be-

tween the respective merit of the two publications. He has also left in manuscript a Commentary on the two Epistles to the Corinthians, and also on the Epistle to the Galatians, all of which are too valuable to be lost, and it is hoped they will meet the public eye at some future period.

Of the Sermons published by the author himself during his life-time, and which comprise the fourth volume of his printed Works, it has always appeared to the writer of this Memoir, that, with a few exceptions, they are liable to the defect of being overcharged with doctrinal sentiment. It is no difficult matter, indeed, to find an apology for the high contempt in which he was accustomed to hold the flimsy harangues, or if you please, the elegant declamation, which is continually issuing from the press in the shape of Sermons, by the butterflies of the present day that have been hatch'd or nurtured in Academic groves (*inter sylvas Academi*) and in which, rounded periods and great swelling words of vanity are made a *succedaneum* for the bread of eternal life. But after all, it seems possible to run into the opposite extreme. Were all Christians blessed with powers of attention and judgment equal to those which the author himself possessed, the complaint we are now making would instantly fall to the ground; but, alas, for one father in Christ that is to be found in the Christian church, there are unhappily ten babes who are incapable of digesting strong meat, and to whom milk alone is palatable. Heb. v. 12—14. This preponderance of doctrinal sentiment in our author's discourses was almost an unavoidable result from a long continued habit of compressing every thing he wrote into as few words as possible, paring excrescences, expunging expletives, and, to the utmost of his power, making the language of inspiration the vehicle through which he spake to his fellow mortals. There are indeed one or two exceptions in the volume of Sermons to which this reference is made. The Discourse on the parable of the Sower, and that also on the preferable Happiness of being with Christ, are not liable to the above complaint; and the style in which they are composed is full proof that their author was capable of a different mode.

of composition, had his judgment approved it. I may also remark that the Sermons which are contained in this Volume, and now first presented to the public, are far more exempt from the charge in question, than almost any other part of his writings—they are less laboured; the style is more free and animated; and on these very accounts I confidently anticipate their better reception with the religious public. This however is to be attributed principally to his not having himself prepared them for the press; they are in general the spontaneous effusions of his own richly furnished mind, committed to writing and preached in his own congregation; but had they passed a second time through the crucible they had doubtless lost in ease what they would have gained in solidity. I am not, however, certain that they would, on that account, have been more extensively useful. The Sermon on the Scripture doctrine of Divine Grace—that on the Economy of Redemption—a third on the doctrine of Reconciliation, with some others, all contained in the fourth volume of his WORKS, would, I humbly conceive, have been more appropriately designated “Dissertations” on those important topics than Sermons. They are, nevertheless, unspeakably valuable, and it would not be easy to find any thing in the English language, on those subjects, that is comparable to them.

I dismiss this brief review of our author's writings with remarking, that in collecting them into one body, a form in which they will no doubt descend to a remote posterity, he has shewn his solicitude to divest them as much as possible of a controversial air, and has omitted the republication of such pieces as could be considered of only temporary interest. For though he was much oftener called by a sense of duty to take up the weapons of controversy, than suited his inclination; and though he never failed to distinguish himself when thus urged to the combat; he was no ways anxious to perpetuate his victories, his utmost ambition being restricted to a defence of the cause of truth.

## SECTION VI.

*Mr. M'Lean's History continued to the period of  
his death.*



IN the year 1790, Mr. M'Lean sustained a heavy domestic calamity in the loss of his wife, who had been for some years considerably afflicted with asthma, especially during the winter season. Mrs. M'Lean had throughout life, exemplified all the excellent qualities that can adorn the female character. To great sensibility of heart, and active benevolence in her deportment, she united a clear and penetrating judgment respecting divine truth, and her remarkable piety commanded universal respect. She rejoiced in every opportunity that presented itself of feeding the hungry and clothing the naked; and the happiness she felt in thus ministering to the necessities of saints, often engrossed so much of her attention as to make her unmindful of her own wants and comfort. She was related by birth to some of the most ancient and powerful highland families in Scotland, her grandmother being the eldest daughter of M'Donald of Sanda. But though her society was sought after by females of considerable rank and distinction, she in general shrunk from the world, and sacrificed the pride of life to a conscientious conformity to the revealed will of God, in which she found greater satisfaction. Her companions were chiefly such as needed to have benefits conferred on them, and who repaid her assiduities by their delightful and refreshing conversation on that topic which stood fore-



most in her mind, the glories of her Redeemer, and the happiness of the saints in light. She was born in the isle of Arran, 1733, in the house of Drumlaboro, which was built by her own father, Mr. Moore, a merchant of Glasgow, on the estate of her grandfather, Hamilton of Cotts, and died at Edinburgh on the 14th Decr. 1790, in the 57th year of her age. The following letter, which was written by Mr. M'Lean, to her sister Mrs. M'Kinlay of Glasgow, on occasion of her decease, is so just a picture of her character, and at the same time exhibits his own resignation under the bereaving dispensation of Providence in so striking a light, that it would be unjust to all parties to omit its insertion.

*Edinburgh, Dec. 29, 1790.*

“ My dear Sister !

Scarcely had I been a week at home after my return from England, when I began to suspect that the time of my wife's departure was at hand. She continued, however, for three week's longer under very severe and increasing distress, and now has exchanged the imperfections and troubles of this life, for the blessedness of the dead who die in the Lord. The faith of the Son of God by which she lived during her pilgrimage here, was her support in passing through the valley and shadow of death. She spoke till within a very little of her departure in such a pleasant, joyful, and edifying manner, as deeply to affect a number that were about her, and to take away almost every impression of the gloomy aspect of death. In the sharpest conflict with that last enemy, she with a noble magnanimity triumphed over it, through the faith of him “ who liveth and was dead, and is alive for evermore, and has the keys of hell and of death,” words which she often repeated. Many of her words and ejaculations were lost at times through inability to speak above her breath; at other times she spoke audibly, and seemed to regret nothing so much as the want of strength to speak more abundantly to the praise

of the dear Redeemer. As for myself, my grief is almost swallowed up in the joyful and well grounded persuasion, that she is now with the Lord whom she supremely loved, and with whom she longed to be present. Death had scarcely made a pause in her song here, when she resumed it above with new and unabating ardour, and never-ending rapture and joy. How grand and glorious the transition! the thought of it may well make us forget every thing else. But alas! I am yet in the body. Reflections on my own loss frequently recur. The dear remembrance of a most tender and affectionate wife, my constant and faithful friend and companion for thirty two years—a judicious, zealous, and exemplary sister in the faith, who has so often counselled, quickened, and encouraged me in the Christian race—such reflections followed out in all their tender and affecting circumstances sometimes unman me a little in my solitary hours. But I must not indulge this selfish grief. I ought rather to be thankful that she was with me so long. My present loss is her unspeakable gain. Being found in Christ, she is not lost to me. I hope soon to join her in the blessed Assembly of the spirits of the just made perfect, where in connection with all the redeemed company JESUS and his SALVATION will be the everlasting center of our joy, and the burden of our song.

“ Such, dear Sister, is my consolation under this sharp but merciful dispensation, and such I hope is yours. I feelingly sympathise with you under your bodily distress, and my prayer is that your mind may be supported with the lively hope of a blessed immortality through the meritorious death, and triumphant resurrection of our glorious Redeemer.

I am &c.

*Archd. M'Lean.*



From this time to the period of his own death, an interval of more than twenty years, our author remained a widower. He had had a number of children, most of whom were taken

taken away in the earlier part of life, and only one of whom survived to smooth the evening of his declining days. This was a daughter, who had married Mr. Kerr, the deacon of the Baptist church in Glasgow, and who was snatched away from her by consumption in March, 1792, in the bloom of life, leaving her the widowed mother of four children. Soon after the death of her husband, Mrs. Kerr, anxious to contribute what was in her power to the accommodation of her honoured parent, removed with her four sons to Edinburgh, sacrificing many worldly advantages which were connected with her continuance in Glasgow, that she might minister to his comfort. Nor did her dutiful kindness rest there: she cheerfully contributed of her own property towards keeping a respectable house for her father, and in entertaining his brethren, when his own income was inadequate to meet the expence to which his public station in the church unavoidably exposed him.

The Baptist Mission to India was an undertaking which, at this time, engaged much of Mr. M'Lean's attention, and in furthering it he took a very lively interest. This, indeed, was only the legitimate consequence of his own views of the nature of the Gospel, and of our Lord's Commission to "Go into all the world, and preach (or proclaim) it to every creature;" and of his promise to be with his servants who are engaged in doing so, "always, even to the end of the world." For though the Scotch Baptists differ in some particulars from those of the same denomination in England, especially in what relates to the order and government of their churches, yet, being satisfied upon the whole that the Missionaries preach the faith of the Gospel, he considered it to be his duty to assist the Society which had been established for the support of the Mission, to the utmost of his ability.

Hitherto the cause was in its infancy in England, and no individual in Scotland had been stirred up to take any active measures in its behalf. But towards the close of the year 1795, Mr. M'Lean delivered a Discourse to the church and congregation among whom he laboured, founded upon Psalm,

xxii. 27, 28. "All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee; for the kingdom is the Lord's, and he is the governor among the nations." The effects of this Sermon were very considerable, and as the preaching and publication of it was followed up by "An Address to the People of God in Scotland, on the duty of using means for the universal spread of the Gospel of Christ," our Author's zeal happily stimulated all classes of his countrymen to co-operate in promoting the interest of the Baptist Mission to India. To augment its funds he set on foot contributions among the different churches with which he stood connected, and remitted the proceeds to Mr. Fuller.\* He also circulated information concerning the affairs of the Mission in every possible direction; and, perceiving that many persons were desirous of encouraging the translation of the Scriptures into the Oriental languages, who had scruples about co-operating with the Missionaries in preaching the Gospel, he delivered a Discourse in the Circus at Edinburgh, to a very numerous congregation, from 2 Tim. iii. 16. on the importance of the Holy Scriptures, and the duty of aiding the translation of them, and also disseminating the word of life throughout every nation, tongue, and people. On this occasion another collection was made amounting to about £100, and that he also remitted to Mr. Fuller for the use of the Society. Thus he had the honour of taking the lead in this good work in Scotland. His powerful talents stimulated Christians there of every denomination to unite their exertions; and he had the satisfaction before he died of seeing the subject of Missions to heathen lands as popular in his own country as it was in England. Such cordial co-operations, and vigorous exertions, tended greatly to strengthen the hands of the parent Society at Kettering; and Mr. Fuller did them the justice at all times to acknowledge, that to no class of Christians was the Mission more indebted

\* New Evan. Mag. Vol. II. p. 76.

than to the Scotch Baptists, whose liberality, he used to say, was unbounded.

As the occurrences now mentioned were well calculated to draw the attention of the people of England towards the Baptist profession in Scotland, which had hitherto attracted but little notice; and as Mr. M'Lean was himself convinced that it might eventually prove beneficial to both classes to cultivate a greater intimacy with each other, he drew up, in the year 1795, "A Short Account of the Scotch Baptists," which was inserted in Dr. Rippon's Baptist Register, Vol. II. p. 361, to which I have been indebted for several particulars mentioned in this Memoir. The sketch of their history is such, indeed, as I believe few writers would have drawn beside himself. He had often been disgusted with the system of puffing and parade which he had witnessed among religious people, (not excepting the English Baptists) and viewing this practice as in flat opposition to the genius and humbling tendency of the Christian religion, he thought proper to give an example of a different style of writing concerning these things. The dark side of the picture is, consequently, almost throughout the narrative, presented to the reader's view; and the colouring is continually of a sombre cast. This "Account" of their proceedings, therefore, was not very palatable to many of his own brethren in Scotland, who thought he might have omitted the mentioning of several things which he thought proper to dwell upon; and to have blazoned others of which he had taken no notice; but as he well knew that their own edification would be promoted, not in flattering their vanity, but by leading them to a *humbling* review of their history, he adopted that course which wisdom and experience must always dictate. After detailing the rise and progress of the Baptist profession in Scotland, he has, towards the close of the article, furnished an epitome of the doctrinal sentiments maintained among them, and of their social church order, which I think may be properly introduced in this place, and therefore I subjoin it.

“ As to their *principles*, they refer us to no human system as the unexceptionable standard of their faith. They think our Lord and his apostles used great plainness of speech in telling us what we should believe and practise; and hence they are led to understand a great many things more literally and strictly than those do who seek to make the religion of Jesus correspond with the fashion of the times, or the decent course of the world. They believe that the salvation of guilty, helpless sinners is first and last of sovereign free grace, and not of him that willeth or runneth.—That *Jesus* is the Saviour of his people from their sins—*the Christ*, or anointed prophet, priest, and king of his church—*the Son of God*, or the Word made flesh, God manifested in the flesh, the first-begotten of the dead, and constituted heir of all things—That by his life, death, resurrection, and ascension into the heavenly, holy place, with his own blood, he hath obtained eternal redemption for his people from the guilt, power, and all the consequences of sin, and procured for them everlasting life with himself from the dead—That men are justified freely by divine grace, without works of any kind, but solely through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whenever they really believe, or credit the testimony of God concerning his Son; which belief is not of themselves but the gift of God—That all who believe and are justified, have immediate peace with God in proportion to the degree of their faith: and joy in God through Jesus Christ, by whom they have now received the reconciliation—That the belief of the truth will work by love to God who hath first loved us, and to those who are of the truth for the truth’s sake which dwelleth in them; it will overcome the world, with all the allurements and tribulations thereof; and purify the heart, not only from the guilt of sin, but also from worldly lusts, such as the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, *i. e.* sensuality, covetousness, and ambition (which to a certain degree, they say, are considered as virtues in the Christian world, and even by many serious professors)—That in proportion as we

hold fast the faith, and are influenced by it to love God and keep his commandments, we shall have an increasing evidence of our interest in Christ, additional to what we had, on our first believing, and therefore ought to give all diligence to make our calling and election sure, and to shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end. Though they hold the doctrine of particular election, of God's unchangeable and everlasting love, and of the perseverance of the saints; yet they think it dangerous to comfort people by these considerations when they are evidently in a backsliding state. In this case, they think the Scripture motives to fear are most useful, and ought to have their full force, even the fear of falling away, and of coming short of the heavenly rest. They think it also unsafe, in such a case, to draw comfort from the reflection of our having *once believed*, it being their opinion, that we must be reduced to the mere mercy of God, through the atonement, which gave us relief at first. These appear to be their views of the leading doctrines of the Gospel, and of Christian experience.

“Their *church order* is strictly congregational, and, so far as they can discern, upon the apostolic plan, which is the only rule they profess to follow. The nature of their union requires that they should be strict and impartial in discipline, both to preserve purity of communion, and to keep clear the channels of brotherly love, that it may circulate freely throughout the body. They continue stedfastly every first day of the week *in the apostles' doctrine*, *i. e.* in hearing the Scriptures read and preached—and *in the fellowship*, or contribution—and *in breaking of bread*, or the Lord's Supper—and *in prayers*, and singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. The prayers and exhortations of the brethren are also admitted in their public meetings. They abstain from eating blood and things strangled, *i. e.* flesh with the blood thereof; because these were not only forbidden to Noah and his posterity, when the grant of animal food was first made to man, but also under the Gospel they are most solemnly

prohibited to believing Gentiles, along with fornication and things offered to idols. They think that a gaudy external appearance in either sex, be their station what it may, is a sure indication of the pride and vanity of the heart: that women professing godliness are not to adorn themselves with plaited or broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but with *modest* outward apparel, as well as with the inward adornments of the mind; also, that it is a shame for a man to have long hair, however sanctioned by the fashion. As to marriage, though they do not think that either of the parties being an unbeliever dissolves that relation, when once entered into, yet they hold it to be the duty of Christians to marry only in the Lord. They also consider gaming, attending plays, routs, balls, and some other fashionable diversions, as unbecoming the gravity and sobriety of the Christian profession.

“As to their political sentiments, they consider themselves bound to be *subject to the powers that be* in all lawful matters; to honour them, pray for them, and pay them tribute; and rather to suffer patiently for a good conscience, than in any case to resist them by force. At the same time, they are friendly to the rational and just liberties of mankind, and think themselves warranted to plead, in a respectful manner, for any just and legal rights and privileges to which they are entitled, whether of a civil or religious nature.”

There are few sentiments that cling more closely to the human breast, than the desire of spending the evening of our days in comparative ease and tranquillity, after having served our generation by the will of God, and sustained the buffetings and storms which in a world of sin and sorrow we are all in our measure destined to encounter. In the early part of life we fondly anticipate it as the solace of our declining years; and as these roll on we still naturally sigh for the enchanting vision. But of all men living, the Christian pastor, if he be in the spirit of his office, is perhaps the last who has any ground to indulge the flattering anticipation. As



the earthly happiness is forfeited by sin, Christianity forbids us to set our affections on any sublunary enjoyment, but directs our hopes and expectations to a future state for the fruition of that rest and peace which we vainly look for in this world of conflict and trouble. On a retrospect "of the days of the years of his pilgrimage," there was much in the success with which it had pleased God to crown his labours in the Lord's vineyard, that was calculated to console the mind and cheer the drooping heart of Mr. McLean, independent of the glorious Gospel which he believed to his salvation. Surveying the state of the Christian profession at this period, and contrasting it with what it was half a century before, when there was not a Baptist church in Scotland, he might be allowed to say with one of old, "What hath God wrought?" but still he knew that this was not his rest. As a follower of Christ, "he had not yet attained the mark of the prize of his high calling," but he followed after, in the confident hope of apprehending "that for which also he was apprehended of Christ Jesus." As a Christian pastor, too, he had frequently been engaged in warning his fellow-travellers to Zion, that it was "through much tribulation they must enter the kingdom of heaven. To his own brethren he had often said, "We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth; for we are glad when we are weak and ye are strong; and this also we wish, even your perfection," 2 Cor. xiii. 8, 9. When appointing persons to the pastoral office, he had sometimes adverted to the solemn warning of the Apostle—"Also of yourselves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them." All these painful things he was called to realize during the last ten years of his life, partly in the church under his own pastoral care, and partly in other societies with which he stood connected, and for whose welfare he was deeply solicitous. I have in a former Section adverted to the revolutionary principle of taking the Lord's Supper without a pastor, which got access into almost all the churches, and was the

source of much strife and confusion. This in itself was a matter of great distress to him; and when he found himself by a sense of duty called upon firmly to resist it, his conduct drew forth such a spirit of rancour from some of the leaders in these factious proceedings as might well excite his surprise. It is not my design in adverting to these unpleasant occurrences to open afresh the sluices of discord, or to rekindle the dying embers of animosity, nor yet to fix a stigma on individuals whose own sober reflections, it may be hoped, have long ere this done what a sense of duty requires of them in regard to these matters. My purpose is to shew how in these and other things that might be mentioned, Mr. McLean was called to exemplify in his conduct, to the latest period of life, the lessons of humility, self-denial, patience under injuries, and submission to the will of God, which in every part of his ministry and writings he had inculcated upon his brethren.

It has been adopted as a favourite maxim by some, that the pastors of Christian churches are to *go before the flock in every thing*. Although I never could subscribe to this dogma in its utmost latitude, yet I am fully persuaded that it is incumbent on persons in that office to be “examples to their brethren in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity,” 1 Tim. iv. 12. They are not to be lords over God’s heritage, but “ensamples to the flock” in every Christian virtue—to imitate the meekness and gentleness of Christ, and to consider themselves the servants of the church for Jesus’ sake. It was a noble spirit which was manifest in Paul when he said, “I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you the less I be loved.” But how rarely is this exemplified now a days. Modern times, I am persuaded, have produced not many instances of it more remarkable than what appeared in the subject of this Memoir. He knew how to make allowance for the waywardness of the human mind, and to manifest a patient and forgiving spirit under personal insults and the most

injurious treatment. In the discharge of his pastoral office, he had frequent occasion to oppose the stream of parties united together by family alliances or connections formed by worldly interest; and when these became linked together in groups to overwhelm the meek and defenceless he always stood forward to plead the cause of the latter and confound their adversaries. He used often to quote the maxim of Solomon—"The rich hath many friends; but the poor is hated even of his own neighbour." He naturally possessed a large portion of sensibility, which prompted him to feel most acutely for the weak and defenceless, when he perceived any thing that had the semblance of oppressing them; and when matters of this kind occurred among the members of the church, in the latter part of life, it greatly affected his nervous system. He had no other trials to embitter the evening of life, than such as arose from this source; but these were sometimes very painful to him and he felt them sensibly. About the middle of November, 1812, after a distressing case of discipline in the church, he was seized with a dimness in one of his eyes. Electricity was applied, but without any perceptible effect. He nevertheless continued his labours in the church, and preached as usual on the Lord's day, Dec. 6th. and on Monday evening visited a friend, from whom he returned home, not apparently worse. On the following day, he was seized with a want of feeling in his left hand, which, as it interrupted his studies and writing, made him rather uneasy. He tried the effect of a walk, but came home still considerably indisposed, and was evidently aware that the time of his departure was at hand. He uniformly manifested the greatest resignation to the will of God, and when his friends expressed their hope of his recovery, he would say, "I am an old man—this tabernacle must come down—it is falling away by degrees." He would then call their attention to the importance of considering their latter end, and to the unspeakable happiness of those who shall be "made pillars in the temple of God, to go no more out." Continuing

much indisposed, he omitted going to the meeting of the church on Tuesday evening. On Wednesday morning he did not rise at his usual time to breakfast, which induced his daughter, Mrs. Kerr, to go several times into his bed room; but he did not seem to take any notice of this, and appeared very much overcome with sleep. In this state he remained till 12 o'clock, when she awoke him, and enquired how he had slept. He answered in broken accents, "Very ill." She then put some other questions to him, and by his attempts to answer she was led to discover that he had received during the night a stroke of some disease resembling palsy. Medical assistance was immediately called for, and various methods employed to remove the stupor with which he was affected, and that kept him almost constantly asleep. The shock which he had sustained during the night had paralysed the whole of his left side. But the means employed for his recovery were ineffectual. Death was now at hand. He, however, survived a few days, during which he was occasionally alert and cheerful, and at other times quite overcome with sleep. As often as he was able to do it, he spoke of the kindness and condescension of God to his people, in "making all their bed in their sickness," thus quoting the forty-first Psalm, on several parts of which he commented with much energy and emphasis. The disorder was found beyond the power of medicine or the surgical art to relieve, and the hour of his dissolution drew rapidly nigh; to him no doubt an hour of joyful release from the troubles of life, the infirmities of nature, and a body of sin and death. He had fought a good fight, his course was now finished, he had kept the faith; and was about to possess that crown which he had long contemplated with joyful hope, and to which he had often directed the attention of others. On the morning of the Sabbath, Dec. 20th, he grew more visibly worse; in the evening the struggle of dissolving nature was apparent, and at one o'clock on Monday morning he exchanged this mortal state for the happiness of the saints in light. Like a

tree that for many years had blossomed, and borne fruit in this wilderness, his root is now transplanted into a better climate and a more genial soil, there to bloom in perpetual vigour, unaffected by wintry blasts, or the sultry heats of summer, through the countless ages of eternity. His remains were interred on Thursday, Dec. 24th, in the West churchyard burying-ground, near the middle of the high ground, on the left side of the entrance from the South.

No sculptur'd marble marks the place ;  
 No weeping willow waves its head,  
 To tell the stranger what he was,  
 That moulders there among the dead.

The following paragraph appeared in several of the newspapers at the time :

“ Died at Edinburgh, on the 21st of December, 1812, in the 80th year of his age, ARCHIBALD M'LEAN, Pastor of the Baptist church. He was known by his writings to many, though comparatively familiar to few. A man whose time was chiefly devoted to the study of the sacred Volume, in which he took great delight. Age had not impaired those clear and acute faculties of mind for which he was so eminently distinguished, and which he enjoyed till the commencement of his last short illness. During his life here he gave the most gratifying proof of that noble confidence in God, and the hope of immortality with which true Christianity alone can inspire the soul, and support it both in life and death.”

The affecting intelligence of his decease was communicated by a circular letter from Mr. Braidwood, one of his colleagues in the pastoral office, to the different churches in the connection, most of whom testified their unfeigned respect to his memory, and their sorrow for his departure, by addresses to the Edinburgh church, copies of which the reader will find in the Appendix to this Memoir.\* On the following

\* See APPENDIX, No. 5.

Sabbath (Dec. 27th) this afflictive dispensation of Providence was suitably improved to the church, late under his pastoral care, in a discourse delivered by Mr. W. Peddie, another elder, from Hebrews, xiii. 7, 8. "Remember them who have had the rule over you; who have spoken unto you the word of God; whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." And as he has obligingly favoured me with a sketch of it, I am happy in presenting to the Reader an extract from it in the Appendix.\* I shall close this Memoir, by a feeble attempt to delineate his character and talents; for though he himself be far removed beyond the reach of praise or censure, and is no doubt alike indifferent to either, we may surely indulge the hope that his example will continue to administer instruction to others, while the fruits of his pen remain to edify the church of Christ to the latest posterity.

\* APPENDIX, No. 6.



## SECTION VII.

### *An Estimate of his Character and Talents.*



IN attempting to preserve for the benefit of posterity something like a moral and intellectual resemblance of our Author, his Biographer feels that he is entering upon a task of no inconsiderable difficulty, part of which arises from the subject itself, and part also from the liability under which he labours of having his judgment perverted by his affections, and of thus substituting panegyric in the place of history. Whatever of this latter description the reader may detect, he is requested to make the necessary allowance for, and to attribute it, not to the wish of eulogising the deceased, but to the warmth of personal friendship, which by the very constitution of our nature, is apt, more or less, to mingle itself with our convictions and feelings.

That we may obtain a correct estimate of Mr. M'Lean's character and talents, it will be necessary to consider the subject under distinct lights ; and in particular to survey him as A MINISTER of the everlasting Gospel, and sustaining the pastoral office—then as exemplifying the CHRISTIAN character—and afterwards as an AUTHOR. But though this analytical method of examining the subject will certainly afford the most ample range of illustration, we ought not to forget that the greatness of a man's character consists in the high degree of excellence to which he has attained in all the several stations he was called to move in, rather than in

the exalted superiority with which he filled any single department.

We have already seen that Mr. M'Lean was called to the work of the ministry in the year 1768, at which time he was about thirty-five years of age, and that he continued an indefatigable labourer in the Lord's vineyard to the close of 1812, a period of five and forty years. His acquired advantages in qualifying him for the arduous undertaking were few and easily told. Of the benefits resulting from an academical education, if any such really exist, which I own I greatly question, he had not availed himself: and even of years of experience as a private member of a Christian church, a school in which much useful knowledge pertaining to the pastoral office is certainly to be gained, he was not so fortunate as to have partaken. The church with which he united was itself in its infancy, and he had not been many months connected with it, ere he was called to take the oversight in the Lord. In point of classical literature too he was in a great measure self-taught. It is necessary to state these things at the outset, and to keep them in mind while we estimate his character; for it is only by looking back to the smallness of his beginnings, and tracing the various degrees by which he gradually arose to the eminent station which in process of time he attained, that we can form any proper view of this matter. Some other considerations, also, are too important to be here omitted. In the present state of Christian society, in our highly favoured country, we assuredly possess many advantages of which our author, *at that day*, was in a great measure deprived. The last half century has been remarkable for nothing so much as the rapid and extensive diffusion of religious knowledge. By means of the collision of sentiment among different parties, truth has been elicited, and a wonderful alteration produced in the style of both preaching and writing on Evangelical subjects; and towards effecting this, I cannot but regard our author's own productions from the press as having contri-



buted quite as much as the labours of any one of his contemporaries. To estimate his progress, therefore, we must survey the ground from which he started, as well as the goal at which he arrived ; and we must connect with these things the additional consideration that for twenty years after he entered upon the work of the ministry he supported himself and family by means of a secular employment. The writers in favour of primitive Christianity were, half a century ago, but few in number ; and even to those many exceptions were to be made in respect of some particular sentiments held by them ; so that our Author had to explore his path by the light of the New Testament, and debate almost every inch of his way by the pen of controversy.

It will probably now be expected that I endeavour to delineate his character as the pastor of a Christian church, and then proceed to ascertain the point of altitude at which the subject of this Memoir had arrived when he was called up from his labours in the church militant to join the general assembly and church of the first-born. But gratifying as this would be to my own feelings, I am happy to be spared that task by the far abler manner in which it is already done by Mr. Peddie in the Sermon preached on occasion of his decease, as before mentioned, and which the reader will find at the end of this Memoir.\* Besides, were he now personally on earth, the pen would be checked by his own remonstrance, which I conceive would be couched in something like the following terms : “ I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry,” 1 Tim. i. 12.—“ Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,” Eph. iii. 8.—“ By the grace of God I am what I am ; and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain, but I laboured more abundantly than many ; yet *not I*,

\* See the APPENDIX, No. 6.

*but the grace of God, which was with me,"* 1 Cor. xv. 10.—  
“For who maketh thee to differ? and what hast thou which thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it,” 1 Cor. iv. 7. The sentiment contained in these various texts conspicuously marked his conversation while a sojourner in this world, and it were absurd to suppose that his happy spirit is less in unison with it now that he has entered into the joy of his Lord.

Mr. McLean has left behind him writings in abundance, from which posterity may judge of his attainments both as an Author and as a Minister of the Gospel of peace; and were there no other fruits of his pen remaining, *the Sermons contained in this Volume are amply sufficient for that purpose.* Let the reader, who feels any interest in the enquiry, peruse them with attention, comparing them with the oracles of God. Let him carefully remark the extent, the variety, and the compass of sentiment, both doctrinal and practical, which is elucidated in them; and having done so, let him then ask himself and others where, in the whole round of the English language, he can find these important and highly interesting topics so ably and scripturally illustrated. Even the single Sermon “on the Assurance of Hope,” were it but properly attended to, and the sentiments contained in it allowed to regulate the preaching of the generality of ministers of the present day, would rid the Christian world of loads of Hyper-Calvinism and of corrupt theology. Instead, therefore, of expatiating upon the eminence to which our author had actually attained, the profit of the reader may be more effectually secured by marking the steps which led him to it; and thus by converting his history into an example for our imitation. And here I cannot but place foremost in the list of things which contributed to his eminence as a minister of the New Testament,

*The delight which he invariably took in studying the Holy Scriptures.* This was a necessary consequence of the

views which he entertained of their importance and excellency. He could truly say with the Psalmist, "O how love I thy law; it is my meditation all the day—Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever; for they are the rejoicing of my heart," Psalm, cxix. 97, 111. Regarding the inspired writings as a revelation of the divine mind and will on the things that related to his eternal peace, he received them with dutiful submission and reverence as the very words of the living and true God: and he rejoiced "at this word as one that findeth great spoil," *ib.* 163. The constant and diligent study of the Scriptures, therefore, was through life the first object of his pursuit; and he reaped the reward of it in the consolation and joy which it imparted to his own mind. "The word of God dwelt in him *richly* in all wisdom," and he thus became eminently qualified to teach and to admonish others. Human writings he could read; and if they contained the things that were consonant to sound doctrine; if they tended to cast light upon any obscure parts of the word of God, he cheerfully availed himself of their aid; but they were always read in a due degree of subordination to the law and the testimony—to the doctrine of Christ and his apostles. No part of the Scriptures was neglected by him; for while he considered that "all Scripture was given by inspiration of God, and that it is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness; consequently able to make the man of God (or Christian minister) perfect, thoroughly furnishing him to every good work," he considered it culpable to slight any portion of it. This regard to *the whole* will of God, had a natural tendency to enlarge and expand the powers of his mind, so as to make him comprehend in a more abundant measure, "the breadth, and length, and height, and depth," of the revealed will of God, and the result was to "fill him with the knowledge of the will of God, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding," Col. i. 9. The sacred Scriptures became the standard to which every thing that engaged his intellectual powers was submitted; and it

was either approved or condemned as it corresponded thereunto. The effects of this intimate acquaintance with the word of God were conspicuous in his conversation, his preaching, and his writings; all of which not merely derived a raciness and flavour from being thus tinged or impregnated with the oracles of truth, but the latter engrossed such an ascendancy in his mind, his judgment, and his affections, that it became as natural to him to deliver his sentiments on divine things in language borrowed from divine revelation, as it was for him to breathe the vital air. Well might Mr. Fuller say of him, that he was "an acute reasoner and mighty in the Scriptures." He used to remark, that there is a dignity and majesty in the language of inspiration, adapted to reach conviction to the understandings and hearts of men, which no other phraseology, however elegant and refined, could fairly pretend to; and he consequently made it his continual study to adopt it in preference to any other, as the vehicle of communicating religious instruction, whether from the pulpit or the press. This is so obvious in all his writings, that I need not take time to prove it. And in this respect he exhibited a pattern which it would be well if others engaged in the same sacred service would imitate. Instead of obtruding *himself* upon the notice of the hearer or reader, his great concern always was to *retire into the background* as much as possible, and to let Christ or his apostles and prophets speak, through the words of Scripture, to the consciences and hearts of men.\* Thus he became a Scribe

\* A writer can often more successfully illustrate his meaning by a short example than could be done in many pages of didactic instruction. The following paragraph from a very recent publication strikingly exemplifies a fault of which Mr. McLean often complained in both preachers and writers; a fault, which he was particularly solicitous to avoid in his own conduct, and against which he often cautioned his younger brethren in the ministry. It is the pompons, consequential air of the preacher, that is referred to.

"The sufferings of Christ strike *me*, very soberly, as being very

well instructed into the mysteries of the kingdom, and at all times able to bring out of the treasures of the divine word things both new and old.

Another thing which contributed its influence, in raising our Author to eminence, was *his inflexible attachment to the cause of truth*. Divine truth, or the Gospel of Christ, in which he found all his own salvation—immutable truth in all its multifarious bearings, was an object ever near his heart. He preached it with singular simplicity and energy, in a style adapted to all capacities, equally remote from vulgarity on the one hand, and from refinement on the other. It was the great thing, too, for which he contended in all his writings. *Let the truth live*, was the motto that invariably regulated his conduct, and to defend it he was ever prepared to sacrifice the enjoyments of life, and even life itself were he called to it. Attachment to the righteous cause of truth, was the standard also by which his friendships were regulated; and a company of beggars united together by the truth, living under its influence, and loving one another for its sake, would have been *honourable* in his eyes, while the first society in the land for rank and splendour, destitute of a relish for the saving truth, would have possessed no charms for him. It was the

great. *I am*, upon the principles and point *I am* endeavouring to lay before you, *I am* a Christian (as far as *I am* one) because *I cannot* help it. *I am* so convinced, *I am* so struck, *I am* so satisfied, that the hand of God must be in this scene, that the light is irresistible to me. It is not by way of courtesy, but by way of conviction, *I speak* these things; and *I can face* any man in the world upon the subject. *I beg no excuse* at his hands. *I am confident* there is no medium; *I am confident* the gospel is worth every thing or nothing. Either the character of Christ is the most glorious or the most infamous. And when these things run so wide *I wish* you to see what is supporting on the subject, and that you will consider the sufferings of the Son of God." VIDE, *Sermons by the Rev. John Martin, of London*, in 2 Vols. 8vo. 1817. Vol. II. p. 429. An unprejudiced reader can be at no loss to determine whether, in this paragraph, the sufferings of the Son of God, or the consequence of the preacher be the more *prominent* object? And the extract is not an unfair specimen of the whole work.

love of truth that strengthened and invigorated all the powers of his mind, gave a noble intrepidity to his conduct, and always rendered him prompt to follow wherever the celestial torch led him. It was the fixed resolution of abiding by the truth that "placed him between two fires," as he once remarked to me, "he had all his life-time been." For, setting out with a determination to call no man master on earth, and to yield his convictions to nothing but the evidence of truth, he was now called to make a stand against the high church party, and now against the still higher followers of Mr. Glas. But as truth and a good conscience will always give a man confidence, he pursued the even tenor of his way, and with all the powers of an enlightened and vigorous mind, maintained the cause of God and truth against many opposers, "until a little one became a thousand, and a small one a strong city:" the Lord hastened it in his own good time.

One thing more which I must mention as contributing in no small degree to establish his reputation, was *the noble independence of his mind*. This not only raised him superior to all the little paltry artifices by which men court popularity, but it enabled him to look down upon the world with disdain, as an object unworthy of his attention and solicitude. Making God the supreme object of his fear and hope, he was also the center of his best affections; and *his glory*, consequently, became the ultimate end of all his actions. He sought not his own honour, nor the honour which cometh from man; and, to use his own expression, "he thought very little of the flattering breath and esteem of ignorant erring mortals, or of all the phantastical vanishing splendour of this world;" his views were directed forward to the glory which is to be revealed at the appearing of Jesus Christ. This independent state of mind rendered him content with what it is to be feared the generality of ministers would have considered a very scanty allowance, and it freed him from all the mean and disingenuous artifices which are so commonly resorted to by the clergy for augmenting their salaries and bettering their worldly

circumstances. It enabled him also to discharge his official duties in the ministry of the word with fidelity to the souls of men, without meanly courting their smiles or servilely fearing their frowns; and the effect was sometimes not a little remarkable amongst his own brethren. When the church had increased, and risen into what is commonly called "a flourishing state," having several rich members among them, he considered it his duty to be pretty plain in enforcing the scriptural admonitions against *covetousness*, and would at times come home to the conscience so closely, that some of them could not bear such hard sayings, and a hint would be dropped that there was no occasion to be so *pointed* about matters—the subject might be treated of in a general way! He would listen silently to these sage admonitions without appearing to notice them; and on the ensuing sabbath some such text as the following was sure to be the subject of his Discourse: "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine," &c. 2 Tim. iv. 3. And thus by manifestation of the truth he commended himself to the consciences of his hearers as in the sight of God.

I shall not here attempt any more minute description of him as a minister of the word and elder of a Christian church, but refer the reader to the masterly sketch with which we have been favoured of this part of the subject by his friend and colleague, Mr. Peddie, as inserted in the Appendix to this Memoir. We shall now, therefore, proceed to a few miscellaneous reflections on his more private character as a Christian. And under this view the particular traits in his deportment, on which I should wish to fix attention, are those of HUMILITY AND SELF-DENIAL—SPIRITUALITY OF MIND, and disconformity to the world—and CANDOUR in judging and speaking of others.

Mr. M'Lean was a man whose life in a very peculiar manner exhibited the influence of genuine Christianity. The doctrine of the cross—the grand theme of his ministry—a doctrine which stains the pride of all human glory, had a pow-

-erful practical influence upon the whole of his sentiments and actions. "If the gospel of the grace of God have any salutary influence whatever upon us," he used to say, "it must surely produce *humility*; it must abase us in our own eyes, and hide pride from man." This was evidently the effect which it had upon himself, as every part of his deportment testified. No attentive reader of his printed works can fail to perceive how strongly they inculcate this temper of mind, as the genuine and never failing tendency of receiving the *true* grace of God. But we all know how much easier it is to exhort others to this duty than to practise it ourselves; and it is painful to add, that of the different classes of men into which society is divided, there is perhaps not one more demonstrably deficient in the practical exercise of humility and self-denial than those who by office are engaged in enforcing them upon others. Exceptions no doubt there happily are, and the subject of this Memoir was a striking proof of it. In the year 1793, the College of Rhode Island, in America, thought proper to confer upon him *an honorary degree* in consequence of his writings; but he declined taking any notice of it; and the only effect it had upon him was to lead him to pity the childishness of those who transmitted it. Nor did the popularity which he lived to acquire by means of his writings, produce the least apparent alteration in his deportment. He rose in the public estimation without any effort or wish on his part; but his intercourse with the church and the world continued to be characterized by the same humble and condescending behaviour, that had distinguished him when an obscure individual and unknown to fame. The writer of this Memoir has had many opportunities of witnessing how nobly he could "condescend to men of low estate." To see a man whose powers of mind and literary attainments qualified him for associating with the ablest philosophical and scientific characters of the age, denying himself to the pride of life, cultivating the most endearing familiarity with the poor of Christ's flock, visiting them in their humble habi-



tations, and always content with their homely fare; accommodating himself to the rudeness of their speech, and, by his edifying conversation, establishing their faith and hope in the gospel, and encouraging them in their way Zion-ward, was a spectacle not only gratifying in itself, but one that was calculated to reach conviction to the mind that there is a reality in true religion—a power in godliness beyond the pomp of words, or the boasted professions of many.

Another remarkable trait in the character of our author, was his *spirituality of mind*, which discovered itself by a conversation richly impregnated with the savour of divine things. It was said of a late eminent statesman that you could not stand with him half an hour under a gateway in a shower of rain, without perceiving by his conversation that you were in the company of one of the greatest men of the age. Although I should deem it quite extravagant to speak of the subject of this Memoir in similar terms, I may be permitted to say that I always thought his superiority to men in general appeared full as conspicuous in his conversation, as by either his writings or preaching. The extent of his information on general subjects was considerable; but his great *forte* was the knowledge of the Scriptures, and his peculiarly happy talent at illustrating them in a manner the most free and familiar that can be conceived. But there was nothing about him that ever surprised me more than the order and regularity in which his knowledge lay in his mind. For whatever were the subject you entered upon with him, if the object was information, you were sure to obtain it. He would take up the matter from the beginning, and place before you the doctrine of the Scripture concerning it in the most luminous point of view; unfolding and simplifying it so successfully that you were ready to say, this is all that can be said to purpose on the subject. But then it was always done without pedantry and affectation—there was no pomp of words—no display of superiority—nothing of the dictator. Never was there a man more free from the solemn grimace which cha-

racterises a certain class of ministers, whose ultimate object in conversation is easily perceived to be, not *your* profitable instruction, but an exhibition of *their* greatness. And as his own mind was richly imbued with the savour of divine things, it was his delight to converse upon them. True, indeed, they were never forced upon you by constraint; it was more agreeable to him that others should start the conversation; but if the profit of his brethren rendered the introduction of a subject necessary, he would himself introduce it by asking the opinion of some individual present on a topic which would lay a foundation for it—perhaps the meaning of a text of Scripture; and thus you were gently led into a strain of richly edifying conversation. I remember many years ago introducing him to the acquaintance of a religious family who resided at some distance from the place of my own habitation, and with whom, at their request, he spent a few days. The heads of the family were members of a Baptist church, and had a very near relative in the ministry. When I next saw them they knew not how to express the admiration and delight they had experienced in the society of my friend—“For once in their lives they had been privileged with seeing the Christian character exemplified in real life!” Such was their very language, and such the impression that was made upon their minds by a short acquaintance with the subject of this Memoir. For myself, I shall merely add, that I never have entered so fully into the meaning of the exclamation of the two disciples at Emmaus, (Luke, xxiv. 32.) as when I have been engaged in close conversation with him in my own family, whether during the hour of breakfast, or in the stillness of the evening. It was at these refreshing seasons that I think I learned *experimentally* what is meant by “the heart burning within us while the Scriptures are opened to the understanding.” But I must check this prolific pen, and therefore I remark that,

The subject of this Memoir was one of the most *candid*

men living, in his judgment of other persons, and remarkable for his cautious manner in speaking concerning them.\*

\* Dr. Ryland, in his Memoir of Mr. Fuller, p. 434, has the following words: "I once had a very pleasant interview with M'Lean, and sincerely respect his memory, as a very worthy, good man, whose talents were highly respectable; but this is no reason that I should scruple to avow, that I considered him in these points, [relating to the nature of faith] to have been mistaken; though on some other particulars he dissented from Mr. Sandeman, and ably opposed him."

As a friend of Mr. M'Lean's I feel obliged to Dr. Ryland for the honourable testimony that he has borne to his character in the former part of this extract. It would have afforded me a sensible gratification could I have returned the compliment by saying as much of Mr. Fuller. I was once, and only once, about half an hour in his company; but it was *not* "a pleasant interview." His conversation was a string of bitter invective against the Scotch Baptists, with whom he knew I was connected; and I frankly confess that its effects upon my mind were such as to afford me no very favourable prepossession of his temper and spirit. I will venture to affirm, that sooner than have treated any of Mr. Fuller's connections with a similar *voluntary*, Mr. M'Lean would have forfeited his right hand. Yet I greatly respect Mr. Fuller's talents and piety.

Having mentioned Dr. Ryland's Memoir of his friend, I cannot prevail upon myself to dismiss the subject without a remark or two upon it. I most cheerfully adopt the Doctor's own words, p. 293. and say, "I do not wish unnecessarily to offend any person or any party of Christians, but truth ought to be dearer to me than any thing that can be placed in competition with it." I complain of the Doctor's Memoir, that it is not calculated to subserve the cause of truth, but to promote a party spirit—not to conciliate, but to widen the differences among Christians. His statements are in general *ex parte*, and not always characterized by the candour and impartiality which he professes. No attentive reader can peruse his book without perceiving that there is a class of sentiments which he denominates "Sandemanianism," and that are prominently held up by him in no very inviting point of view! Now, whether these opinions be right or wrong, they are entitled to justice, to equity, and a candid construction. But will any man be hardy enough to affirm that they have experienced this treatment at the hands of Dr. Ryland? Mr. Fuller meets with a warm Sandemanian, and they have a sharp set to! The account is given by Mr. Fuller himself, who was quite competent to bestow a *colouring*

This amiable trait was in him a religious principle which diffused its influence throughout every part of his conduct and conversation, whether in the church or the world. It induced him cautiously to avoid whatever had the appearance of being cynical and censorious—invariably to put the most candid construction upon things which their circumstances would admit of—and to make all the necessary allowances which he should himself wish or expect, were the case his own. This liberality of mind tended to qualify him in an eminent degree for conducting cases of discipline in the church, for reconciling differences among brethren, and promoting concord and harmony. We must not, however, con-

on his opponent's sentiments, and Mr. Fuller *of course* uniformly has the better of the argument! It would be strange indeed if the case were not so, *as reported by Mr. Fuller himself*. It is very possible to find an apology for Mr. F. in writing these things *confidentially* to his friends for their amusement; but I must leave it to others to make out Dr. Ryland's justification in retailing these *ex parte* statements through the medium of the press. I question if there be a "Sandemanian" in all Scotland that would have acted such a part towards Mr. Fuller or his friends. If this note should give offence to any, I am sorry for it; but Dr. Ryland is the assailant.

One word more, and I quit this disagreeable topic. The principal outcry against this said Sandemanianism is, that it denies the faith of the gospel to include *in its nature*, love, or the exercise of the affections—yet these same Sandemanians make no account of any man's faith that does not "work by love," as its genuine operative tendency. Now so long as this is the case, one is at a loss to see the ground of all this clamour against them. In deference to the plain letter of Scripture, they contend that faith, hope, and love are *three* in their own natures: but if, according to Mr. Fuller and Dr. Ryland, faith includes love, or the exercise of the affections, then, does it not seem to follow, that it cannot, in strict propriety of speech, be said to *work by it*? for that would be making it to work by itself, or to produce itself—a thing which is neither philosophically just in expression, nor consistent with the immutable nature of things. So that, after all, if the Scripture is to stand—*viz.* that faith, hope, and love are *three*; and that faith operates by love, it must still be as these Sandemanians say upon this subject!

found it with weakness, pusillanimity, or that kind of courtesy which would barter truth, or sacrifice principle for the sake of peace, and shew itself equally complaisant to truth and error. So far from it, that no man could be more determined, I might say, who could use greater sternness, when the occasion appeared to him to demand it. But having studied to form his conversation on the precepts of the gospel, his conduct exemplified much of "the wisdom that is from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." Nor can I dismiss this particular topic, without remarking how strikingly this candid state of mind manifested itself in the readiness with which he would always listen to the efforts of his Christian brethren, however feeble, in exhorting and edifying one another in the public meetings of the church. We always judge of things most accurately by comparison. Among the English Dissenters the minister is almost every thing. He is commonly the bond of union among the members; and to him is committed the conducting of every part of their public worship excepting that of singing. He reads the Scriptures, is the sole organ of the church's prayers, and he alone dispenses to them the word of life. A long continued custom has now sanctioned this monopoly of the gifts in the body of Christ; and it may with truth be affirmed, that in general the churches have no idea of the Apostle's meaning, when he speaks of "the whole body being fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual *working in the measure of every part*, so as to make increase of the body, *to the edifying of itself in love*," Eph. iv. 16. As there were many things peculiar to the first Christian churches, they seem to suppose that this might be one! And certain it is that the constitution and order of worship in modern churches cuts out the possibility of the thing intended in the Apostle's words. The usual plea is, that were the primitive institution of a plurality of pastors in each church to be adhered to,

the pastors might be jealous of each other, or the members be divided into parties and factions, each having its favourite preacher. All this is probable enough, but has the Scripture provided no remedy for this evil? Look at the Corinthian church; it was split into parties, as much as any modern church can be. One was for Paul, another for Apollos, a third for Peter, and a fourth for Christ. But what says the great Apostle of the Gentiles to this state of things? Does he recommend it to them to cure the evil by having only one preacher, or by setting aside the exercise of all the other gifts which Christ had bestowed on them? Far otherwise; on the contrary he tells them plainly that all these evils sprang from their *carnality*—"their envying, and strife, and divisions shewed that they were yet carnal, and walked as men," 1 Cor. iii. 3, 4. But then he points them to a sovereign remedy for this carnal state of things—he leads all their minds afresh to the cross—places full in their view the doctrine of *Christ crucified*; that humbling, self-abasing doctrine, so confounding to all the pride of the human heart—that doctrine, which, though a stumbling block to the Jews, and foolishness to the Greeks, was the power of God to their salvation. And as to the comparative merits of their preachers, he reprobates the folly of converting this into a source of discord; for who was Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, but ministers by whom they believed, even as the Lord granted his blessing on their labours. Mr. M'Lean entered fully into these views; he had no rivalry with his colleagues in the pastoral office, nor with any of his brethren in the ministry. The malignant principles of envy and jealousy were strangers to his bosom; and if he discovered traces of them in others he was the first to bear his testimony against them and to counteract their operation. He was ever ready to *receive* the word of exhortation from his private brethren, and the "truth spoken in love" by the stammering tongue, was always listened to by him, not merely without impatience, but with marked indications of pleasure and satisfaction.

I need not enlarge much on his qualifications as an *Author*. Though he made no pretensions to critical accuracy in his compositions, and though the fulness of his mind with the subjects on which he wrote, seldom left him at leisure to polish his periods, he had habitually accustomed himself so much to correctness, that if his thoughts were committed to writing at all, they needed very little revision for the press; and of this we have a striking proof in the following Sermons, which, though not prepared by himself for the press, yet required but very trifling corrections. Though he could stand up and deliver an extempore discourse without notes, yet it was rarely his practice to do so. He had, from the outset of his ministry, addicted himself to the practice of writing his Sermons, not altogether at full length, but a pretty copious outline of them; and of this he usually availed himself in the pulpit. The consequence was, that his Sermons had much the air, peculiarities, and advantages of written compositions. They were lucid in their order, rich with doctrinal sentiment, close to the point, correct in reasoning, sentiment, and diction. It has sometimes struck me that he would have been more interesting as a public speaker, if he had never carried his manuscript into the pulpit, or had left more to be supplied at the moment. There were times when he seemed to hamper himself by his notes, which gave a stiffness to his method and expression. Had he not clipped his wings so closely in his early days, it is probable, from the rich and exhaustless stores of his mind, that he might have soared to a greater elevation as a preacher in his mature age. But he was content to sacrifice the graces of elocution and the delight of his hearers, to the more important and useful ends of caution and their edification. The qualities of his writings, or, if I may be indulged in the term, their excellency consists in their being PLAIN, NERVOUS, PRACTICAL, and ILLUSTRATIVE.

The first praise of good writing is certainly due to *plainness* and perspicuity. There were no authors in the English language whose writings, I believe, Mr. McLean had read

with more satisfaction, in the general, than those of Dr. Owen and Mr. Glas. Yet his style bears no resemblance to the style of either of them. The former is remarkable for his tediousness and prolixity; the latter is generally perplexed and involved—awkward in the structure of his sentences, and consequently obscure; and were not his dullness in some measure compensated by the excellence of his sentiment, he would be intolerably wearisome. I have often fancied that in our author's first production, his "Letters to Mr. Glas," I could trace some little affinity to the style of that author; but if ever he was so unfortunate as to have insensibly imbibed any thing like a partiality for it, he very soon got rid of it; for all his other publications are distinguished by simplicity in the structure of their sentences, and plainness in his diction.

Nor is the style less characterized by its *nervousness* and compression. It is never feeble; rarely diluted by expletives; and for ordinary readers may occasionally be rather thought to err on the contrary side. I have often reflected on a reproof which I am persuaded he with great kindness dealt out to myself at a very early part of my *literary* life; and I mention it because it is so characteristic of my friend's faithful way of giving useful advice. I had written a paragraph of about *ten* lines for the press, which I submitted to his inspection—"Yes," said he, "this *may* do; but I would have expressed in five lines the whole of what you have said there." I instantly began to consider what superfluous words he would have lopped off; and if I have since attained to any little portion of talent in composition, I assuredly owe it to that hint!

I have mentioned as another excellence of his writings their *practical* tendency. All of them, indeed, are full of evangelical doctrine; but then he never discusses a doctrine without deducing from it strict practical conclusions, and closely applying them to the conscience. It has been supposed by some who knew little about him, that he was a dry,



doctrinal, didactic preacher, fond of discussing abstruse and metaphysical points, but very little solicitous about the practical part of religion. A more mistaken opinion of him, however, could scarcely be formed. If he found fault with the prevailing systems of theology that are current in our day, the system of ethics which is founded upon them appeared to him still more defective, and of course reprehensible. A profession of Christianity which accommodates itself to the decent course of this world; which allows its abettors to pursue the world as their portion; to be conformed to it in its lusts and maxims; and in short, to shrink from the cross, he considered to be altogether hypocritical and vain. Though a belief of the doctrines of the everlasting gospel is absolutely essential to change the heart, and to principle men for the active duties of the Christian life, yet all our author's writings are directed to form the Christian character upon the holy and self-denied *precepts* of the gospel, and to expose the vanity and danger of all pretensions to be the followers of Christ, that are not justified by obedience to his revealed will. But the Sermons contained in this Volume afford so fine an illustration of this subject, that it is quite unnecessary for me to enlarge further upon it. I pass on, therefore, to notice, that,

The crowning excellence of his writings arises from the successful manner in which they *illustrate* the various doctrines and duties of the Christian life. Without the formality of system they may be almost pronounced to embrace the whole compass of divine truth, both doctrinal and practical; an encyclopædia of Christian knowledge, in which its doctrines are clearly stated and unfolded; disentangled from the corrupt glosses that had obscured their native lustre; and placed in their beautiful order and connection with each other. It would be difficult to mention a subject connected with the gospel of salvation which has been left untouched by his pen, or one that, having touched, he has failed to place in the noon-day light of the New Testament. The distin-

gushing qualities of his mind were VIGOUR, COMPREHENSION, SAGACITY, JUDGMENT, FIRMNESS, PROMPTITUDE, and ORDER.

Whatever the subject might be that presented itself to his attention, he always grasped it with a firm and *vigorous* hold, and the strength of his mind enabled him to retain possession of it, until he had surveyed it on every side. His doctrinal sentiments—his practical principles—his conversation, spirit, and walk—all indicated a manly and powerful mind.

His view of every subject was *comprehensive*. He took his station on elevated ground, and from thence he contemplated the point before him in all its multifarious bearings: He would survey it on all sides, as it were by intuition, and form an harmonious whole out of many complex parts. Nor could he rest satisfied with what may be termed a clear perception of the positive side of a question; I have heard him say that it has often cost him more time and pains to find out what objections could be plausibly urged against any particular sentiment or doctrine, and to furnish himself with suitable answers to them, than to draw up an illustration of the doctrine or sentiment itself. A mind like his, which must explore the foundation of every superstructure, could not rest contented with the superficial way of thinking that satisfies ordinary persons.

He possessed an extraordinary degree of penetration and *discernment*. His sagacity enabled him to dive below the surface, and to explore the deep things of God—to unravel, in some happy measure, mysteries in providence and grace; and thus to adapt his discourse, his project, or his plan, to the occasion; and make them suit the circumstances of the persons interested in them. His conceptions were so luminous that he could with the greatest ease disentangle the mazes of sophistry, and render familiar to common minds what appeared to them involved in intricacy and darkness. His controversial pieces against Dr. Walker, Mr. Fuller, Mr. Wardlaw, and others, afford ample proofs of this.

The qualities already mentioned were accompanied in him by great *soundness of judgment*. Plain good sense, candour, and calmness were apparent in all his decisions. The view which he took of any subject was not so much that of a philosopher as of a man of plain common sense; it was not the dictate of passion, but of a calm and enlightened reason which guided his determination and his step in the uniform tenor of his life; and in his ascent or descent to heights and valleys, amid the numberless hypotheses which the love of paradox and a rage for innovation were at one time incessantly issuing from the Tabernacle school, his cool and deliberate judgment enabled him to take a survey of them with composure, as one who standing upon a hill, looks down upon the storms and tempests that affect the valley beneath him.

There was no indecision in his character; he was *firm* in holding whatever he received for truth. Possessing a manly confidence in his own decisions, he avowed them with intrepidity, and maintained them without wavering. Having examined dispassionately, and deliberated coolly, his opinions and practices were the result of conviction; and though the waves might be noisy and the elements tempestuous, he felt his standing to be upon a rock, and it inspired him with a corresponding confidence. I know not whether the late Mr. Pirie, of Newburgh, designed it as a compliment to our author or not; but I am persuaded that there was much propriety in the remark which is to be found in one of his pamphlets on Baptism, namely, “that he never knew a man who, in all respects, was so well qualified to stand at the head of a denomination as Mr. M<sup>c</sup>Lean.” It has been justly remarked that decision inspires confidence, while a vacillating state of mind always weakens it.

Having made up his mind, he was also *prompt* in acting upon it, and this conduct he strongly urged upon his brethren. When he had carefully surveyed the subject and came to a point, it was no question with him what was the right course to pursue. He never halted between two opi-

nions, nor wasted his moments in balancing accounts between conflicting consequences. Indeed, few things could affect him more than a whiffling conduct in the affairs of religion. As he made little account of that profession which is not the effect of a deep conviction of truth, he justly thought that it was a matter of extreme importance for persons to be prompt in obeying the dictates of conscience, whether they followed with him or not; and as he uniformly exemplified this in every part of his own conduct, so he strongly inculcated it upon others.

The valuable faculty of *order*, which enabled him to methodize and arrange his thoughts was, as I have already remarked, a striking feature in the properties of his mind. In preaching, this enabled him to break down his general heads of discourse into particulars, and to allot each its proper place; so that there was no perplexity, no confusion, but the mind of the hearer was carried forward in a uniform tenor to the conclusion. His knowledge and learning were a kind of twin-sisters to the powers of his mind. He never appeared to want either; for whether in the pulpit or in the social circle, he betrayed no ignorance on any subject on which he could be expected to possess knowledge. His general reading was certainly not extensive, but it was probably much more so in the early part of life than afterwards; for which, indeed, it is easy to account. I recollect him once telling me that he had read Dr. Johnson's Rambler four different times; and on my starting a surprise that he could have found so much interest in a book of that kind as to go through it repeatedly, he smiled and said, he could not well avoid it—there had been four editions of the work printed at Mr. Donaldson's office while he was employed there, and each time he had revised the proof sheets. Indeed the latter part of his life was so much occupied in preaching and writing, that it precluded the possibility of much reading, though it was a thing of which he was extremely fond; but when, as for several years was his practice, he paid his annual visit to the churches in England,

and took up his residence in a family where he had access to a good library, he would devour any new publication with great avidity. It was thus that while under my roof at Liverpool, he exhausted Paley's Moral Philosophy, Dr. Campbell's Lectures on Ecclesiastical History, and other works of established reputation, which he would not have thought of enquiring for at home. It may, however, be confidently affirmed of him, that there are few writers in the English language who have borrowed so little from others, and at the same time have contributed so amply of their own mental riches. His conceptions were bold, and there was a novelty and originality in his cast of thought. He would frequently give an ingenious form to his materials, and present them before you with a force which impressed you at the moment with the conviction that they were his own and fresh from the mint. I may add, too, that he could reason with extraordinary cogency, and deduce legitimate conclusions from his premises with singular precision, so as to make an ample use of every subject he undertook to discuss.

There was much *affection* in his natural temper; and though in his preaching he never attempted to soar to heights of sublimity, he often displayed an eloquence which reached the heart—a pathos which powerfully excited the pleasing sensibilities of the soul. He knew how to present to his hearers the motives of the gospel, so as excite their best affections—the sovereign mercy of God towards a rebellious world—the love of Christ in giving himself for them, to redeem them from the curse of a broken law—the joys of heaven and the pains of hell. With these infinitely important subjects his own heart was deeply affected, and he could not speak of them to others in a cold and unfeeling manner. I have seen him, while descanting on the tender and compassionate heart of our “great High Priest,” who can be yet “touched with a feeling of our infirmities,” (Heb. iv. 15.) have his feelings so acutely excited that the tears would trickle down his furrowed cheeks, the lips would quiver, and

he would be obliged to pause in the midst of his discourse that he might recover his firmness. I must, however, desist from reflections of this kind, because they open a field for remark too copious to be exhausted, and in which my present limits do not permit me to indulge.

In stature Mr. M'Lean was rather under than above the middle size. He was muscular in his composition, but never inclined to corpulency. His likeness is well preserved in the Portrait prefixed to this Volume; but then he must be considered as about the age of sixty, at which time it was taken. At a later period of life he shrunk in person, was consequently less erect, and of course became more round-shouldered. He used to speak of himself as "the rough highlander"—and though his Northern extraction was always conspicuous in his speech, as well as in his countenance, his intercourse with England did much for him in the way of external polish. There was considerable urbanity in his manners, much cheerfulness in his deportment, and he would relate an anecdote with great pleasantry.

Such is the feeble sketch which I am enabled to give of my departed friend. I may be thought by some to have been too minute in description, by others too prolix in detail, and by many profusely lavish in my commendations. I have only to say in my own defence, that I have spoken of him according to the convictions of my own mind, as well as the best of my judgment; and that I COULD NOT CONSCIENTIOUSLY SAY LESS OF THE MAN WHO FIRST TAUGHT ME HOW TO THINK.



## APPENDIX.



### NO. I.

*Mr. Carmichael to Mr. McLean.*

Dear Brother,

WE wrote to London in June, desiring the favour that Dr. Gill would come down to Edinburgh, as we were made to hope he would if invited. It was long before we received an answer, which still made us hope for a favourable return. However Dr. Gill and Mr. Robinson wrote us that they were extremely glad to hear of us, and that there was a prospect of a Baptist church in Edinburgh; but at the same time signified that he could not come such a long journey for several reasons, which I cannot mention at present, and desiring me to come up to London, promising us all the encouragement in their power. Yet we wrote again, insisting on their coming down if possible, because of our present situation and circumstances. We got no letter in return till Monday night last: by this we were told that Dr. Gill could not possibly come, and desiring me to come up as soon as possible. So we resolved that I should go with Capt. Thomson's ship. You would have heard from me sooner, but I waited always for an answer to our letters, and now I am in great haste because the ship sails this afternoon. I shall be well accommodated

in my voyage, as I am to have the best room in the cabin, and every thing convenient. I hope you will remember me in your prayers. Since I wrote you there is one Mr. John Home added to our number. I recommend you to the God of all grace, and I hope if it please the Lord to return me in safety, we shall have a visit from you at Edinburgh. I shall write you when I return. Give my kind respects to Mrs. M'Lean and Miss Alison. Pray be so good as send with the first opportunity my Declaration, and also a copy of John M'Lean's answer to your long letter to him, and direct to Mr. Robert Walker, Surgeon, in Edinburgh.

Grace, mercy, and peace be with you.

I am,

Yours in our Dear Lord Jesus,

ROBERT CARMICHAEL,

*Edinburgh, 19th Sep. 1765.*

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## NO. II.

*Mr. Carmichael to Mr. M'Lean.*

My Dear Brother,

I SAW your letter to our brother, Mr. Walker, yesterday. I see you are little straitened with one of Dr. Gill's corrections upon your performance; where he denies that Baptism is to the true Israel who are born of the Spirit, what Circumcision was to the typical Israel who were born of the flesh; and that Circumcision and Baptism cannot be considered as type and antitype; and therefore he says that your pallel must be left out, or altered. Now in my opinion, if this were left out, one of the strongest and most convincing



arguments against Infant Baptism would be laid aside. I know, indeed, that Dr. Gill and all the Baptists constantly deny that Circumcision is in any sense a type of Baptism, or that Baptism in the New Testament comes in the room of Circumcision in the Old. I am ready to think that which hath led them to deny this so strenuously is the seeming advantage which the Paedobaptists have from this argument—That if Baptism comes in the room of Circumcision, then infants may now be baptised even as infants then were circumcised; and their common answer to this is, There was an express command for circumcising infants of old, but none for baptising infants now; which, indeed, is a sufficient answer, but yet not convincing; for let us deny that Baptism comes in the room of Circumcision never so much, they as constantly affirm it does, and so are never driven out of this their strong hold. I think, therefore, it is better to grant them their argument, (though it be not easily proved) That Baptism in some sense or other comes in place of Circumcision; and then we have a very strong and clear argument on our side, which at one blow cuts the sinews of all arguments for Infant Baptism—*viz.* That Baptism being a privilege of the New Covenant, it cannot belong to any but them who are the children of it, nor can it be administered to any but them who appear to be so, which are believers professing the faith, who were typified by Israel after the flesh—on the other hand, I am not willing to have any controversy with our brethren who are agreed with us in the same cause against Infant Baptism, about this. Wherefore my mind is, that your parallel should stand, and you may introduce it in some such manner as this, in Answer to Mr. Glas, when he says, that “The Apostle gives us Baptism instead of Circumcision, and that Baptism must be to the true Israel who are born of the Spirit, as Circumcision was to the typical Israel who were born of the flesh”—This cannot be easily proved, and though it could, yet the argument comes up with full force against the Baptism of Infants: which clearly appears from the following parallel.

Any thing further that I might write you about its being published, I leave to Mr. Walker.

With my kind respects to Mrs. M'Lean,

I remain,

Very Dear Brother,

Your affectionate Brother and Servant in  
our Dear Lord Jesus,

ROBERT CARMICHAEL.

Edinburgk, 12th June, 1766.

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NO: III.

*Mr. Robert Walker to Mr. M'Lean.*

Very Dear Sir,

I COMMUNICATED your letter to Mr. Carmichael, and you see the remarks he has made. I am quite unable at present to enter into the argument, being distressed with a head-ache and tooth-ache, and shall only say, that though the particulars you observe in the parallel betwixt Circumcision and Baptism are very just, yet I cannot consider them as type and antitype; nor can I admit of Mr. Glas's sense of Col. ii. 11—13. for the Apostle there does not say that he gives us Baptism, with the thing signified in it, in place of the Circumcision of the flesh: this is, indeed, what the Pædobaptists generally insist upon in order to make the Baptism of infants an initiating ordinance, as they are accustomed to consider Circumcision, which is by no means just; for the children under the old covenant had their right to its privileges, as Abraham's natural seed, and were members of

that national church as soon as they were born—that is, eight days before they were circumcised. For these and other reasons I am inclined partly to agree with Mr. Carmichael's view, without having any seeming difference with our brethren in London. I cannot say I am so clear about inserting the parallel as it stands, for in that formal way it would look as if it was a fixed principle with us, that we considered the one as a type of the other. Whereas as it cannot be proved, that the one comes in the place of the other, we are willing to make the supposition, and yet to shew how weighty the argument from thence is against Infant Baptism. I am not able at present to express my sense of this so clearly as I would incline, nor to say much more, only wish you may lose no time in the publication. I wish from my heart that business would answer better with you in this place. The session affords a good deal in your way, but am afraid to advise in a matter of so much importance to you and your family. With best respects to them, in which my wife joins, I am,

Very Dear Brother,

Your's Affectionately,

ROBERT WALKER.

Edinburgh, 12th June, 1766.

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No. IV.

*Mr. Carmichael to Mr. M'Lean.*

Dear Brother,

SINCE you were here our differences are happily ended; the Lord hath graciously interposed when we were likely to be scattered, and hath united us together in the truth, and hearty love to one another. Mr. Braidwood, our

brother, died on the fourth of this month, generally lamented here ; his death was pretty sudden.

We had several meetings for prayer for the Lord's countenance and direction about our setting forward ; and I may say he hath manifested himself to us as the hearer of prayer. On Monday sennight we met for prayer, being determined to proceed. The Scripture characters of elders were read and spoken upon by several of the brethren, and in the end the society called Mr. J. M'Lean and me to be elders ; and on Monday last, this day eight days, the society met for prayer and fasting, when we were recommended to the grace of God by the prayers of the church. We have had four added to our number—*viz.* Alex. Ritchie, a Lapidary, and Mr. Alex. Veitch, a Limner, John Hill, a Shoemaker, (who all were once in communion with Mr. Glas) and Mr. Robert Walker, Surgeon ; they were all cheerfully received. There is something like a new face upon our meeting ; the Lord hath done great things for us—he hath turned back our captivity, and we are like them that dream ; he hath filled our mouths with laughter and our tongue with singing ; he hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad ! Yesterday we had the Lord's Supper for the first time. Through the whole day the Lord gave us his countenance remarkably ; he sent the plentiful rain, whereby he hath refreshed us when we were weary ; and I can say, for my own part, I have not experienced such a time since the days of my youth : I got such a discovery of the divine mercy venting to sinners through Jesus ; such a view of the person and work of Christ ; such a comforting sense of the forgiveness of my sins in the blood of the Lamb—that I was humbled, melted, emptied, and comforted, and made to rejoice in him as the God of salvation, to whom alone belong the issues from death. I think he brought me to the banquetting house, and his banner over me was love ! I hope the Lord will be with us, and do better for us than at our beginning. I pray and hope the Lord may be with you, in supporting and comforting you in your solitary situation. Pray

for us—we shall not forget you. I shall be glad to hear from you. Remember me to George Law if he be yet with you. Give my kind respects to Mrs. M'Lean, and to my dear friend Miss Alison; if you think fit you may read this letter to her. Write me how you all are, and let me know what I must pay you for printing my advertisement. May grace and peace be with you. Mr. Strachan and his wife send their kind compliments to you.

I remain,

Very Dear Brother,

Yours in all sincerity,

ROBERT CARMICHAEL.

*Edinburgh, 29th Oct. 1754.*

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#### NO. V.

The Death of Mr. ARCHIBALD M'LEAN on the 21st December, 1812, was communicated by Mr. BRAIDWOOD, one of his Colleagues, in the following letter to one of the Pastors of the Church at Glasgow; and, as it was well known how deeply interested all the Churches in the connection were in this event, it was thought proper to send a copy of it to each of them. The answers to that letter shew the high esteem in which Mr. M'LEAN was held, and how much his death was deplored as a public loss.

*Edinburgh, 21st Dec. 1812.*

My Dear Brother,

WITH the deepest regret I now inform you, that it has pleased God to remove from us our highly esteemed and beloved Elder, Mr. M'Lean. He died this morning at one o'clock, in his eightieth year, having been confined only twelve days, and never, as I thought, completely sensible of the state in which he was, though always collected when at any time he spoke a few words. The nature of his disease

during its whole progress nearly precluded all conversation with him. A very few words now and then shewed that he was calm and resigned, and also that he had death in view, though he could not dwell long upon any subject. I am, however, as much satisfied that he fell asleep in Jesus as if he had spoken at full length, and expressed the most lively hope of obtaining the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour. I saw him last night about half-past nine, and had also seen him in the middle of the day. The apparent struggle was not great, and the Physicians thought that he was then sunk into a state of insensibility. He spoke none all yesterday. Till Friday last there were symptoms of recovery; and when appearances became less favourable, it was some time before they were thought seriously alarming. This, with the confusion into which we have been thrown, is the reason why I have not written you sooner, and I have no doubt that you will excuse me.

What shall I say? It has been the will of God to deprive us of a most eminent teacher. That to depart and to be with Christ is to him unspeakable gain, and that it is our duty to submit to the will of God, cannot be doubted. But surely I may be permitted to bewail the loss of a servant of Christ, whose talents were so remarkably distinguished, and employed for many years in the service of his master with unremitting constancy and perseverance, and whose conduct uniformly justified and adorned his profession. The stroke would not have been so severe had he been disabled and laid aside for a considerable time, which usually happens at an advanced period of life. But his faculties were entire, and his bodily strength not much impaired, till the deadly disease came suddenly upon him. Three days before that, he delivered a lecture with all his usual acuteness and accuracy, and nearly with as much spirit as he ever displayed in preaching the truth of God. I am now deprived of his friendship, his experience, his counsels, and the opportunities of instruction which I have long enjoyed, and have not suitably im-

proved. What shall I say? The Lord liveth, and he is able to qualify and send forth other labourers, though at present I can see no reason to expect any one equally qualified to edify and establish the Church of God. Pray for me and the Church here, who are all deeply afflicted. Give my love to the Brethren with you, and believe me to be always

Your very affectionate Friend and Brother,

(Signed)

WM. BRAIDWOOD.



The following Letters were received by the Church assembling in the Pleasance, Edinburgh, from their Sister Churches, on the Death of Mr. ARCHIBALD M'LEAN.



*To the Church of Christ meeting in the Pleasance,  
Edinburgh.*

Dearly Beloved Brethren,

It was with unfeigned sorrow of heart that we received from your elder, Mr. Braidwood, the account of the heavy affliction with which you have been visited, in the loss of your aged and beloved elder, Mr. M'Lean, whom it hath pleased God to remove from this earthly state, closing the scene of his labours and usefulness in his kingdom in this world.

We esteem it a duty we owe to his memory, as well as from regard to our dear Brethren, among whom he so long laboured, to express our condolence with you under the great loss you have sustained. Nor would we be unmindful of the many obligations we lie under for the frequent and accep-

table visits, which, as a Church, we have enjoyed from him during more than twenty years past. While we must ever acknowledge that every good gift, and every perfect gift, cometh down from the Father of Lights, it is equally our duty to confess that our dear departed brother was eminently qualified, through grace, to promote the interest of the Redeemer's kingdom, to proclaim and defend the truth as it is in Jesus, and to establish the Churches of Christ in faith and holiness. We cannot but reflect with thankfulness to God, on his clear and comprehensive knowledge of divine truth—his peculiar talent in stating it with simplicity and perspicuity—his unwearied and successful labours in unfolding the pure word of God, both from the pulpit and from the press—his enlivening and edifying conversation, full of the savour of divine things, with that purity of life and conduct, in all things becoming a minister of Christ, and the holy profession of His name;—on these and other particulars, we rejoice that it is unnecessary for us to dwell, because his praise is in all the churches.

By the churches in general, but by you, brethren, in particular, the loss will be severely felt. You are deprived of one, who for many years hath been over you in the Lord, and faithfully spoken to you the word of God; who hath laboured with zeal and perseverance for your growth in grace, and your establishment in the faith; but although “the watchful eye is in darkness closed, and mute the instructive tongue,” you have still a consolation remaining, the well-grounded persuasion that your beloved pastor is receiving, as an under shepherd, the reward of his labours in a crown of glory that fadeth not away; and, at the same time, that the chief Shepherd still lives; that all fulness dwells in him, as the head of his body, the church, for whom he hath received gifts; and that HE, who hath raised up faithful servants in time past, can also qualify and raise up others, and bless the labours of all who are engaged in his vineyard, to the advantage of his church and people. It should also mitigate our



sorrow, that your late worthy pastor hath been so long continued as a blessing to the church; and while advanced in years to a good old age, the talents committed to him have been occupied to the last in a manner not often experienced. His removal is indeed the more sensibly felt by its unexpected approach; but we surely ought to consider it as an instance of great mercy, that his life was spared to continue his labours for so long a period; and that he was thus enabled to produce so many valuable writings, which, we trust, will benefit generations yet to come, in directing their attention to the important truths of the word of God.

We conclude, dear brethren, this expression of our sympathy and affection, with an assurance of our earnest prayers to God for you, that the God of all comfort and consolation may comfort your hearts, and sanctify to you, as a church, this afflicting stroke; and that the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, may make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever—Amen.

Signed on the behalf of the Church meeting in Red-Cross Street, London, by

(Signed)

JAMES BLAIKIE.

SAMUEL JONES.

*London, 4th January, 1813.*



*Aberdeen, Jan. 8. 1813.*

*To the Church of Christ assembling in the Pleasance,  
Edinburgh.*

Dear Brethren,

WITH heartfelt sorrow we received Mr. Braidwood's account of the death of your worthy and beloved elder,

Mr. M'Lean; and, as a testimony of our veneration for his character, and from a desire to sympathise with you in your affliction, we have been induced to address a few lines to you on this painful occasion.

Your's, brethren, is no ordinary loss; you are deprived of the labours of an eminent servant of God, whose life was devoted to the support and propagation of the truth. His labours in public, and conversation in private, shewed with what diligence and perseverance he had studied the word of God; while his exemplary deportment in ruling, proved how well qualified he was to "take care of the church of God." The consistency of his conduct through the whole course of a long and laborious life, at once justified and adorned his profession, and constrained even those who were "otherwise minded" to admit that his example was in the highest degree worthy of imitation. His usefulness, however, was not confined to you alone. Endowed by the Great Head of the Church with talents of no ordinary description, he was singularly qualified to instruct his fellow men far beyond the sphere of his ministry in a particular Church. These he certainly improved to the glory of God. His valuable publications are lasting monuments of his indefatigable researches into the Sacred Writings, and of the warm interest he took in the furtherance of the Gospel.

By these he has taught many the "truth as it is in Jesus," and the simplicity of the institutions and laws of that "kingdom which is not of this world;" and their influence, we doubt not, will extend to future generations.

It is with much shame to ourselves that we would now advert to his conduct while here; yet, though the result has not corresponded with our wishes and his most anxious endeavours, we trust his visit was not altogether in vain. His prudent management and Christian spirit, during a perplexed and intricate discussion, has left an impression on our minds which will not be speedily effaced. His patience with refractory individuals, and his earnest warnings to all of us to be-

ware of similar evils, fully demonstrated that he had no "greater joy than to hear of his brethren walking in the truth," and "loving each other for its sake."

Though your loss is great, yet you are not called upon to "mourn as those that have no hope." The glorious gospel of the Son of God was the great theme of your beloved pastor's discourses; and we have no doubt that he has now entered into that "rest which remaineth for the people of God." By a patient continuance in well doing, he looked for glory, honour, and immortality. His "hoary head was to him a crown of glory, being found in the way of righteousness." "Remember," then, beloved brethren, "him who had the rule over you, whose faith follow, considering the end of his conversation—Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;" follow him, even as he followed Christ. And may one and all of us consider this event as a call to us to "be ready, seeing in such an hour as we think not the Son of Man cometh;" so that at last we may be found of HIM in peace, without spot and blameless, and be welcomed into the New Jerusalem, with "Well done, good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord."

At the same time we ought to recollect, that, though "all flesh is grass, the word of our God endureth for ever." Jesus has all power in heaven and on earth; and can raise up and qualify others for the advancement of his kingdom in the world. It is not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord of Hosts, that "pure and undefiled religion can be established in the hearts of sinful men;" and it is consoling to reflect, that the residue of the Spirit is with God, and that whatever he sees most consistent with his own glory and the real good of his people, he will assuredly bestow.

With our warmest wishes for your true happiness, believe us to be, very dear brethren, with much affection and esteem, your's in the Gospel of Christ,

In the name of the Brethren here,

(Signed)

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THOMAS FRASER.

GEORGE BAYNE.

*The Church of Christ assembling in George's Street, Glasgow, to their Brethren the Church of Christ under the Pastoral care of Messrs. William Braidwood and William Peddic, Edinburgh.*

*Glasgow, Jan. 13. 1813.*

Dearly Beloved Brethren,

WE desire to sympathise with you in the afflicting loss of your valuable pastor, Mr. M'Lean.

We had previously heard of the severe attack which he had, and ceased not to offer up our supplications to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus-Christ on his behalf, intreating that if he in his infinite wisdom saw meet he would raise up his aged servant from the bed of affliction, and yet spare him for farther usefulness in his church and kingdom.

Having learned that the means used for his recovery had been so far blessed, as not only to abate the violence of the disorder, but even to effect a progressive amendment, we were the less prepared for the event, and consequently felt the shock more severely. But what shall we say, beloved Brethren? It has been the will of our heavenly Father to deprive you of an elder and teacher of great eminence; of one, whose labours in the Gospel of Christ were not confined to the flock over whom he was more immediately appointed an overseer, but were extended to all the churches with whom we walk in the fellowship of the Gospel; in whose prosperity he took a lively interest. We ourselves have often been benefited by his counsel; many of us, we trust, have profited by his visits amongst us, when he opened up the Scriptures with such perspicuity and force, as was calculated both to inform the judgment and to engage the affections; to communicate consolation and to administer salutary reproof and correction; and such lively impressions upon the minds of many of us have been made, through the clear and for-

cible manner in which he was enabled to state and illustrate the doctrines of the Gospel, and inculcate the precepts of Christ, that his memory will be dear to us as long as we live. But while we bewail our loss, and mingle our tears with yours, let us bow with submission to the will of God, and gratefully acknowledge his goodness in preserving him so long, and extending his usefulness to the last. In him was exemplified the promise, "They shall bring forth fruit in old age." He came to his grave in full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in his season; he now rests from his labours and his works do follow him. Our loss is his unspeakable gain. He hath entered into the joy of his Lord, into the full enjoyment of that blessedness of which he frequently discoursed, and to which he was no stranger when travelling through this valley of tears. Let us not sorrow then as those who have no hope, but look forward to that happy period, when those who have fallen asleep in Jesus shall be brought with him; when we shall meet our dear departed brethren in Christ, and enter together into that happy place where there is no sin to interrupt our joy; where there shall be no more curse; and where we shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; but the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne shall feed us, and shall lead us unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes.

We shall not attempt a delineation of his character, as we are convinced we cannot do it justice, and because you who so long enjoyed the benefit of his public ministrations, and witnessed the tenor of his conversation, can best appreciate his worth. Suffice it to say, that to great mental powers, and a clear discriminating judgment with which he was blessed, he united not only a patient, laborious, and impartial research for truth, but also a becoming fervor and zeal in contending for the faith once delivered to the saints; and upon the whole, we may say, that he not only attained to an extensive knowledge of the Scriptures, and a peculiar gift for stating and via-

dicating their important doctrines in a style both adapted to the capacity of the meanest, and calculated to convince gainsayers, but that he also manifested in his general deportment the power of the truth which he believed, and was an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, and in purity. Indeed, it is only occasionally that teachers of such singular talents and zeal appear; they are raised up by the great Head of the church, for some important work or service, and when that is accomplished they are removed. But though none of like eminence may appear immediately to succeed them, we are not to doubt of the care of the chief Shepherd for his church. He from time to time raises up men of great mental powers, and deep research, and endows them with a fervent love to the truth, and an ardent zeal for his glory, and thus qualifies them for defending his cause against the sophistical reasonings of the adversaries of the truth; and when he sees meet to remove those who have possessed such conspicuous talents, he carries on the edification of his church by means of the more ordinary gifts which he bestows upon his people in a rich variety, by the faithful exercise of which they grow up to him in all things who is their head.

Permit us to make one obvious improvement of this dispensation, and it is, that as the churches have been deprived of one of superior talents for public edification, it is the more incumbent on those who possess gifts, to be doubly diligent, in using and improving them, that they may by their united exertions, diminish the loss which we have sustained. We are, beloved brethren, in the name and by appointment of the Church,

Your's in Christ Jesus,

(Signed)

DAVID SMITH.  
 GEORGE SWANSTON.  
 ANDREW DUNCAN.



*From the Church at Dundee to the Church in Edinburgh.*

Dearly Beloved Brethren,

MOST feelingly do we enter into your sorrow upon the death of your highly esteemed elder, Mr. M'Lean. No doubt, brethren, ye who sat constantly under his ministry, who were the immediate objects of his care, and who have lived in daily intercourse with him, must be considered as sustaining the greatest loss by this dispensation of Divine Providence; but our dear departed brother was a common blessing among all the churches, and they will all deeply feel the deprivation sustained by his death. We look back upon the refreshing visits which he paid us—on the readiness with which he gave us his counsel in cases of difficulty—on the affectionate care which he shewed towards us—on his constant labours for the peace and prosperity of Zion—and with grief proportionable to our former pleasure, we think that now we are deprived of these blessings, and our tears are mingled with yours. Nor is it we alone who are united upon the same views of the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus, that are sufferers in this case; for many who differed from him on several points, acknowledge having received much instruction by what he wrote, and join with us in deploring his loss.

But, brethren, let us view this event in a way becoming our profession. We are sure that He who purchased the church with his own blood, and hath all power committed into his hands, and who hath the government thereof upon his shoulders, will take care of the interests of his own kingdom. He will continue to raise up such instruments for its advancement and defence, as He in his infinite wisdom sees meet, and will withdraw such at his pleasure. We may lament the loss of those who have been eminently useful in the church below; but we know that the Lord reigneth, and will support the cause that is his own, even unto the end of the

world. The truth is God's, and we must leave to him what means he sees fit to raise up in its defence and for its propagation : for the word of the Lord will endure for ever, and he will not leave himself without a witness. But really, brethren, have we not much ground for praise and thanksgiving ? Our departed brother was raised up for singular usefulness, and he has been singularly useful. When, after sparing him to labour among us to a good old age, he who gave him to us hath seen meet to take him away, we are apt to repine. Was he not spared to us almost to the utmost extent of human life ? Ought we not to be particularly thankful that he was spared so long ? Ought we not to bless the name of the Lord, who giveth and taketh away ? In regard to him we cannot sorrow as them who have no hope. He hath finished his course, and we cannot doubt hath fallen asleep in Jesus and is now with the Lord which is far better. And believing that Jesus died and rose again, so we believe that they who sleep in Jesus shall God bring with him at his second and glorious appearing. There is one thing then, brethren, which requires much of our attention, that is, that we continue in the faith grounded and settled, and so become imitators of them who through faith and patience are now inheriting the promises. We doubt not that many things said by our departed brother to establish our minds in the faith and obedience of the Gospel, will dwell long on our minds. Although his body is now mouldering in the dust, it will be a happy thing if we are enabled to hold fast the faith, and at last to overcome through the blood of the Lamb, and the word of his testimony ; and when we are removed from the church on earth, we shall join our friends in the general assembly and church of the first-born in heaven.

While we sympathise with you, as you certainly do with us, for we feel the loss of Mr. M'Lean as a heavy stroke ; we particularly do so with your elders, who must in a peculiar manner feel the want. We are sure that nothing will support their minds so much under this affliction, as seeing you all



loving as brethren, being of one heart and of one mind, and “keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” Let none of us sink into despondency; for this can arise only from distrust in God, and a leaning to our own understanding. He who does not allow a sparrow to fall to the ground without his notice, knows our wants, and he will supply them in his own way. Our Lord Jesus Christ continues to walk in the midst of the golden candlesticks, and if we are found walking in his commandments he will hold us up.

And now, dear brethren, we commend you to God, who is the Comforter of those that are cast down, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance among them who are sanctified.

And we are

Your very affectionate Brethren in the kingdom  
and patience of Jesus Christ.



*From the Church at Galashiels.*

*Dec. 28. 1812.*

THE Church here to the Church in Edinburgh—Grace and peace be multiplied unto you, through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

We deeply sympathise with you for the loss of a pastor so eminent in the work of the Lord. From his indefatigable zeal, personal labours, fatherly care of all the Churches—the conciseness and energy with which he set forth human depravity, and the sovereign freedom of that grace which saves the guilty—and from his private edifying conversation, he will be ever dear to all who knew him.

His labours as an author are confessedly interesting, and

have been of great use to many out of the profession, as well as those who walked in fellowship with him, and will, we hope, prove, through the blessing of God, a source of instruction to posterity. We may say of him, "he being dead yet speaketh." Brethren, we trust that in this trying dispensation all of us shall feel, and continue to comfort one another with these words—"Them who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." What shall we say to you, the remaining pastors, who must in a peculiar manner feel the want of his assistance? As the Lord was with him, so may he be with you; for he hath said, "I will not fail thee nor forsake thee." Only be strong and very courageous in declaring the counsel of God, that when the chief Shepherd shall appear you may receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

We are,

Your's affectionately



*From the Church at Whitehaven.*

Jan. 1. 1815.

Very Dear Brethren,

MAY he who comforteth us in all our tribulation, comfort you by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

We jointly feel it our duty to sympathise with you all on this truly distressing occasion. Thus only is it in our power to bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. Some of us recollect, twenty years ago, the labours, charity, and fervent zeal of your late beloved pastor amongst us. He was the instrument in Divine Providence of gathering together and instructing us in the things of the kingdom of Heaven. But what shall we say? many little societies scattered up and

down on the face of our kingdom are the living monuments of his unwearied labours either in person, or by his pen. We doubt not but the consciences of many may trace their first dawning of instruction to his labours from the press. But why descant? His works praise him, and shew to men at large his zeal for truth—his attachment to apostolic institutions—and his steady wish for order and subordination in the observance of those institutions; on these considerations all our societies must feel his loss. You, favoured with his personal ministry, must doubly feel it. On this account we weep with you weeping, and shall not cease to make mention of you in our prayers. And now, brethren, it becomes us to remember how much we have even in this case to give thanks for. We should rejoice that the gracious King of Zion hath granted us so long a loan of his servant, who hath left behind him so many able defences of truth and order, which will long serve as helps to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.—We should rejoice in the prospect of being all gathered together at Christ's coming, and of being for ever with the Lord. Above all, brethren, how animating the thought, that the chief Shepherd ever lives, and, mindful of all his flock in their various states, will not forget a chief purpose of his ascension, even the giving of gifts unto men—Yes, the Lord's hand is not shortened nor his ear heavy. Let us, therefore, pray the Lord of the harvest, that he may send forth labourers into his harvest. Let us follow him who is only gone a little before, as he followed Christ, and soon we shall all be where grief and sin, sighing, parting, and sorrow are no more. And now, brethren, we commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance among all them who are sanctified through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

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## No. VI.

*Extract from Mr. Peddie's Sermon on Heb. xiii. 7, 8.—  
Preached on the Morning of the Lord's Day, Dec. 27th, 1812.*

———“ I should now apply the exhortation. It comes home to our present situation, as mourning the loss of a beloved and highly respected elder, who has spoken unto us the word of God. Brethren, need I say, remember him? I am fully persuaded he will continue to live in the affectionate and grateful remembrance of many of you; both in regard to the doctrine he taught and the eminent example he set, until having closed your conversation, by sleeping in Jesus, you also enter into the joy of your Lord, and meet to part no more.

As an individual I owe much to his memory. It is 18 years this day since he administered to me the ordinance of Christian baptism; and from that period to the period of his dissolution, I have lived in the closest intimacy with him without a single interruption. Many opportunities have I enjoyed during this period of instruction in divine things, and would I could say, my profiting has been in proportion to these!

Any attempt of mine to delineate the character of him whose loss we deplore, would be feeble indeed; to do the subject justice, would require abilities to which, without any dread of the imputation of false modesty, I hesitate not to say, I have no pretensions.

By the great Head of the Church he was endowed with singular talents—talents which rarely fall to the lot of man. These he cultivated with care, and diligently employed for the great ends for which they had been conferred—the glory of God in the advancement of his cause in the world, and the edification of the flock of which he was an overseer.

His abilities as a writer are extensively known. In his writings, though dead, he will continue to speak to future ages, and in proportion to the increase of primitive Christianity will be their circulation, and the estimation in which they will be held.

As a preacher his talents were of the first order. He possessed an eloquence peculiar to himself—an eloquence that spake to the heart. His conception of his subject was clear and distinct, discovering the greatest depth of judgment, and the most acute penetration. In the delivery of his discourses his ideas were clothed in plain and simple language; he, as it were, held up his subject to view, and the attentive hearer was never at a loss to discover his meaning; nor, having discovered it, was his attention fatigued by a multiplicity of words in a repetition of the same ideas.

In the choice of his subject he was guided by a careful attention to the circumstances of the flock. Never did he entertain us with idle speculations, which gender strife and minister questions; but with the wholesome words of sound doctrine, suited to promote godly edifying. In the spirit of the beloved disciple, having no greater joy than to see his brethren walking in the truth, he kept back nothing that was profitable to us, nor did he ever shun to declare unto us the whole counsel of God. Having renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, and not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, he by manifestation of the truth to the conscience, proved himself indeed a workman that needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

His heart was in his work; it was his pleasure and delight. Out of the abundance of his heart his mouth spake. He spake like one who felt the power of the truths which he taught, and who lived upon them. It may with the greatest truth be said, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, he had his conversation in the world, and more abundantly to us-ward. He was, indeed, a living preacher, exemplifying in his own conduct what he inculcated upon us, and an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in doctrine, in faith, in spirit, in purity. In doctrine he shewed incorruptness, gravity and godly sincerity. He possessed no attachments but for the truth's sake. Here his attachments were strong and

unfeigned; and without much shew, he loved with a pure heart fervently. With this also was connected that independency of mind, so ennobling to the Christian character, and so necessary in a Christian elder, to the faithful discharge of his office without partiality. To him the rich offender and the poor transgressor stood on equal terms; and if there was any leaning, it was a leaning to the side of mercy. Never perhaps was there a man who paid less regard to the external circumstances of rank and riches in professors, those adventitious circumstances, so apt to magnify themselves in human estimation. Never was there a man who stood at a greater distance from what the Apostle calls "holding men's persons in admiration because of advantage." I cannot pass over a strong and leading feature in his character—namely, that nothing roused his feelings so much as any thing like poverty opposed by riches, and weakness oppressed by power.

In short, my brethren, in his death we suffer a loss—it may be accounted the language of despair, but it is the language of sincerity—we suffer a loss, which I am afraid will never again be made up to us. Our loss, however, is his gain, and on his account we have no cause to sorrow even as others who have no hope. He has fallen asleep in Jesus; he has died in the Lord, and is blessed from henceforth, and his works do follow him. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear he shall receive his reward—a crown of glory which shall never perish. Let us improve the event by taking heed to the exhortation of the Apostle. No church, perhaps, has so seldom been the subject of this exhortation, or now that we are the subject of it, to whom it applies with greater force. We have long been blessed with faithful labourers, but first one and now another has been removed by death, and these events are a loud call on us "to remember them who have had the rule over us, and who have spoken unto us the word of God, whose faith let us imitate, considering the end of their conversation, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

## PREFACE.



**H**AVING been entrusted by the surviving branches of the family of the late Mr. M'Lean, with an inspection of his Manuscripts, I was happy to find a number of Sermons, in a state which required but little correction in order to fit them for the candid eye of his own friends. And as he more than once told me, when living, that he had it in contemplation to publish a volume or two of short Discourses, at a future period of his life, I concluded that in presenting this Volume to the world, I should be carrying into effect what his own decease prevented him from accomplishing. As I do not think the Sermons now published stand in need of any apology, it is needless to offer one; though it is very certain that, in their present state, they want that finishing touch which the author's own pen would have conferred on them, had he lived to revise them for the press. Should

what are now offered meet with a favourable reception, and I be spared so long, it is my intention to follow them up with a Second Volume which, it is hoped will be found not less valuable and interesting.

With regard to the Memoir of the Author which is prefixed to this Volume, I am very sensible of its numerous deficiencies; and could have ardently wished that the task of compiling it, had fallen to the lot of one of his colleagues in the ministry, both of whom are so much more competent to do the subject justice than I profess to be; but as they declined it, I did not feel myself warranted to refuse the pressing request of the family, to do the best I could in rescuing from oblivion the chief incidents in the life of one who honoured me with his correspondence and friendship while living, and whose memory must ever be dear to my heart.

W. J.

*Pentonville, London, August 1, 1817.*



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ROMANS, VIII. 31—34.

*What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*

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2 PETER, I. 10, 11.

*Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure, for if ye do these things ye shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be administered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

## ON DISCONFORMITY TO THE WORLD.—Page 286.

Being the substance of several Sermons on

ROMANS, XII. 2.

*Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind; that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.*



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**SERMONS.**

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## SERMON I.

CHRIST'S PROVIDENTIAL GOVERNMENT OF THE  
WORLD.



PSALM, XCVII. I.

THE LORD *reigneth*; *let the earth rejoice*; *let the multitude of isles be glad thereof.*

MANY persons profess to believe that there is a God who created all things, and even to credit the gospel also, who are not established in the faith of his particular providence in governing the world. Some of those who are of a speculative cast will tell us, that God acts not by particular but by general laws; that these laws were impressed in the original constitution and nature of things at the creation, and that every thing must necessarily operate according to the law of its nature, without any need of divine immediate agency; just as a clock once constructed, wound up, and set a going, will move on of its own accord without any assistance of the artificer till it has run the length of its paces. They think it far beneath the Deity to be continually attentive to the concerns of his creatures, especially the particular concerns of individuals. So that their whole scheme amounts ultimately to this—that though God at first

created the world, he hath left the government of it to these unmeaning sounds—nature, chance, or fate.

The text, however, gives us better information; for it declares, that **THE LORD REIGNETH**. He not only at first made all things, and impressed upon them laws in their original formation, but he also continues to superintend and govern all his works by his providence; and upholds, directs, and disposeth of creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest to the most minute; and that according to his own most perfect holiness, wisdom, and goodness. This is a most important and comfortable doctrine to the fearers of God; and so the earth is called, upon the consideration thereof, to be glad and rejoice.

I. We shall consider this as it relates to God's providential kingdom in governing the world.

II. To the reign of the Messiah, which also includes the former as subservient to it.

III. The use to be made of this doctrine.

The whole word of God is full of this comfortable truth, that *Jehovah reigneth*, and that his kingdom ruleth over all, Psalm, ciii. 19.

I. It shews us plainly, that God not only *foresees* whatever comes to pass, but also *determines* the time, circumstances, and manner of it. So he says himself, “I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure,” Isaiah, xlvi. ix. 10. Here he not only declares his foreknowledge, but his *determinate counsel* with regard to future events; or what is commonly called his

*decrees* as the Sovereign of the world. But this is not all; he also declares, that he will most certainly put his determinations into *execution*—"My counsel shall *stand*, and *I will do all my pleasure*." So he is said to "*work* all things after the counsel of his own will," Eph. i. 11. and to "*do* according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" Dan. iv. 35. True indeed, he often, nay ordinarily, uses the instrumentality of second causes and free agents to execute his purpose; nay, even the wicked intentions and actions of men he over-rules and makes subservient to his holy, just, and good designs, as in the case of Joseph and his brethren, Gen. i. 20. and in the delivering up of Christ to be crucified, Acts, ii. 23. with many other instances that might be produced; but yet both these events are ascribed unto God, Gen. xlv. 8. Acts, iii. 18. and iv. 28.—He has also the *particular circumstances* of every event under his direction and management. It is the combination and adjustment of circumstances that, naturally speaking, produceth the event intended. If these were left loose and unsettled, so must the effect which depends upon them. Not that God is confined to one train of circumstances; he can bring about his purpose in innumerable ways: but it plainly appears from scripture, that he hath determined all the *means* and *circumstances* conducive to a purposed event, as well as the event itself, and that he uses and manages them all to that end with infinite skill. This might be clearly illustrated from the fore-mentioned accounts of Joseph and the death of Christ.—His providence is not only engaged in the great affairs of the world, such as the government and revolutions

of empires and states, but it extends to the private and minute concerns of individuals. Christ says of his people, "Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered," Matt. x. 30. Nay, the very smallest of his irrational creatures are the subjects of his care and goodness: "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing, and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father," Matt. x. 29. or as Luke has it, "none of them is forgotten of God," ch. xii. 6. In short, the scripture abundantly holds forth that Jehovah reigneth, not only in his *miraculous providences* towards his ancient people, but in his *universal government* of the world, Psalm, lxxxiii. 18. and that not only in the great concerns of the world, but also in the particular minute concerns of individuals. Nor does he reign merely as the upholder, and preserver, and disposer of all things, but as the *moral governor* of his rational creatures. He judges the world in righteousness, and to him they are accountable as the Sovereign and righteous Judge of all the earth, who will do justice to every one. Indeed his government of the natural world is clearly subservient to his moral government, which makes the chief figure in revelation. Every view therefore we can take of proper reign or government is applicable in the highest degree to Jehovah.

What generally blind men's minds as to his providential government, are—The intervention of means or second causes—Their ignorance of God's design in many providences—And, as to his moral government, the afflictions of the righteous, and the prosperity and impunity of the wicked in this life, tend to obscure it in the eyes of many.

1. As to *means* or *second causes*—Some of them

operate *naturally*, or according to the established course of nature, such as the sun dispensing light and heat—the regular succession of seasons, with all their effects—the propagation and death of animals—the qualities and operations of certain parts of matter, as that of fire to burn, &c. In a thousand such things men are apt to lose sight of providence on account of their being so regular and fixed; yet the scripture makes the established course of nature to depend immediately upon God—“He *upholdeth* all things by the word of his power,” Heb. i. 3.—He *actuates* all things, and gives natural causes their energy and effect. He maketh the sun to know his rising and going down, Psalm, civ. 19. He maketh day and night, light and darkness, Psalm, lxxiv. 16. and civ. 20. The succession of seasons is established by *covenant* not *necessity*, Gen. viii. 22. and all their produce in like manner, Psalm, civ. 13—16. Acts, xiv. 17.—It is he that multiplies the race of men; he made us and not we ourselves, Psalm, c. 3.—It is in him we live; and it is he that killeth as well as maketh alive—It is he who gave the fire its nature, and who continues its operation. The established course of nature is part of the divine government, wherein his glory is to be seen, Psalm, xix. 1. 2. and he makes natural causes to fulfil his particular purposes. He has in many instances *suspended* and *altered* the course of nature at pleasure. He has arrested the sun and moon in their courses, and even made the sun go backwards. He has used the elements as instruments of his righteous vengeance, punishing a guilty city with fire and brimstone from heaven, and a wicked world with an universal deluge. When he wanted to shew his power in behalf of his people, he suspended

the operations of nature; the water did not drown, nor the fire consume, nor hungry voracious lions devour them.

There are second causes which act *voluntarily*, or from their own choice and design, such as rational creatures. This so much resembles the Deity's own manner of acting, that men are apt to look upon the free agent as the first cause, and so to overlook divine providence in the matter. But God rules over the spirits of free agents as well as over inanimate matter, (though in another way) and makes all their motions and determinations subservient to his purpose. Kings have the greatest power and influence in the nations of this world; but their "hearts are in the hand of the Lord; as the rivers of water he turneth them whithersoever he will," Prov. xxi. 1. and this holds as well with respect to bad as to good kings. He maketh them the instruments of good or evil, of mercy or judgment, as he sees proper; witness Cyrus, Vespasian, &c. Sometimes he uses the wisdom and sagacity of men; at other times he makes very small and unlooked-for things to blast and defeat the best human plans, and the very wrath of man he makes to praise him. All that favour on the one hand, or distress on the other, which we receive by the will of man is directed by him. We may see this in the instance of Joseph, of Paul, and of others.—Some second causes appear to us *fortuitous* or *accidental*, and hence we are ready to imagine they are under no direction but pure *chance*. But nothing is chance with God. A man draws a bow at a venture, but it kills Ahab as the Lord purposed, 1 Kings, xxii. 34. Another is trodden to death in a crowd, as it were accidentally, but it is to punish his unbelief, 2 Kings, vii. 19, 20. The thing that

has the greatest appearance of chance to us is a lot, yet we are told that the determination thereof is of the Lord, Prov. xvi. 33. as exemplified in the cases of Achan, Josh. vii. 18. and of Matthias, Acts, i. 24—26.

2. *Ignorance of God's design* in many providences is another reason why men do not recognise his hand in them. His way is often in the sea, and his path in the deep waters, so that his footsteps are not known. And when men cannot trace how such and such dark providences tend either to the glory of God or the good of his creatures, but seem to militate against both, they are apt to entertain doubts if the Lord have them under his special direction. But it is not only unreasonable; it is arrogant to circumscribe providence by our conceptions, or to deny his government in every thing which we do not understand, considering how limited our knowledge is. What conceptions could we form of the mazy, intricate, and dark providences which have issued in some of the most glorious events that ever took place in the world, such as Israel's bondage in Egypt, the sufferings of Christ, the rejection of the Jews, &c? Is it not enough that we are told, that he reigns in the darkest providences, and will make all things work together for good to them that love him?

3. His moral government is darkened to many by the afflictions of the righteous, and the prosperity and impunity of the wicked in this life. This stumbled the Psalmist greatly, and led him to doubt the Lord's concern in human affairs, see Psalm, lxxiii.—But it should be noticed, that the wicked have not always gone unpunished in this world. The wrath of God has not only been revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men in his word, but in the

most striking and signal judgments; witness the case of the old world, of Sodom, of Egypt, the Canaanites, the unbelieving Jews, &c. enough to show that God is the hater of iniquity. On the other hand, many signal and miraculous deliverances has he given to his people; witness Noah, Israel, the three children, Daniel, &c. all which openly demonstrate his love of righteousness.—The justice of the divine administration cannot be properly seen if we judge of it by what takes place in this life only. So much of it is to be seen as to make men know that God reigneth to the ends of the earth; but the scripture refers us chiefly to a future state for clearing up the justice of his moral government.—The afflictions of the people of God in this life are declared to be for their benefit in relation to another life; while the prosperity of the wicked is but of short duration, and hurtful to their eternal interests.

II. Let us consider the words as they relate to the reign of the Messiah, in which the former is included as subservient to it.

That these words do apply to the Messiah is plain beyond all dispute, provided we allow the inspired apostle to be a proper commentator; for he quotes the 7th verse of this Psalm, and applies it to Jesus as risen from the dead, and exalted far above angels, Heb. i. 6. “And when again he bringeth the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.” The original is, *worship him all ye gods*, (elohim) which the seventy translate *his angels*, and the apostle, *angels of God*; but the sense is the same in all. As, therefore, the apostle applies ver. 7 to Christ as God’s first-begotten from the dead and heir of all things, and exalted above angels who are commanded to worship him, it is evident the first



verse must apply to him; and that of him it is said, "Jehovah reigneth, let the earth rejoice, and the multitude of isles be glad thereof;" for there is no change of person intervening; nay, it is clear that the command given to angels to worship him in ver. 7. is grounded on his reign, ver. 1. The Psalm contains a grand description of the majesty and universality of Christ's reign, who is repeatedly termed Jehovah: "The Lord (*viz.* the Messiah) reigneth, let the earth rejoice, let the multitude of isles be glad thereof." In ver. 5. he is termed, the *Lord of the whole earth*, before whose presence the hills melt like wax, every obstacle giving way to him. It is added, "The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory," ver. 6. Then follows a denunciation of confusion and shame upon idolaters or worshippers of idols, "Confounded be all they who serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols," which was the practice of the whole heathen world; while at the same time the Messiah is pointed out as the true object of worship not only from men, but from the highest created beings; "Worship him all ye gods," ver. 7. and the reason is given, "For thou, Jehovah, art high above all the earth, thou art exalted (*viz.* in consequence of his resurrection) far above all gods," ver. 9. all the angels being made subject to him. Then the saints are called to view him as their deliverer, to rejoice in him as their king, and to give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness, ver. 10—12. All this gives us a most exalted view of the dignity of the Saviour, Jehovah, the Lord of the whole earth,—the object of the religious worship of angels.

This appears to me to be the view which the apostle had of this Psalm. And if so, it gives us a most extensive view of Christ's kingdom or dominion.

I do not intend at present to treat of Christ's kingdom in that sense wherein it respects only his *peculiar people* and church whom he hath redeemed, and who shall all finally partake of his glory; nor yet of the *visible appearance* of that kingdom among men, which includes many false professors. This has been frequently handled agreeably to the scriptures. But what I have in view is his *universal kingdom*, or dominion, over the whole creation of God. Upon this I would observe,

1. That he was naturally entitled to this universal dominion as the Creator of all things: for "all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made," John, i. 3. And that not only the lower creation, but the highest intelligences in heaven; "for by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him, and by him all things consist," Col. i. 16, 17. The relation of the Creator to his creatures, gives the most undoubted right of sovereign dominion over them. But then,

2. The apostle does not adduce this Psalm to prove Christ's universal dominion as *Creator*, but as the *Messiah* raised from the dead and exalted above angels; as Lord and heir of all things, having all things put under him, see Heb. chap. i. ii. and viii. and that by way of donation from the Father who thus exalted and constituted him heir of all things. So that we must understand the Psalm speaking of him as in our nature or as the Son, when it saith, the Lord reigneth, ver. 1. and when it terms him universally "the Lord of the whole earth," ver. 5. and not only so, but when it de-

clares him *high above all the earth*, and *exalted far above all gods*, *i. e.* the angels of God in heaven who are commanded to worship him.

Some texts express the *universal dominion* and authority of Christ in general terms. He himself says, "*All things* are delivered to me of my Father," Matt. xi. 27. The Baptist says, "The Father loveth the Son, and he hath given *all things* into his hand," John, iii. 35. Peter says, *He is Lord of all*, Acts, x. 36. and Paul observes upon the universal word *all* in Psalm, viii. 6. "For in that he put *all* in subjection under him, he left *nothing* that is not put under him," Heb. ii. 8. These universal expressions therefore must be taken in an unlimited sense.

There are other texts which mention the extensive bounds of his dominion, as well as the creatures and things which are the subjects of it. He says, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth," Matt. xxviii. 18. *Heaven*, then, is one part of his extensive empire. He is exalted far above all heavens; there his throne is at the right hand of the Majesty on high, Heb. i. 3. All the holy angels in heaven are his subjects, as is clearly and repeatedly declared, see Eph. i. 21. Philip. ii. 9, 10. Heb. i. 4. *ad. ult.* 1 Pet. iii. 22. They had formerly dominion assigned them, but now all is immediately put under the Son, and they are his ministers, Heb. i. 14. chap. ii. 5—9. The spirits of just men made perfect in heaven are all his subjects, and the purchase of his blood; and they join with the angels in worshipping the Lamb: for he is Lord of the dead as well as of the living, Rom. xiv. 9. Heaven itself is at his disposal; and so he appoints a kingdom to his disciples as the Father hath appointed unto him.

The *earth* is another part of his empire, and he has all power in it. Hence he is called “the Lord of the whole earth.” It will be owned, that he is in a peculiar manner Lord and King of his people and church on earth, as has often been shown. But this is not all; the whole world belongs to him, and “he is the governor among the nations,” Psalm, xxii. 28. The Father hath by grant given to his only Son, begotten from the dead, “the heathen for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession,” Psalm, ii. 8. This cannot be restricted to his elect among all nations; for it includes a rightful power to punish rebels against his government, who will not have him to reign over them, ver. 9, and this plainly implies, his right of dominion over them as King. The same universal dominion is held forth, Psalm, xxii. 28, 29. and Psalm, xviii. 43—46. Psalm, xlvi. 7, 8. Psalm, lxxii. 8—12. where we find it attended with the destruction of all who will not submit to him as their rightful King. The Jews would not receive him as their king, nor have him to reign over them, and accordingly he brought destruction on them and on their city, Matt. xxii. 7. When he sends forth his apostles to preach the gospel, he bids them go into all the world, and publish it to every creature, to all nations; which shows that his dominion extends over the whole earth; and he bids them also declare universally, that *he that believeth*, consequently submits to him as King, *shall be saved*; but that *he that believeth not*, consequently refuses subjection to him, *shall be damned*. This shows, that he has *all power on earth*, and that every one is accountable to him, and so under his administration, as to be either saved or punished by him, as they receive or reject him.—

Further, He is the Sovereign of all the mighty kings on earth, Psalm, lxxii. 11. Hence he is styled "*King of kings and Lord of lords,*" 1 Tim. vi. 15. Rev. xvii. 14. ch. xix. 16. and "the Prince of the kings of the earth," ch. i. 5. for all the kingdoms of the world are included in his grant, Rev. xi. 15. Hence the kings of the earth are admonished to be wise, and the judges to be instructed—to serve the Lord with fear, and to rejoice with trembling; and to kiss the Son (*i. e.* acknowledge him as their Sovereign) lest he be angry, &c. Psalm, ii. 10—12. So that the nations of the earth and all their rulers are under his administration. They are all under obligation to believe in him as the Saviour, and obey him as their King; and all who will not do so, shall undoubtedly be punished as rebels against their lawful Sovereign. Again, he over-rules all the revolutions, events, and commotions of this world in subserviency to the great ends of his government and kingdom. He not only opens the book with seven seals, but directs and over-rules all the events, whether of mercy or judgment, that fall out under every one of them to the end of time; for the Lord Christ reigneth, and must reign, even in the midst of his enemies, until they are finally subdued and made his footstool.

Lastly, All judgment is committed to him; "for the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son, that all men might honour the Son, even as they honour the Father—and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man," John, v. 22, 23, 27. This includes a power to raise the dead, and cite them before his tribunal, both the righteous and the wicked: for all must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, to receive the things done in the body, according to that they

have done, whether it be good or bad, 2 Cor. v. 10. Now, if all the earth are amenable to him as their Judge ; if he has sovereign power to confer rewards and inflict punishment according to men's works ; then he must be King of all the earth, for these are acts of kingly government. Even the devils themselves are the subjects of his power and righteous judgment, and shall at last be punished by him.

Thus it appears that Christ is Lord over all, the supreme head of the whole creation of God ; and that, in consequence of his death and resurrection, he is "highly exalted, and has obtained a name which is above every name, &c. Phil. ii. 9—12. His government extends over heaven, earth and hell, angels, men and devils, the world that now is, and that which is to come ; and all things in nature, providence, and grace, are committed into his hand.

Having thus briefly illustrated this subject, both as it relates to God's providential kingdom in governing the world, and also to the reign of the Messiah, it only remains that we consider what practical improvement we should make of the doctrine. And on this I remark that

1. It should lead us to view the hand of God in every thing that concerns us, as we may clearly perceive the saints of old did, particularly Jacob, David, and Job. Whether in prosperity or adversity, it is a sweet and pleasant employment to converse with God in every thing that befalls us—in all the dispensations of his providence. To a mind so engaged, every thing then seems full of God. When his ways are in the dark with respect to us, let us still hold fast the general conclusion, that all his ways are mercy and truth to them that fear him, and that all events shall

work together for good to them that love God. This view of providence lays a solid foundation for our confidence and trust in his almighty power and goodness—of thankfulness and gratitude for his mercies—of resignation, patience and contentment under afflictions. When thus engaged, the language of our souls will be “It is the Lord! let him do what seemeth good unto him.” “I was dumb: I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it.” This view of the subject should also teach us to acknowledge God in all our ways, and undertakings, saying “If the Lord will, we shall do this or that.” But further,

2. In the universal reign of the Messiah, we have exhibited to our view a glorious manifestation of God, and of his goodwill to guilty men. He sent him into our world out of his great love, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life. He has exalted him as a Prince and a Saviour to grant repentance and remission of sins. All power and authority are committed into his hands both in heaven and on earth; and, vested as he now is with such unlimited dominion, he is fully able to crush all his enemies, and to save to the uttermost all that trust in him. This is surely a matter of joy to the whole earth; for under his reign all nations of the earth are blessed. “The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice, let the multitude of isles be glad thereof.”

3. The dominion of Christ constitutes an *obligation* upon all men, wherever his gospel comes, to believe in and obey him. He is their Sovereign by the universal power which is given unto him as Lord of all, and so has an undoubted right to their faith and obedience, whether they yield it or not. Consequently in rejecting him, they are rebels against his just autho-

rity, and are amenable to him as their Judge. None can plead exemption here, for he is Lord of the whole earth. Hence they are admonished to “Kiss the Son, and serve God in fear, and rejoice with trembling,” Psalm, ii.

4. Again: this doctrine may also serve to rectify various speculative errors, which abound in the professing world; such as—that is not the *duty* of men to believe the gospel—that none but believers are under obligations to obey Christ—that the kingdom of the Messiah has no concern with the affairs of this world—that men may do that as politicians which they could not do as Christians—and that that may be lawful in nations which would be sinful in Christians; with numerous other mistaken opinions which are but too prevalent among us.

5. Lastly: let those who profess themselves to be the subjects of Christ, and to love his kingdom, manifest their obedience, by a conscientious regard to his authority, by observing *all things whatsoever he has commanded*; by earnestly seeking its peace and prosperity; and by vigorous scriptural exertions to extend the knowledge of his salvation, and communicate the benefits of his government throughout every clime; that the nations who are now sitting in darkness and in the region of the shadow of death, may be blessed with the cheering beams of the Sun of Righteousness, until the whole earth be filled with glory.

AMEN.





## SERMON II.

THE GOSPEL REPORT, AND GROUNDS OF ITS  
REJECTION ILLUSTRATED.



ISAIAH, LIII. 1.

*Who hath believed our Report? and to whom is the  
arm of the LORD revealed?*

FROM the 13th verse of the preceding chapter to the end of this, we have a clear prediction of the advent, the sufferings, and the following glory of the Messiah. The verse now read contains a complaint of the prophet respecting the reception which the Messiah would meet with from his own nation when he appeared, for so the inspired apostles explain it, John, xii. 38. Rom. x. 16.

The *report* here mentioned is the report or testimony of the gospel. This the apostle expressly tells us, Rom. x. 16. "But they have not all obeyed the *gospel*; for Isaiah saith, Lord, who hath believed our *report*?" The original word, both in the Old and New Testament, is literally *the hearing*, because it was to be proclaimed in a public and *audible* manner, that all might hear it: for "how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" Rom. x. 14.

The prophet calls the gospel *our report*. He in-

cludes himself among the number of those who proclaimed it; for the prophets testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow, 1 Peter, i. 11. Or, he is led forward by the Spirit to speak in the person of the first publishers of the gospel; even as he speaks of the sufferings of the Messiah as an event which had already taken place. The truth is, the prophetic and apostolic testimony were but one and the same; differing only in this, that the one was *before*, the other *after* the thing testified took place, Acts, xxvi. 22, 23.

When he saith, "Who hath believed our report, &c." he is not putting a question for information, but regretting, or lamenting, the infidelity of the Jews. Neither is he saying that *none* of them believed the gospel, as such negative interrogatories frequently mean, (see Rom. viii. 33-35.) but only, that a very small number of them, comparatively speaking, would credit the report; they were only a *remnant* in comparison of that people whose number was as the sand of the sea, Rom. ix. 27.

By the *arm of the Lord* is meant the divine *power*, and particularly as it is exerted in a work of salvation or deliverance. Thus the Lord is said to have a *mighty arm*, Psalm, lxxxix. 13.—to have redeemed his people with his arm, Psalm, lxxvii. 15.—in saving his people he is said to *make bare his arm*, Isaiah, lii. 10. *i. e.* to display his power in a conspicuous manner. So the arm of the Lord is called upon to awake and put on strength as in the ancient days, when he delivered his people out of Egypt by marvellous works of power, Isaiah, li. 9—11. In our text it signifies that divine power which the gospel holds forth for the salvation of men, and particularly in those wonderful works of power which attended the first publication

of it, and by which it was confirmed. Accordingly John connects this passage with Christ's miracles thus, "But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him, that the saying of Isaias the prophet might be fulfilled—to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" ch. xii. 37, 38. These miracles are said to be done by the *finger* of God, Luke, xi. 20. and by the Lord stretching forth his *hand*, Acts, iv. 30. But it may be asked, Did not the Jews see these miracles with their eyes? How then can it be said that the arm of the Lord was not revealed unto them? To this I answer, They saw indeed the miracles, for they were done *before them*, yet many of them saw not the arm, or power, of the Lord in these miracles, but ascribed them unto Beelzebub, Luke, xi. 15. Others who were obliged to own them to be effects of divine power, yet denied the meaning and import of them, *viz.* That Jesus was the Christ the Son of God. The arm of the Lord was not revealed to them in these miracles as a confirmation of the gospel report concerning Jesus, and so they did not believe on him, but excused themselves in this way, "Give God the praise; we know that this man is a sinner," John, ix. 24. So that though the Lord's arm was made bare, yet they perceived not its import, like their fathers in the wilderness, "For all this they sinned still; and believed not for his wondrous works," Psalm, lxxviii. 32. Having explained the words, I shall now consider more particularly

- I. The subject matter of the gospel report.
- II. The grounds of the prophet's complaint.
- III. The causes of the infidelity of the Jews.
- IV. Make some use of what may be delivered.

I. The subject matter of the gospel report as it was at first published to the Jews, during Christ's personal ministry, was in substance as follows :

That their promised and long-expected Messiah was now come—That Jesus of Nazareth was the person.—That he was the Son of God, or God manifest in the flesh.—That he was to lay down his life as a sacrifice for the sins of many—That he was to rise again from the dead on the third day, and take possession of his heavenly kingdom, as supreme Lord and Judge of all. And that whosoever should receive this testimony, or believe on him in this character, should not perish but have eternal life, and be raised up by him to the full enjoyment of it at the last day.

After Christ's resurrection and the effusion of the Spirit, the gospel report was still the same as formerly, with this difference only—that it was now declared more *fully* and *clearly*—that several things formerly announced as *at hand*, were now declared to be *accomplished*—and that the *crowning proof* of the great point to be believed, was now given in his resurrection, ascension, and sending the Spirit, the wonderful effects of which were seen and heard by all. This is the gospel testimony, which was also preached unto the Gentile nations; and which we are called to believe at this day. I come now to consider

II. The grounds of the prophet's complaint with respect to the Jews. And

I. It is evident that the principal ground of his complaint, was their *infidelity* in not believing the gospel report concerning the Messiah: "Lord," says he, "who hath believed our report?" They indeed believed that the Messiah was to come, according as it was predicted by their prophets whom they believed

to have been inspired—they explained several of the prophecies respecting him very justly, such as that he should come of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, John, vii. 42.—and they were expecting him about the very time in which he appeared. But when he actually did come, what reception did they give him? Did they acknowledge him in his true character, and hail their King? By no means; “He is despised and rejected of men,” says the prophet, Isa. liii. 3. “He came unto his own, and his own received him not,” says the evangelist, John, i. 11. Whatever they believed concerning the Messiah, they did not believe that Jesus was the person; and so he tells them, “If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins,” John, viii. 24. for the gospel report respected Jesus and none else.

2. The gospel report was sufficiently published among them, and that by the Lord himself and his apostles. Had they only heard some distant, vague, and indistinct report, their infidelity would have been the more excusable; and so our Lord says, “If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloke for their sin,” John, xv. 22. The word *report*, as I noticed, signifies *the hearing* in the original; that very thing by which faith comes, Rom. x. 17. and implies a sufficient publication of the gospel in their ears. So the apostle explains it, “But I say have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world,” Rom. x. 18. It is mentioned as an aggravation of Israel’s infidelity in the wilderness, that “some when they had heard, did provoke,” Heb. iii. 16. This therefore is another ground of the prophet’s complaint, that the Jews continued obstinate in their unbelief, and rejected

both the gospel testimony and calls, though it was so fully and clearly proclaimed among them.

3. Lastly, Another ground of his complaint is, that they should reject all the clear and demonstrative evidence and proofs, by which the gospel report was confirmed;—"to whom," says he, "is the arm of the Lord revealed?"

They were constantly referred to the *predictions* of their own prophets which they had among their hands, and entreated to compare them with what was daily transacting before their eyes; but all in vain. "They searched the scriptures, for in them they thought they had eternal life, and they are they which testified of Jesus; and yet they would not come to him that they might have life," John, v. 39, 40. They did not discern the signs of the times, though they were most clearly foretold, and exactly verified in Jesus before their eyes. They saw not the arm of the Lord revealed in accomplishing what he had promised. Thus whatever they professed, they neither believed Moses nor the prophets, for they all wrote of Jesus, John, v. 46. Again; Jesus referred them to his *miracles*, for a proof of his mission. "The works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me," John, v. 36. Peter appeals to their own knowledge of these miracles as performed before their eyes, Acts, ii. 22. "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know." But John tells us, that "though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him, that this saying of Isaias the prophet might be fulfilled," John, xii. 37, 38. The *arm of the Lord* which was made

bare in these miracles was not revealed to them as confirming the testimony of Jesus; and so they were proof against any true conviction from them. Thus their unbelief was exceedingly aggravated, as our Lord expressly declares, "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father." We see also how he upbraids those cities where most of his mighty works were done, telling them it would be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, for Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgment, than for them, Matt. xi. 20—25.—They had also the evidence which arose from his *resurrection* from the dead, whereby he was determined the Son of God with power, and to this he refers them as the great and crowning proof that he was the Messiah, Matt. xvi. 4. xii. 39, 40. Yet when it actually took place, and was declared to them with power, they saw not the *arm of the Lord*, which was so conspicuously revealed in it, but resisted all the evidence, and so believed not the gospel report. Thus I have shown the grounds of the prophet's complaint and lamentation, and now proceed to point out

### III. The causes of their infidelity.

This may very well be accounted for upon the general principle of the depravity of the human heart, which is naturally both blind to, and averse from, divine things. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned," 1 Cor. ii. 14. "The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be," Rom. viii. 7. This being the case, no wonder that the gospel scheme, which is so far above all men's natural reasonings,

and in many respects opposite to them, and which strikes so directly against their favourite lusts and inclinations, should be rejected by them. But to be a little more particular :

1. *Ignorance* or *blindness* of mind was one great cause of their unbelief. So the apostle says, "Blindness in part hath happened to Israel—the rest were blinded," Rom. xi. 7, 25. "Had they known they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory," 1 Cor. ii. 8. "It was through ignorance they did it, as did also their rulers," Acts iii. 17. Our Lord says, "Let them alone, they be blind leaders of the blind," Matt. xv. 14. "Hearing they heard the gospel report, but did not understand its import; seeing they saw Christ, his miracles, and the accomplishment of the prophecies, but did not perceive the evidence that Jesus was the Messiah, Matt. xiii. 14. and "because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets, which were read every Sabbath day, they fulfilled them in condemning him," Acts, xiii. 27. for when Moses was read the vail was upon their heart, 2 Cor. iii. 15. They had, therefore, no true perception of the import, evidence, and excellency of the gospel report, however much they heard or saw about it with their bodily ears and eyes. But we must not ascribe their unbelief entirely to simple ignorance, otherwise they could not be condemned for it, as our Lord declares, "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin," John, xv. 22.—"If ye were blind ye should have no sin," ch. ix. 41. *i. e.* If ye were *entirely* and in *every respect* ignorant, and had no *means* of information, ye could not be guilty of unbelief; for unbelief is the discrediting of something which is declared or made known to us. Therefore we must admit that



2. Another cause of their unbelief was deeply rooted *prejudices*, which did not suffer them to consider the gospel with candour, or to attend unto its evidence. By prejudices I mean erroneous preconceived opinions which forestall and pre-occupy the mind like first principles; and which, till they are dispossessed, govern the judgment so entirely that it can admit of no truth, however plain and well attested, which seems in any respect to clash with them. For instance, should the doctrine of the resurrection be ever so clearly understood by any person, yet should he at the same time hold this prejudice against it—that a resurrection is *impossible* in the nature of things, and altogether *absurd*, it is evident that every attempt to persuade him would only serve to excite his indignation or contempt; for he could with no patience attend to the evidence of a fact which he esteemed impossible, and which, therefore, could in his judgment admit of no proof. Again, should a person hold some deeply rooted errors respecting the divine character and government, and hear some pretending to be his messengers, give a very different account of God and his ways, would he not consider them as blasphemers, and reject all the evidence of their divine mission as artful imposture, or satanic delusions?

Such then was the case with the Jews. They heard the gospel report, and understood something of its meaning; but it was so opposite to their preconceived notions and deeply rooted prejudices, that they could not admit its truth, and so rejected all the evidence by which it was confirmed as deceit and imposture. I shall here just mention some of their leading prejudices.—They held it as a firm sentiment that the Messiah was to be an earthly monarch, who should

not only free them from the power of their temporal enemies, but extend his conquests over the heathen nations, and raise the glory of the Jewish state to the highest pitch. Our Lord's disciples themselves were not altogether exempt from this prejudice of their countrymen; for some of them appear ambitious to be his prime ministers, Matt. xviii. 1. and even after his resurrection ask, "Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" Acts, i. 6. This erroneous opinion among the Jews took its rise partly from their pride and worldly ambition, and partly from their ignorance of the true sense of the prophecies, which frequently set forth the kingdom, conquests, and glory of the Messiah by images drawn from earthly things. So standing the fact, the consequence was, that when the Messiah came they saw nothing about him to answer their carnal expectations, but every thing the reverse, as the prophet had beforehand declared, Isaiah, liii. and hence they despised and rejected him, ver. 2—4. Psalm, cxviii. 22, 23. This prejudice made all the evidence of his divine mission go for nothing; because they held it impossible that such a mean person as Jesus appeared to be could ever be the glorious triumphant Messiah held forth in their prophets. They saw about him no earthly grandeur, court pageantry, nor military preparations answerable to the designs they had in view; nor did they see him pay his court to the rulers of the nation to secure their interest; but, on the contrary, taking up with the meanest of the people, and choosing fishermen and publicans for his intimates; and therefore they considered it as a disgrace to their nation, and an affront to their understandings, to speak of him as their Messiah. This radical prejudice

involved in it a number of others; for if they did not admit he was the Messiah, they must have held him for a deceiver of the people, and looked upon all his doctrines and miracles (however pure the one, and wonderful the other) as directed to this end; and that this was their opinion they frequently declare, John, vii. 12. and therefore they could not receive any thing from him as they would do from another man of whom they had a good opinion; hence they tax his doctrine with blasphemy and his miracles with diabolical art.—Another ground of prejudice was, that Jesus paid no regard to the traditions of the elders, for which they had the highest veneration, exalting them even above the law of God itself, Matt. xv. 2, 3, 6. They even thought that he paid no regard to the Sabbath, Luke, xiii. 14, 15. Add to this, that while he associated with notorious sinners, and appeared friendly to them, Matt. ix. 10, 11. and xi. 19. he at the same time inveighed very severely against the most religious and esteemed characters in the nation, representing them as covetous, malicious, and hypocritical, children of the devil, who could not escape the damnation of hell, affirming that the publicans and harlots would enter the kingdom of God before them, Matt. xxiii. This would naturally raise the resentment of those against whom his censures were levelled, as tending to discredit them among the people; and those who held them in the highest veneration would be ready to attribute his severity to his dislike of strict religion and godliness; and they would be confirmed in this from the contempt he showed to the traditions of the elders. The prophet tells us, that in his sufferings “they did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted,” Isaiah, liii. 4. *i. e.* they looked upon him as deserving

the punishment he sustained on account of his own sins; and so they put him to death as a wicked person.

His sufferings and death were to the Jews another ground of prejudice; and contrary to any notions they had of the Messiah, though nothing was more clearly foretold in their prophecies, see Psalm, xxii. Isaiah, liii. Dan. ix. 26. But their minds were so filled with the idea of a triumphant victorious prince, that they entirely overlooked the prophecies which respected his sufferings; and so when Christ tells them he was to be lifted up, (*i. e.* crucified) they object to it immediately, saying, "We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever; and how sayest thou the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?" John, xii. 32—35. They here refer to the promise made unto David, that the Messiah should sit for ever on his throne, Psalm, lxxxix. 36. and they could not conceive how this could be if he was to suffer death. Even our Lord's disciples could not digest this, see Matt. xvi. 21—24. The Jews considered the death of Jesus as a full proof that he was not the Messiah, for it overturned at once every conception they had of him; and so Paul says, that the preaching of Christ crucified was to the Jews a stumbling-block, 1 Cor. i. 23. *i. e.* the most offensive and incredible thing they could think of.—Another ground of prejudice was the place of his birth; "Search and look, (say they) for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet," John, vii. 52. Though they might have known that he was to be called a Nazarene, or the Branch, Isa. xi. 1. Matt. ii. 23. and display the light of the gospel in Galilee of the Gentiles, Isa. ix. 1, 2. Matt. iv. 15, 16. notwithstanding his being born in Bethlehem

of Judea, Micah, v. 2. Matt. ii. 6.—With respect to the bulk of the common people, who implicitly followed their blind guides, it was a sufficient argument with them against his being the Messiah, “Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed on him?” John, vii. 48. for they could not imagine that God would suffer such holy, pious, and learned men to be mistaken in so important a point; and upon this presumption they followed them in rejecting him, and so both fell into the ditch. But to proceed :

3. A third cause of their unbelief was their *aversion* to the gospel report, as striking against their favourite lusts and corrupt inclinations. It is surprising to think what influence the inclination has upon the reason and judgment of men, either in receiving or rejecting truths proposed to them. Instead of the will being directed by the judgment, the judgment is often governed and directed by the will. If a man does not like a doctrine, he will endeavour all he can to deceive himself, and resist the evidence of its truth. With respect to the gospel, our Lord says, “This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil,” John, iii. 19. He says, “If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father,” John, xv. 24. Again, “Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do,” John, viii. 43, 44.—*Worldly-mindedness* is represented as hindering their believing. They were covetous, and derided his doctrine. The cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches

choked the word. They who were first bidden to the gospel-feast went, one to his farm and the other to his merchandise.—*Pride* and the love of *worldly-honour* was another cause: “How can ye believe which receive honour one of another, and seek not that honour which cometh from God only?” John, v. 44. Even some of them who had secret convictions of the truth, stifled them, and did not confess Jesus lest they should be put out of the synagogue; and the reason given is, “For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God,” John, xii. 42, 43. They could not think of falling into disrepute with their religious neighbours, or to separate from the established church.—*Self-righteousness* was another cause. “They trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others—they went about to establish their own righteousness, and so did not submit themselves to the righteousness of God.” They knew not their bondage to sin and Satan, John, viii. 33. nor saw any need of a spiritual Saviour.

Having thus illustrated the subject matter of this report, *viz.* That Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, who died and rose again for the salvation of sinners:—The grounds of the prophet’s complaint; *viz.* the unbelief of the Jews, notwithstanding the gospel report was sufficiently published to them, and the truth of it fully attested by their own prophets, by miracles, and by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead:—with the causes of the Jews’ infidelity, *viz.* their ignorance, prejudice, and aversion: I shall now

IV. Make some use and application of the subject.

I. From the unbelief of the Jews we have a strik-

king evidence of the truth of the gospel report. Some will be apt to start at this, and ask, How can this be? Were not the Jews eye and ear witnesses of the transactions and doctrines of Jesus? Had they not better access to know and judge of the facts than we, at this distance of time? Besides, was not Jesus their countryman, for whom they may be supposed to have had some partiality? Must not their unbelief, therefore, be rather a strong presumption against the truth of the gospel testimony? To this I answer with the apostle, "Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid; yea, let God be true, but every man a liar," Rom. iii. 3, 4. But if we consider that their unbelief was clearly foretold by their own prophets, then, instead of being an objection, it must be a strong proof that Jesus is the true Messiah. Now it is a fact, that the Jewish scriptures contain several predictions that they would reject their Messiah when he came unto them; thus Psalm, cxviii. 22. where Christ is represented as the head-cornerstone, and rejected of the Jewish builders, Acts, iv. 11. In Isaiah, viii. 14, 15. it is foretold of the Messiah, that he "shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel; for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken." Compare this with Isaiah, xxviii. 16. Rom. ix. 33. 1 Peter, ii. 8. Our text is another prophecy, that few of them were to believe the gospel report, and that the Messiah was to be despised and rejected of his own countrymen, Isaiah, liii. 1—3. The blindness and hardness of their hearts is also foretold, with the consequent total destruction that

was to come upon them, Isaiah, vi. 9—13. with JOHN. xii. 40. Matt. xiii. 14. Nay, it was foretold that Herod, Pontius Pilate, and the people of Israel, should combine against the Lord's Christ to put him to death, Psalm, ii. 1, 2. with Acts, iv. 25.—That the Jews should reject and crucify their own Messiah, whom they were so earnestly looking for, was a thing very unlikely, and could not be foreseen by any human sagacity. None but the omniscient God could foretell it. That the event hath verified the prediction we have already seen from the history of the New Testament; and if any should doubt that, let them ask the Jews at this day, who will not dispute the fact, but avow and justify the infidelity of their forefathers. But then it may be said, that this does not sufficiently distinguish the true Christ, for the Jews might reject others as well as him. To which I answer, that this was not the case; they took up with every impostor that flattered their carnal views; “If another shall come in his own name, (says Jesus) him ye will receive;” John, v. 43. The prophets foretold that they were to reject the true Messiah; for they describe him as the foundation stone which God should lay in Zion, who was to be wounded for the transgressions of God's people; as the Lord's anointed, whom he should set over his holy hill of Zion; his Son whom he hath begotten; the stone whom he was to make the head of the corner; and who, by his knowledge, should justify many. This is the description of the person whom they were to reject. And to whom will it apply? Will the Jews apply it to any person who has already come, and who was honourably received by their forefathers? This will not do, for this person must have been rejected by them whoever he is.—Will



they apply it to any impostor whom their ancestors have rejected? Neither will this do, for the character given him in the prophecies will not agree to an impostor. Will they apply it to any one who is yet to come, and who shall answer their expectations? As little will this do; for, if the prophecies are true, come when he will, they must reject him; they will see no beauty in him that they should desire him. Besides, the person promised must have come according to the prophecies, ere the sceptre departed from Judah, Gen. xlix. 10. and before the second temple was destroyed, Haggai, ii. 7. and before Daniel's 70 weeks, or 490 years, from giving forth the commandment to rebuild Jerusalem, were expired, Dan. ix. 24—27. but all these have happened long ago. But, as I said, whatever time the Messiah was to make his appearance, it is foretold that the Jews should reject him, even as they rejected Jesus.—Will they allege a number of reasons why Jesus could not be the Christ? Be it so; but will they have no reasons for rejecting the true Christ? Will he be perfectly agreeable to their expectations? How in that case can they be supposed to reject him? And if they reject not the true Messiah, come when he will, how are the prophecies fulfilled? But we know that Jesus is the true Messiah, because he came at the time, and in the circumstances foretold—he answers to all the accounts given of him in the prophecies, and to this among the rest, that he was to be rejected of his countrymen, the Jews. Let their unbelief, therefore, confirm our faith, and reach conviction to infidels.

Will it be said, that these prophecies were forged after the events took place? This cannot be; for our Lord and his apostles apply these prophecies to the

Jews at the very time they were fulfilling them in rejecting the Messiah, which shews they were then written in the Jewish scriptures. The Jews at this day acknowledge these prophecies to be the inspired writings of their prophets, and read them in their synagogues every Sabbath day, though they both foretell and condemn their infidelity.

2. From what has been said I would deduce a caution or two to real Christians.

1. That we should not boast or glory over the Jews. The apostle makes this use of the subject, and of God's consequent rejection of that people, Rom. xi. 18—23. We are all ready to condemn the Jews, as we justly may; but then we are apt to think, had we been in their place, we should not have acted their part; even as they said, "If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets," Matt. xxiii. 30. Yet these same persons who abhorred the deeds of their fathers, crucified the Lord of Glory himself, and persecuted his apostles. It is a great deception to think that we are naturally better than they in any respect, or that under the like circumstances we should not have acted the same part, unless prevented by sovereign grace.

2. It is easy to shew that the rejectors of the gospel now are worse than they, if we only consider our advantages above them. They had indeed Moses and the prophets testifying beforehand the coming of Christ; but then that revelation was so clothed in earthly figures, that it required another revelation to unfold them, and being prejudiced against Christ and his apostles, they could not receive their interpretation. But we are not brought up with such national

prejudices against the New Testament revelation, wherein the whole is unfolded to us with great plainness of speech. The appearance of the Messiah was exceedingly contrary to their expectations. They saw him a mean man—they knew that his kindred and relations were poor people, who dwelt in Galilee, a part of the country from which they expected no prophet, and so considered it as ridiculous in the highest degree to speak of Jesus as the Messiah. But we are taught from our infancy that the Messiah was to appear in that manner, and not in earthly grandeur.—They were trained up under an earthly establishment of religion which their ancestors received from God, and so from religious principle were led to reject every thing which, in their apprehension, tended to set it aside. But we are taught from the New Testament that Christ's kingdom is not national, or of this world, and that the kingdom and church of the Jews was only an earthly temporal figure of it; and that it was designed to vanish away when the Messiah came. They had only part of the evidence of the gospel; but we have it now fully collected and summed up in writings which we profess to receive as inspired.

But perhaps many nominal Christians who have little value for the gospel, will be much offended at being compared to the wicked infidel Jews. Let us examine their pretensions a little.

Will they tell us that they have been *born of godly parents*? This may admit of a doubt; but granting it to be the case, so were the Jews: they could say, "We have Abraham to our father," Matt. iii. 9. Were your parents equal to the father of the faithful, who is called the friend of God? Yet this did not avail

them ; for the rich man in hell cried to Abraham as his father, without effect. Neither will the godliness of your parents avail you any thing unless you are born from above.

But “ they brought us into covenant with God, and dedicated us to him as soon as we were born by *baptism.*” So were the Jews by circumcision ; but this did not avail them, though it was God’s ordinance, without the circumcision of the heart. How then will your being sprinkled in infancy (which is no ordinance of God, but only an invention of men) avail you, when even true baptism would be of no service without true faith and repentance ?

But “ we are members of the true reformed presbyterian national church of Scotland, and so must be better than either Jews, Papists, Episcopalians, or Sectaries.” The Jews were members of the only true national church that ever God established in this world, and which was a figure not of any other national church on this earth, but of the holy nation of believers gathered from among all nations. And as Christ’s kingdom is not of this world, his subjects being only those who are of the truth and hear his voice, the Jews had greatly the advantage in this respect, that their national church was founded by God ; whereas all national churches now are established by men upon the corruption of Christianity, and by forming a junction betwixt believers and visible unbelievers, which is expressly contrary to the whole of the New Testament.

But “ we regularly attend church on Sundays, and take the sacrament once or twice a year.” The Jews were very punctual in attending the worship of God. “ They sought God daily, and delighted to know his

ways as a nation that did righteousness, Isa. lviii. 2. Some of them fasted twice a week, paid tithes of all they possessed, and yet were proud, conceited hypocrites. Do you outstrip them in these things, and add sincerity to it? I believe you do not equal them, and yet unless your righteousness exceed theirs, you cannot enter the kingdom of God.

But “we believe the gospel, which they did not.” Let us try this by your fruits, which is our Lord’s rule. Have you been convinced of your need of Christ? Do you count all things but loss and dung for the excellent knowledge of him? Are you less proud, sensual, and covetous than the Jews? more spiritually-minded, and conformed to the mind and example of Christ in humility, patience, self-denial, benevolence, and love, with all its practical effects? If not, then it is only calling him Lord, Lord, while you do not the things that he says.

3. Let us take warning by the punishment of the Jews for their infidelity, which appeared, and still appears visible in this world; and by the more dreadful punishment that awaits unbelievers in the world to come.—Let us beware lest the misimprovement of the gospel provoke the Lord to give us up to judicial blindness, as he did them.—And let us not deceive ourselves with a *form of godliness* without the power of it, as they did;—nor with zeal about *lesser matters* while we neglect the weightier matters of the law;—nor yet with an outward appearance before men, without inward sincerity of heart.—And to conclude the whole, let the infidelity of the Jews confirm our faith in the truth of the gospel of our salvation,

## SERMON III.

### THE GOSPEL FEAST.



#### MATTHEW, XXII. 1—14.

*And Jesus spake to them in parables, and said, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: and the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth; and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy; go ye, therefore, into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment; and he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.*

**T**HE practice of conveying instruction by means of *Parables* is of very ancient date. We can trace it in

the scriptures as far back as the days of the Judges; a period of about three thousand years, when we find Jotham, by the parable of the trees of the forest choosing the bramble to reign over them, conveying a most cutting reproof to the Shechemites for electing Abimelech, the basest of Gideon's sons, for their king, and in murdering all the rest of them. Indeed the advantages arising from this mode of instruction, when judiciously managed, are so considerable, that it has prevailed in all ages. It was used by the Hebrew prophets, by the Eastern sages, and by the Jewish doctors; and it is manifest that our Lord Jesus Christ, who may be truly said to have carried it to perfection, had various inducements to adopt this practice. For, independent of the consideration that it added beauty and vigour to his discourses, and rendered them more agreeable to a people accustomed to this manner of speaking; it enabled him to throw a veil over some things which there might be an impropriety at the moment in declaring in express terms. Many events were to take place, which, humanly speaking, would have been obstructed, had our Lord openly and plainly foretold them, and had he been credited by those to whom he addressed himself; such as his being put to death by the Jews, the destruction of their polity and worship, and the spread of the gospel among the Gentiles. And then, as to the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, the full explanation of them being reserved for wise purposes, to the preaching of the apostles, this parabolic mode of instruction was the fittest to convey that degree of light concerning them, which was judged the most proper during the term of our Saviour's own personal

ministry. Hence, a little before his last sufferings, he said to his disciples, "These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs (or parables); the time cometh when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father," John, xvi. 25. \*

Among the numerous parables which our Lord delivered during his personal ministry, this of the marriage of the king's son, holds a distinguished rank. The evangelist Luke, ch. xiv. 16—24. records a parable of a similar kind, as delivered by Christ, and it is not easy to determine whether they are one and the same, narrated with a little variation of circumstances, or whether they were spoken upon different occasions. However, in attempting a brief illustration of the one before us, I purpose

I. To shew what is meant by the marriage-feast.

II. Why men make light of the invitation to it.

III. What is meant by wanting the wedding garment.

I. This parable was originally spoken to the Jews, to whom the first gospel invitations were given, and who for the most part rejected them.—God the Father is the *king*, whose grace and love is the original spring of all—Jesus Christ is the *son*, who is the bridegroom of his church.—The *servants* are the prophets, John the Baptist, and the apostles, &c. some of whom are sent before, others after, the feast is prepared.—The *guests* invited are first the Jews at Jerusalem, then those of the dispersion, and lastly the Gentiles.—The *feast* itself are the blessings of the everlasting gospel.

\* See Stennett on the Parable of the Sower.



2. The things provided for this feast are set forth under the images of oxen and fatlings, ver. 4. see also Prov. ix. 2. Isa. xxv. 6. and lv. 1, 2. Here the provisions of the gospel are represented by the choicest and most delicious dainties, in comparison of which all other things are *unsatisfying*, and *not bread*. Here God hath provided both for himself and for sinners, that they may feast together. He hath provided for himself a Lamb for a sacrifice of infinite dignity and value, wherein he rests for ever well-pleased. He invites sinners to partake of this feast also, and be reconciled to him.—To receive the free *remission of their sins*, the *adoption of children*, and feast abundantly upon his *love* and grace manifested in and flowing freely through a crucified Saviour. Here he holds forth himself as their satisfying and everlasting portion; their father, their God, and their all, in time and through eternity. What a feast is this!

3. To induce sinners to come to this feast of love, (for it is a *marriage* feast) he tells them that *all things are ready*. Much was to be done in *making ready* this feast, before it could be a suitable entertainment for guilty sinners.—The law which was broken by their sins must be fulfilled, magnified, and made honourable.—Reparation must be made to divine justice by a complete and adequate atonement for sin.—The head of the serpent must be bruised; the world, sin, and death overcome; an everlasting righteousness brought in; and remission of sins and eternal life procured in a consistency with all the divine perfections. What insurmountable difficulties (humanly speaking) lay in the way of preparing this feast! Neither men nor angels could give the least assistance in this preparation. But behold the depth of infinite wisdom

and grace! To make all things ready, the eternal Word must be made flesh, and in the form of a servant become obedient in the room of the guilty, be made a curse and endure the death of the cross for their sakes, and rise again from the dead for their justification to eternal life.—How costly to the Father this feast! how costly to the Son! Angels had never such a feast prepared for them. “Expended Deity for human weal!”—The saints of old looked forward to it with longing desires, and died in the sure hope of being satisfied with it, Psalm, lxxv. 4. but all things were not then ready. But now, the Lord bids his servants tell sinners of mankind, “Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and *all things are ready*; come unto the marriage.” In this feast nothing is *deficient*, or left for us to provide; for (says the Lord) here are *all things*—*i. e.* every thing becoming his infinite bounty, and every thing suited to our wants; he spared not his Son, and he gives *all things* with him. Nor is any thing *unprepared*; every thing is in a finished and perfect state; all is already done and prepared for present use. In this respect we have nothing to do either. Moreover, however costly this feast, yet nothing is left for us to *pay*; it is absolutely free, without money and without price, Isa. Iv. 1.—And lastly, the invitation demands a *speedy compliance*, because all things are ready and waiting upon us. Every moment’s delay is dangerous, and throwing contempt on the feast and its provider.

4. But notwithstanding all this costly preparation, we are told *they made light of it*. Wonder, O heavens! and be astonished, O earth! Can any thing be more unaccountable than this conduct? especially after such repeated, hearty, and free invitations. But

this is not all; they even take the servants, entreat them spitefully, and slay them, ver. 6. There is, however, in the corrupt human heart what will account for this conduct, however astonishing it may appear; which leads me to consider,

II. Why men make light of the gospel invitation.  
And

1. *Unbelief* is the great and radical cause of slighting this feast. Indeed the coming to, and partaking of, the gospel feast is only by faith, or believing in the name of the Son of God, as delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification. Faith is the only way whereby spiritual and invisible objects can be received and enjoyed; and consequently unbelief, which is its privation or opposite, must entirely incapacitate men for complying with the gospel invitation, or enjoying the good things held forth therein: for how should they comply with what they neither believe nor credit? Many can speculate about the gospel, who do not believe its truth.

2. The natural *enmity* and *alienation* of the heart from God is another reason. The carnal mind is not only ignorant of God, but *enmity* against, and neither is nor can be subject to his law, Rom. viii. 7. We are all by nature *enemies* to God in our minds by wicked works, however mild, good-natured, and sociable we may be in other respects. Our Lord says, "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil: for every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd," John, iii. 19, 20. Upon this text two queries arise: First, How can men hate the light which they neither properly understand nor

believe?—Ans. They know so much of it as to render them inexcusable, and to excite their hatred, see **John, xv. 22—24.** Secondly, But how comes such joyful, suitable, and seasonable news as that which the gospel contains, to excite men's hatred? Answer, Because they neither see it in that point of light, nor the need they have of it—because it interferes with their carnal pursuits, which they love better—and because it condemns their evil deeds, and gives them uneasiness and disquiet. This is the reason given by our Lord, why they hate and shun the light. From this natural aversion, they not only make light of the invitation; but the hatred of some transports them so far as to maltreat the messengers and even to slay them, whilst they were inviting them to partake of the grace and bounty of their master. What diabolical malevolence and base ingratitude was here!

3. The *insensibility of their need* of the gospel provision made them slight the invitation. Our Lord says, that the whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick. Now though all are infected with the malady of sin, and so need a physician, yet few are duly sensible of this; and indeed this very insensibility is a constituent part of the disease; and while this is the case they will pay little regard to the gospel remedy. Persons may in general own they are sinners, whilst they have the whole world to bear them company, though they have no self-abasing conviction of sin—in its *source—universality* over the whole man—*hatefulness* and malignity.—And as to its *consequences*, they cannot believe that it deserves, or will meet with the punishment threatened. Hence they make light of the pardon and reconciliation held forth in this feast.

4. They have no *appetite* or *desire* for the good things held forth in it. The finest dainties have no relish to the full soul; it loathes the honey comb. The enjoyments prepared in the gospel feast are no enjoyments to them, their minds being sensual and earthly. The *favour*, the *image*, and the *enjoyment* of God, they have no delight in, and consequently no hunger after. Hence they make light of it. But “blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled,” Matt. v. 6.—such hungry souls he filleth with good things, whilst the rich he sends empty away, Luke, i. 53.

5. *Pride* and *self-righteousness* is another reason why the gospel feast is despised. This reason is assigned by the apostle with respect to the Jews; “They being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God,” Rom. x. 3. The gospel supposes our being worthless, helpless, and undone sinners, and holds forth a salvation suitable to such, and to such only. It rejects all compromise with the pride of man, and exalts only the glory of sovereign, free, rich grace. Hence we cannot be comforted by it without being humbled. Pride and self-righteousness cannot stoop to this. It cannot brook to be levelled with the utterly worthless, the chief of sinners, whom it looks down upon with sovereign contempt. If it does not attribute all to itself, it will at least put in for a share, whilst with a hypocritical shew of humble gratitude it thanks God for the imaginary distinction. What! must such persons reckon nothing upon their prayers, fasts, tithes, good works, &c. must they plead nothing but mere mercy through the propitiation, like the poor publican?

This will never do; they cannot submit to this righteousness of God. In short, while men imagine that they have done, or can do, any thing in order to their justification; or expect some divine assistance to enable them to merit the divine favour, or qualify themselves for it, they can never relish the gospel, which throws contempt on all their boasted distinctions, describes their true character, and leads to the worthiness of another as the only foundation of hope, and ground of glorying before God.

6. *The love of this present world* makes men reject the gospel feast; and so we see one has got oxen to prove; another has married a wife; one prefers his farm; and another his merchandize; and upon these different grounds all beg to be excused. Whenever the cares of this world, or the deceitfulness of riches and a desire to obtain and accumulate them, predominate in a man's heart, they will infallibly choke the word and render it unfruitful; for it is impossible we can serve God and Mammon. We must of necessity hold by the one and hate the other, Matt. vi. 24. The young rich man wanted to serve both, but in that case mammon will always have the ascendancy. They that *will be rich* fall into temptations and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, and err from the faith, 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10. Yet we often find this love of the world conjoined with the strictest profession of religion. It generally goes hand in hand with self-righteousness. If we are not content with food and raiment we are covetous. 1 Tim. vi. 8. Before I proceed to the last thing proposed, I would notice,

1. *The awful doom* of those who rejected the invitation to the gospel feast. In Luke, xiv. 24. we are told, that the Lord was angry at the refusal; and said,

“None of those men who were bidden shall taste of my supper.” This is like what he said to Israel in the wilderness, when he swore in his wrath they should not enter his rest, Psalm, xcvi. 11. and which is also set before the believing Hebrews, by way of caution, lest they should fall after the same example of unbelief, Heb. iv. 11. This parable being originally spoken of the Jews, we see how it was verified in this particular. There is something exceedingly awful in this declaration, “they shall not taste of my supper.” It imports that on account of their abuse and contempt of the gospel, the Lord had given over striving with them; delivered them up to the lusts of their own hearts, and sealed them up under judicial blindness and hardness of heart, so that they could not believe, John, xii. 39, 40. Acts, xxviii. 26, 27. Rom. ix. 22. xi. 7, 8. 1 Pet. ii. 8. He had stretched out his hand all day long to a disobedient and gainsaying people, Rom. x. 21. Often would he have gathered them as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but they would not, Matt. xxiii. 37. therefore when our Lord thus weeps over them he says, that the things which belonged to their peace were hid from their eyes, Luke, xix. 42. It is awful and dangerous to reject, or trifle, with the gospel, or even to stifle our conviction, and neglect any thing Christ has commanded. The first struggles and uneasiness of conscience (as appeared in the young rich man) may at last subside, and the Lord may be provoked to give us up to hardness of heart and a reprobate mind.—But this is not all, we are told that he actually punished these despisers; he sent forth his armies, destroyed them and burnt up their city, ver. 7. This literally respects the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, See also Luke, xix.

43, 44. and the cause is assigned, 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16. But this was only typical of that eternal vengeance which he will take on those who know not God, and obey not the gospel of his Son.

2. Next we have here the calling of the Gentiles which took place upon the rejection of the Jews; for the fall of them was the riches of the world, Rom. xi. 12, 15. because upon their putting the gospel from them the apostles turned to the Gentiles, Acts, xiii. 46. They are represented as in the streets and lanes of the city, and about the hedges and highways of the fields; which points out their distant and wandering state from God. —Further, they are represented as poor, maimed, halt, and blind, which points out their needy, helpless, diseased, and wretched condition by nature. Could ever such expect to be raised from the dunghill to sit with the princes of his people, whilst the children of the kingdom were shut out? Such, however, is the sovereignty and grace of our God. See how the apostle admires it, Rom. xi. 33—36. This cuts off all objections arising from our own unworthiness—shows how he is found of them that sought him not—and that it is not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to his mercy that he saves us.

3. We have the servants' declaration, that notwithstanding all that were gathered there was still *room for more* in the house, or church of God. Formerly there was room only for the seed of Abraham in the house of God; but in the prophets the Lord calls upon Zion to enlarge the place of her tent, and make room for the Gentiles, Isa. liv. 2, 3. which answers to the Father's grant to his Son of the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession, Psalm, ii. 8. There is room for



simmers of all nations; of all denominations: and there will room still remain till the last elect soul is brought in, when his house shall be full, and then the master of the house will arise and shut the door.

4. The servants are commanded to *compel* them to come in. On which I observe—That we are not naturally willing to come in, but averse to it.—That the compulsion is of such a nature as not to use violence to the will, but to renew and incline. It is not a compulsion of outward force and violence, but a compulsion of evidence and motives operating upon the mind. Before the gospel motives can have their proper effect they must be perceived and believed, which faith is the gift of God.—It strongly points forth God's good-will to men, in not only providing the gospel feast, but that he should compel them to come in to partake of it.—And, lastly, It may teach the servants of Christ to be earnest and assiduous in their master's work, to recommend themselves to every man's conscience, and to press them with all the evidence and motives of the gospel.

III. I proposed, in the last place, to consider what is meant by the man wanting the wedding garment.

1. We should remember that parables cannot in every respect be explained strictly. It was customary among the Jews (and indeed among most people) to make a point of being decently dressed for marriage entertainments, and those who came otherwise were considered as showing disrespect to the master of the feast, and so were turned out disgracefully. Our Lord, therefore, makes use of this circumstance to represent the character and doom of formal hypocritical professors.

2. This person was *called* but not chosen, as our

Lord affirms, *i. e.* he was called by the king's servants in preaching the gospel, but he was not elected to everlasting life, or found approved. Hence we see that the scripture means two very different things by the world *called*. There is the *general call* of the gospel to all men. Many are thus called but not chosen.—There is the *effectual call*, where the gospel takes place in the heart by the Spirit. These are the called and chosen.

3. This man not only represents those who partake of the universal outward call, for so did those who refused; but he represents those who have been so far wrought upon by the call as to take their place in the house of God, in separation from the world, and sit down among his children to partake of the feast; and so he ranks with the stony ground hearers who believed for a time, or like the foolish virgins. Some of these meeting with proper temptations fall away from the visible profession; but others continue in the outward appearance of Christianity until the king comes to view the guests.

4. The king's coming to view his guests points out unto us the last judgment, when we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. Then he will make a strict scrutiny, and separate the chaff and tares from the wheat—the sheep from the goats—the good from the bad fishes—the foolish from the wise virgins—or, which is the same thing, those who have, from those who have not, the wedding garment. These parables are all of the same import in this particular. The difference lies only in the similitude.

5. This affords no argument for admitting *visible* unbelievers into the church of Christ; for it does not appear that the man without the wedding garment

could be distinguished by any but the king himself when he came to view the guests. He was not an open infidel like those who refused to come, and maltreated the servants; by his profession they were bound to esteem him a brother for whom Christ died. Many now make a fair and plausible appearance in the *visible* churches of Christ, who will be detected and dreadfully disappointed when the King comes to view his guests. There are indeed some hypocrites made manifest to men in this life; but there are others who are not known to their fellow men in this world, nor even to themselves, whose presumptuous hopes do not leave them till the King himself detect them; but who go down to the grave with a lie in their right hand, and who will at last be saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us, but to whom he will answer, verily, I know you not.

6. By the wedding garment which this man wanted, some understand what is commonly called the imputed righteousness of Christ. And, indeed, it is a certain truth, that there is no acceptance at the great day of account, but only as we are found in him not having our own righteousness, Phil. iii. 9. and our Lord hath said, when we have done all these things we are unprofitable servants. But the wedding garment, I take it, is to be understood in a more general sense, and that it respects also the influence of the gospel on the heart and life. For instance, *faith* in Christ as the end of the law for righteousness. This is what the Judaisers wanted, though they believed Christ to be the Messiah. It must also include, *love* to Christ for the great love wherewith he loved them. This is to receive the love of the truth with which salvation is connected. Also, the *fruits* and *effects* of this faith

and love, in keeping his commandments, and particularly his new commandment of love to the brethren for the truth's sake, manifested in the work and labour of it. For the judgment proceeds upon our works of love to his name, Matt. xxv. 35, 36.

7. Lastly, We have the *punishment* inflicted upon this hypocritical professor; he is bound hand and foot and cast into darkness without, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth: which corresponds with our Lord's doctrine in the parable of the Talents, as recorded in Matt. xxv. "Unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath," or only seemed to have; "and cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth," ver. 29, 30. And so, the same divine authority assures us, it will be said to all hypocritical and formal professors, in the great day of account. "Depart from me, ye cursed; into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels: for I was an hungered and ye gave me no meat: thirsty and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked and ye clothed me not; sick and in prison and ye visited me not—for inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these (my brethren) ye did it not to me." v. 41—45.

Having thus briefly discussed this interesting subject, I now close with a few remarks. And

1. We may learn from this divine parable what a glorious system of Grace,—rich, free, and sovereign grace, the gospel is. How suited to the case and circumstances of perishing and guilty sinners! Doth not Wisdom cry aloud and lift up her voice in the streets? "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to

the waters, and he that hath no money ; come ye, buy and eat ; yea come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread ? and your labour for that which satisfieth not ? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear and come unto me ; hear and your soul shall live," Isa. lv. 1—3. " Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through (Christ Jesus) is preached the forgiveness of sins ; and by him *all that believe* are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you which was spoken by the prophets : Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish : for I work a work in your day, which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you," Acts, xiii. 38—41. And, lastly,

2. From this subject we may learn, how exceedingly deficient in the discharge of the duty of their office are those public teachers, who, while professedly preaching the gospel to a lost and perishing world, strictly confine themselves to a dry declaration of scripture facts, or an elucidation of doctrinal points, but who neglect the calls and invitations of the gospel, with all the kind entreaties and persuasive motives which abound in the word of God, and which characterised the preaching of the first heralds of salvation. " All things," says the apostle, " are of God, who hath reconciled us unto himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, to be reconciled unto God : for he hath

made him to be a sin-offering for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. We then as fellow-workers, beseech you also that you receive not the grace of God in vain. For he hath said " I have heard thee in a time accepted and in a day of salvation have I succoured thee : Behold now is the accepted time : Behold, now is the day of salvation, 2 Cor. xv. 18—21. ch. vi. 1, 2.

Let every mortal ear attend,  
 And every heart rejoice,  
 The trumpet of the gospel sounds  
 With an inviting voice.

Ho, all ye hungry starving souls,  
 That feed upon the wind,  
 And vainly strive with earthly toys  
 To fill an empty mind,

Eternal Wisdom has prepar'd  
 A soul-reviving feast,  
 And bids your longing appetites  
 The rich provision taste.

Ho, ye that pant for living streams,  
 And pine away and die,  
 Here you may quench your raging thirst,  
 With streams that never die.

Rivers of love and mercy here  
 In a rich ocean join ;  
 Salvation in abundance flows,  
 Like floods of milk and wine.

## SERMON IV.

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FEAR OF GOD.



PSALM, CXI. 10.

*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom : a good understanding have all they that do his commandments : his praise endureth for ever.*

THE former part of this verse, which is all that I purpose at this time to illustrate, may be said to comprise what may be called a theological axiom ; and it deserves our consideration, how frequently it is repeated in the inspired writings. Thus, for instance, if you turn to Prov. i. 7. you will find it said, “ The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge ; but fools despise wisdom and instruction.” And again, ch. ix. 10. “ The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom ; and the knowledge of the Holy (One) is understanding.” We also find the same maxim recorded in the book of Job, ch. xxviii. 28. “ And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom ; and to depart from evil is understanding.”

I need not take up your time in shewing that all these passages are of similar import ; nor to prove that where the Holy Spirit has seen fit to give us “ line upon line, and precept upon precept,” we ought

to infer that the subject is of more than ordinary importance to us. Without detaining you, therefore, by any further remarks in the way of introduction, I shall endeavour to shew

- I. What is imported in the fear of the Lord.
- II. How it is the beginning of wisdom.
- III. Deduce a few inferences by way of improvement.

The fear of the Lord is an expression of extensive meaning. It sometimes signifies a reverential awe or dread of the divine Majesty. Thus the prophet Isaiah says, "Fear ye not their fear, nor be afraid; sanctify the Lord of Hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread," Isa. viii. 12, 13. And the apostle, writing to the believing Hebrews, says, "Let us have (or hold the) grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with *reverence and godly fear*; for our God is a consuming fire," Heb. xii. 28, 29.

At other times it comprehends every principle and disposition which constitute true inward *religion* and *godliness*. Hence the Psalmist says, "Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that *delighteth greatly* in his commandments," Psalm, cxii. 1. "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy; for all nations shall come and *worship before thee*; for thy judgments are made manifest," Rev. xv. 4. What I would have you to notice in these texts, is the connection which is manifestly implied between the fear of the Most High, and our delighting in his precepts and worshipping at his foot-stool. But further:



The fear of the Lord is sometimes put for the matter or *rule of our duty* to God, and so is equivalent to his law or word. In this sense it occurs, Psalm, xix. 9. "The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever." And thus Jehovah himself, by the mouth of the prophet, "For as much as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and *their fear toward me* is taught by the precepts of men," Isa. xxix. 13. Which our Lord quotes, and applies to the hypocritical worship of the Pharisees and Scribes of his day: "Howbeit, in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men," Mark, vii. 7. In our text it signifies, both the principle and practice of true religion, which includes

1. The true *knowledge* of the Lord, which is a blessing promised in the new and everlasting covenant. "They shall no more teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more," Jer. xxxi. 34. This is the basis of all real religion. We cannot truly fear him whilst we are ignorant of him. False conceptions of his character will only produce profanity, idolatry, or superstition. But if our knowledge of God be correct, it will regulate all our dispositions and conduct towards him accordingly. Hence Solomon connects the *fear* of the Lord with the *knowledge* of the Holy, Prov. ix. 10. The world by all their wisdom did not know the true God from his works of creation and providence, I Cor. i. 21. The gospel alone discovers his genuine cha-

acter, and a discovery of his glory shining therein excites the true fear of him; which includes, also,

2. A superlative *love* and *esteem* of him. Love is attracted by what we perceive to be *amiable* in itself, and *beneficial* to us. The gospel presents God in both these views—it holds forth all his perfections, as exercised in a subserviency to his mercy to the guilty. This reconciles us to every part of his character, which is summed up in *love*, and draws out our supreme affection, which is his law written in the heart, Jer. xxxi. 33. This is ever accompanied with,

3. A holy and *reverential awe* of the divine Majesty. From this ingredient it is denominated the *fear of the Lord*. This is not a *tormenting slavish fear*, which is inconsistent with love and delight in its object, and which, consequently, unfits for obedience, Matt. xxv. 24, 25. But a *filial awe* and *reverence*, arising from the knowledge and love of God. It imports a deep impression of the infinite *greatness, justice, and holiness* of God, and of our own meanness, weakness, and pollution in his sight; as also a deep impression of his infinite *grace* and *condescension* towards us in Christ Jesus. This produces a mixture of profound *reverence, self-abasement, and holy confidence*; makes us tender in our conscience, and cautious of every thing that would incur his displeasure, or mar our enjoyment of his favour.

Many persons have handled the gospel, particularly the doctrines of *election* and *perseverance*, in such an unskilful manner, as to blunt these impressions; and so have hardened men insensibly against the fear of the Lord, and soothed them in self-conceit, presumption, and security. But the gospel does not remove this fear; on the contrary, it enforces it. The dis-

play which it makes of God's mercy and grace is guarded with the most awful manifestation of his justice, holiness, and infinite opposition to sin; so that we cannot be comforted with the one, without being struck with the other. His very mercy and goodness promotes this fear. "There is *forgiveness* with thee, *that thou mayest be feared,*" Psalm, cxxx. 4.—"They shall *fear* the Lord and his *goodness* in the latter days," Hos. iii. 5.—We are exhorted to "serve the Lord with *fear*, and rejoice with trembling, while we *kiss* the Son, and put our *trust* in him," Psalm, ii. 11, 12. With this agrees the apostolic exhortation, "Work out your own salvation with *fear* and *trembling,*" Phil. ii. 12. and the apostle represents our "serving God acceptably with *reverence* and *godly fear*" to be the effect of *holding the grace* of the gospel, Heb. xii. 28, 29. wherein *our God* appears as a *consuming fire*, taking vengeance on his beloved Son, and threatening to consume all who either reject, abuse, or apostatize from his grace, ver. 25, 29. Thus in the new covenant he promiseth, "I will put *my fear* in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me," Jer. xxxii. 40.

4. This fear of the Lord necessarily imports a tender, strict, and universal regard to *all his commandments*. I have already observed that his commands and institutions are called his *fear*, Psalm, xix. 9.—xxxiv. 11. because the true fear of God is express in obeying and serving him according to his revealed will. So it is joined in the text with *doing his commandments*.—It is opposed to observing the *commandments of men* in the affairs of his worship. The Lord complains of hypocritical Israel, "their fear towards me is taught by the precept of men," for which he dreadfully threatens

them, Isa. xxix. 13, 14. Our Lord also applies it to those in his time, who made void the commandments of God by their traditions. "But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men," Matt. xv. 9. and the apostle says this will-worship and voluntary humility, has a shew of wisdom, Col. ii. 18, 22, 23. but turns men from the truth, Tit. i. 14.—It also consists in a conscientious observance of *all things* whatsoever Christ hath commanded, without excepting any of them. The *fear of the Lord*, in so far as it prevails, gives weight and authority to every thing he says, so that the subjects of it dare not deliberately and avowedly break or neglect one of the least of his commandments, Matt. v. 19. He views them as the words of him that made him, and that will shortly call him to account, and therefore he dare not trifle with them, or look upon them as matters of indifference or non-essentials. The Lord promiseth to such "to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word," Isa. lxvi. 2. Further, he in whose heart the fear of God dwells, sees that every the least of his commandments is the effect of infinite *wisdom, holiness, and goodness*; and though the majority of professors should despise them and neglect them as mere trifles, yet he will say with the Psalmist, "It is time for thee, Lord, to work; for men have made void thy law. Therefore I love thy commandments above gold, yea, above fine gold. Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way," Psalm, cxix. 126—128. Thus *the fear of the Lord* makes every thing of great importance that bears the stamp of divine authority; whilst it makes us reject

the commandments of men which turn from the truth, and render the commandments of God of no effect. Before I proceed to the second thing proposed, I shall just advert to a few objections whereby men reason themselves out of this fear.

“The Lord threatens his people to deter them from drawing back; but we are not to think that ever we can fall away, or sin in such a way as to be punished for it.”—Ans. If we entertain this notion of the matter, these cautions are entirely useless, and will have no effect to deter us. We cannot be influenced by what we do not believe. But let no man deceive us with vain words, for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. The Lord speaks to us in earnest, and wills we should believe him to be so. But farther,

“How does this fear agree with absolute election and the perseverance of the saints?”—Ans. The elect shall all certainly obtain, being kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation; but as to our own particular case, we know not our election, but by our being kept in the faith and holding it fast. Should we let that go, the knowledge of our election goes along with it, and it will afford us no comfort to think that we have believed for a while, but only aggravate our fear and distress.

“But does not the Lord promise salvation to him that believeth? Is not his faithfulness engaged?”—Ans. This promise is not to him that *believeth for a while*, but that endureth to the end, Matt. x. 22.—that abides in Christ, John, xv. 6, 7.—that continues in God’s goodness, Rom. xi. 12.—that continues in the faith grounded and settled, and is not moved away from the hope of the gospel, Col. i. 23.—that lives

by faith and draws not back unto perdition, Heb. x. 38.—Whenever we believe the gospel, we immediately enjoy the comforts of its promises, and know our salvation whilst we continue in the faith of it. Holding this fast, we have God's word for it that we are safe, and shall never come into condemnation; and we cannot be too confident in the faithfulness of God, or in the sufficiency of Christ to save. But then we must know at the same time that we are safe and secure *only here* and no where else; “that if we deny him, he also will deny us; if we believe not yet he abideth faithful and cannot deny himself”; of these things we must be put in remembrance, 2 Tim. ii. 12, 13.

All this is consistent with *election*—with the most absolute *promise* of salvation—and with our *comfort* and *joy* in the gospel. I shall illustrate it by two pertinent similies. When Paul and the rest in the ship were like to be lost, the Lord positively *determined* that none of them should perish—he *absolutely promised* to Paul that they all should escape, Acts, xxvii. 24. but though Paul believed God that it should be even as he had told him, ver. 25. yet he tells them afterwards, “Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved,” ver. 31. Whilst, therefore, the word of God gave them *assurance* of safety in his own way, it gave them as certain grounds of *fear* they should perish in any other way.—Noah and his family were assured of salvation in the ark, and it would be sinful to doubt it; nay, they had the distinguishing enjoyment and comfort of present salvation there, whilst the whole world around them were swallowed up in the devouring deep; but then it behoved them at the same time to know, that if they abode not there they should perish. So in Christ we have the greatest assurance of salvation, but then it is only in him.

II. Let us now consider in what respects the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

1. The *beginning* in the original language, sometimes signifies the *chief* or *most excellent* kind of any thing. This holds true of the fear of the Lord; it is man's chief, or highest, wisdom. It is the most excellent of all wisdom; nay, all the wisdom of the wisest men without this, is but folly and vanity. So Solomon declares, "And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit. For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow," Eccles. i. 17, 18. Whilst he also declares, that to fear God and to keep his commandments is the whole duty of man, chap. xii. 13. In much worldly wisdom is much grief; but this true wisdom makes men holy here, and happy hereafter; for "the fear of the Lord is a fountain of life to depart from the snares of death," Prov. xiv. 27.

2. It is the *beginning* of all true wisdom; for till the fear of the Lord takes place in the heart, there is no true wisdom to be found there, no not so much as the first rudiments of it. This will appear a paradox to many; for where shall we find men of greater capacities, more extensive knowledge, deep penetration, and accurate judgment, than among those who seem to be void of the fear of the Lord? And on the other hand, where shall we find persons of weaker natural parts or intellects than among the fearers of the Lord? Yet, according to the Scriptures, the highest wisdom of a natural man falls under one or all of the following characters, (Jam. iii. 15.)—It is *earthly*, being circumscribed to the things of this earth, and does not extend to heavenly or divine

things. They may boast of their enlarged sentiments and extensive views; but in fact, they are narrow, confined, and grovelling. As they have not that faith which is conversant with objects not seen and eternal, so all their wisdom is employed about the concerns of this present life.—It is *sensual* or animal, *i. e.* conversant about the things of the animal life, and the gratification of the sensual appetites, which they have in common with the brutes that perish. Their minds are carnal, and so their wisdom is the wisdom of the flesh; yet such will speak of refined and exalted sentiments!—It is *devilish*, being that kind of wisdom which Satan possesseth; proud, malicious, and deceitful. That wisdom of the world which opposeth or corrupteth divine revelation—that speculative or pharisaical which puffs up with pride—that political cunning or crafty wisdom which is engaged to the hurt and prejudice of others—all such wisdom is devilish, and the very opposite of that true wisdom of which the fear of the Lord is the beginning.

3. The fear of the Lord is the *beginning* of wisdom, because it humbles a man to the dust before the Lord, and so cures him of that pride which is a source of self-deception and folly. The fear of the Lord is the “instruction of wisdom; and before honour is *humility*,” Prov. xv. 33. He who is the subject of it no longer compares himself with others, and plumes himself upon the imaginary difference, but judges of his character as it appears in the sight of God, who searcheth the heart, 2 Cor. x. 12—18. Jer. ix. 23.

4. The fear of the Lord is the *beginning* of wisdom, because it leads him to be *docile*, or *teachable*, which is an important ingredient in true wisdom, and the sure way to grow in it. It is the character of



fools, that they despise "wisdom and instruction," and this is opposed to "the fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom," Prov. i. 7. This gives a humble, teachable, disciple-like disposition. It makes a man to listen unto God's word in the simplicity of a little child, and to become a fool to his former wisdom and reasoning, that he may be wise unto salvation.

5. It is the *beginning* of wisdom to a man, because it makes him *pursue his best interest*. This is true wisdom, and whatever engages a man to this must be the beginning of wisdom. If we had no existence but in this world, it would be our wisdom to make the most of it. But if our great concern lies beyond this life; if this state of existence is only a passage into an eternal state of consummate happiness or misery; then, surely, it must be our greatest wisdom to seek the kingdom of God in the first place, and make every worldly pursuit yield to it. But it is only the fear of the Lord that can influence us to this.

6. Wisdom not only pursues the best end, but the *fittest means* for attaining it. Christ is appointed the way, the truth, and the life; the only name given under heaven whereby we must be saved. The fear of the Lord, therefore, will make us *cleave unto Christ* as the ground of our hope—*walk in him* as we have received him—and keep ever in our eye the danger of departing from him through unbelief.

7. It is the beginning of wisdom, because it *raises a man above every other fear* that would turn him aside, such as "the fear of man that bringeth a snare," Prov. xxix. 25. Matt. x. 28. When we sanctify the Lord of hosts in our hearts, and make him our fear and our dread, then we fear not their fear, but are

steady and courageous in the way of the Lord, Isa. viii. 12, 13. "But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye; and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled," 1 Pet. iii. 14.

III. I come now in the last place to shew what use or improvement we should make of this subject. First: this doctrine may serve to reach conviction to those persons who have hardened their minds against the fear of the Lord by false views of his grace. They presume upon some enthusiastic revelation, impression, or deceitful feeling, that they are of the number of the elect; that the faithfulness of God is engaged to save them—that though they deny Christ, yet that He will not deny them; and that they have no concern with the awful cautions which abound in the word of God, even whilst they pay little or no regard to his commands. These are the most hardened of the human race; and it is, humanly speaking, the most difficult thing in the world to reach conviction to the minds of such persons or to excite the principle of fear within them. The Lord, indeed, "taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy," Psalm, cxlvii. 11. But then the true fear of God is of a humbling, self-abasing, tendency. It is well expressed by the poet, in the following lines:

The more thy glories strike mine eyes,  
The humbler I shall lie;  
Thus while I sunk, my joys shall rise,  
Unmeasurably high.

It is certainly an awful consideration, and should make professors tremble, to think what lengths men may go in a profession of religion, even to advance their claims upon him, while they have not one spark

of the true fear of God about them. "Many shall say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity," Matt. vii. 22, 23.

The subject we have been considering, may also reach conviction to those persons, whose fear of God is taught by the precepts of men. It is a great thing to have our religious profession, and indeed the whole of our deportment in the world regulated by the authority of God in his word; to hear him speaking to us therein, and to have our consciences in subjection to that infallible standard. Many professed Christians, notwithstanding all their zeal for religion, have no ear whatever to give to the scriptures, except in so far as the latter are sanctioned by the authority of their favourite guides; and thus it is that a deference to great names among men has the prevalence in their minds, and obtains a commanding influence over the words of the living God. Point such persons to the plain sayings of Christ or his apostles, and unless the things enjoined have obtained the sanction and approbation of those who are regarded as the wise and learned of this world, they have no ear to give to them. Thus it was with the Jews of old, "Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him? but this people who knoweth not the law are cursed," John, vii. 48. Such would do well to consider, that they are individually accountable to God for their conduct; and to remember the apostolic maxim, "We ought to obey God rather than man," Acts, v. 29. Indeed there can be no proper and acceptable obe-

dience to God at all, until the mind is brought to this; for, as hath been already remarked, we never truly fear God, until we are raised above the fear of man, and his word has such weight in our minds that we can say, "Let God be true, though every man should be a liar." I add, lastly,

That this subject suggests a useful lesson to those profesors who avowedly hold any of Christ's laws and ordinances to be things circumstantial, or matters of indifference. This is absolutely inconsistent with the fear of the Lord, which ever operates in the way of making us "tremble at his word," Isa. lxvi. 2. Though every thing is not equally important in religion, it is a most perverse inference, and highly presumptuous in sinful mortals, to whom he has given a revelation of his will, to account any of his commands too insignificant for their attention. Justice, mercy, and the love of God, are of higher importance than any ritual observances; but we should never forget what our Lord said to the Pharisees on this point, "These things ought ye to have done, and not to leave the others undone." Let us, then, see that we are consistent in our profession of obedience, paying an implicit and uniform regard to whatever bears the stamp of divine authority; observing "all things whatsoever he hath commanded," and in order to this, let us take the admonition of the wise man, "Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long," Prov. xxiii. 17.



## SERMON V.

### THE HAPPINESS WHICH ATTENDS TRUE RELIGION.



PROVERBS, III. 17.

*Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her  
paths are peace.*

**THERE** are few opinions which have obtained greater currency in the world, than that religion is a very dull, austere, and melancholy affair; and that, in order to make the Christian profession in sincerity and truth, a person must bid adieu to all the pleasures of life, and to every enjoyment that renders life desirable. It is, indeed, very certain that serious, practical piety, which has its basis in the fear and love of God, is an utter enemy to that noisy merriment that characterizes the laughter of fools, and which the scriptures assimilate to the “crackling of thorns under a pot”—a mere flash of the moment, occasioned by an ebullition of the animal spirits, producing a mere transient bluster, and then vanishing into emptiness. No; the happiness of a Christian is a serious thing. It consists in

What nothing earthly gives, or can destroy;  
The soul's calm sun-shine, and the heart-felt joy,

To be convinced, however, that the men of the world are carried away with a popular error, when they imagine true religion to be a gloomy thing, they need only to read the Bible with an unprejudiced mind, and to give credit to its sacred dictates. They would then presently find that it is replete with encouragements, exhortations, and persuasions to the children of God to abound in the delightful exercises of praise, and gratitude, and joy. Hence it is that we read such passages as the following: “ Rejoice evermore—and in every thing give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”—“ Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice.”—“ I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness; as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.”—“ With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. And in that day ye shall say, Praise the Lord, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name be exalted. Sing unto the Lord, for he hath done excellent things, let this be known in all the earth: Cry out and shout thou inhabitant of Zion; for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.”

From this specimen of the grounds, and motives, and injunctions, to “ rejoice and be exceeding glad,” which every where pervade the sacred pages, we may at once perceive how greatly those mistake the matter, who suppose, that in order to be truly religious, they must needs be melancholy. But as many false notions respecting this important matter prevail even among professors themselves, I shall endeavour briefly

to analyze the constituent principles of true religion, or godliness, and evince from the very nature of the thing, as well as from the divine testimony, that it is impossible to be truly religious without being comparatively happy; and that none but such persons can possibly be so. With a view to this I have chosen the words of Solomon, as the ground of my discourse, who, speaking of Wisdom, affirms that “Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.” In attempting an illustration of the text, I purpose,

I. To consider what is here meant by Wisdom.

II. Illustrate the truth of the proposition, that her “ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.”

III. I shall answer a few objections.

I. We are to consider what is here meant by wisdom, which is mentioned in ver. 13. and referred to by the pronoun *her* in our text. By wisdom here we are not to understand that *natural sagacity* which some men are possessed of in a higher degree than others; for there is nothing praise-worthy in mere natural talents, which, though a blessing in themselves, are often abused to the purposes of folly and vice, the very opposite of wisdom.—Nor are we to understand by wisdom, that *cunning*, or *political craftiness* which is to be found in the most wicked characters, and is generally the object of fear and suspicion rather than of esteem.—Neither does it signify that *worldly acquired wisdom*, of which Solomon says elsewhere, “In much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow,” Eccles. i. 18.

for the reverse of this is affirmed of true wisdom, "She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her; and happy is every one that retaineth her," Prov. iii. 18.

But the wisdom here intended is that which has the *fear of the Lord* for its beginning, or chief part, ch. i. 7. and ix. 10. which imports the true *knowledge* and supreme *love* of his character, with an *esteem* of his favour as our chief happiness. So he that findeth this wisdom is said to "understand the fear of the Lord," and to find "the knowledge of God," ch. ii. 5. Now as we know nothing of God but as he has been pleased to reveal himself, so the most perfect display which God hath given of himself is in and by his Son, who is made unto us wisdom, and hath declared his Father's name, his grace, and his salvation, to the children of men, John, i. 18.—xvii. 6. I Cor. i. 30. To know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, is to be wise unto salvation, for it is life eternal, and with this is connected the true fear and love of God.

Further, the wisdom in our text is such as influenceth us to conform to the will of God in heart and life. This will appear from the different things connected with it, such as uprightness, righteousness, judgment, equity, every good path, Prov. ii. 7, 9. liberality, patience under affliction, &c. ch. iii. 9, 11, 12. so that it includes in it both the principles and practices of sobriety, righteousness, and godliness, Tit. ii. 12. When the Psalmist says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," he adds, "a good understanding have all they that do his commandments," Psalm, cxl. 10. This is true wisdom, and every thing short of it, or opposed to it, is folly, vanity, and vexation of spirit.



II. It is affirmed of this Wisdom, that "her ways are ways of pleasantness; and all her paths are peace." It is of the utmost consequence to be thoroughly convinced of this. The love of happiness is deeply implanted in our nature by God himself, and nothing can effectually attach us to the ways of wisdom, but a strong conviction that our own true happiness is connected with walking in them. Many will admit that the ways of true religion ultimately land in happiness; but then they imagine that all the way thither is a most cheerless, melancholy, and unpleasant path. The fact is, they do not relish religion itself; their minds are not formed for its enjoyments; but set upon other objects which religion prohibits; and hence they consider it as inimical to their present happiness. But our text not only affirms that wisdom's ways issue in happiness at last, but that they are at present ways of pleasantness, and paths of peace to them that walk in them. And to this the experience of the saints has borne witness in all ages. The Psalmist says, "I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches," Psalm, cxix. 14. "I will delight myself in thy commandments which I have loved," ver. 47. And in general he says, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord; and he delighteth in his way," Psalm, xxxvii. 23. But it will also appear from the nature of things that wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths peace, if we consider,

1. That the *principles* of true wisdom are pleasant, and productive of peace and happiness to the minds of those who really understand and believe them. These principles are clearly revealed in the gospel, which is glad tidings of great joy. Here we have

such an amiable display of God, and of his love in Christ Jesus towards guilty sinners—such a full and free salvation, every way suited by divine wisdom and grace to our guilty and deplorable condition—such inestimable blessings of present pardon and peace with God, and such glorious prospects of everlasting future happiness; that reason itself must admit these truths to be every way calculated to support the mind under a conscious sense of guilt, and in the prospect of death and judgment, which naturally appal the hearts of men; and not only so, but also to fill the believer of them with all joy and peace. Paul counted all things but loss and dung for this excellent knowledge. His soul was happy in it, amidst all the afflictions he suffered on its account. This was also the case with those who at first believed the gospel; and from the very nature of the thing, it must be so to the end.

2. The *dispositions* and *affections* influenced by these principles are a source of pleasure and peace to the mind, both in their nature and effects. The effects of the Gospel believed, are love to God and men, hope, joy, peace, humility, temperance, meekness, patience, gentleness, contentment, &c. These and such like are fruits of the Spirit, and not only constituent parts of holiness, but of happiness. They are the health of the soul; but their opposites are its maladies and its misery. The soul can never be happy while alienated from God, and under the dominion of corrupt and insatiable desires, malevolent dispositions, and unruly passions; these are harpies that prey upon the peace of the soul, and fill it with disorder and misery. What a happiness to be delivered from these, and to have the fruits of the Spirit which are life and peace to the soul.

3. The *conduct* influenced by such principles, dispositions and affections, is obedience to the revealed will of God, and this properly speaking is to walk in the *ways* and *paths* of wisdom; for as the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, so a good understanding have all they that do his commandments. His commandments are all ways of pleasantness and paths of peace; for "great peace have they that love his law; nothing shall stumble or offend them," Psalm, cxix. 165. The divine precepts are all *conducive to happiness* from their very nature; and this philosophy acknowledges with respect to such of them as regard morality. The principle of the law is *love*, and its precepts are only so many directions to the proper exercise of love. We are always gratified and happy in acting suitably to our affections; and it is this free, happy, and delightful obedience, that Christ demands; "If ye *love* me, keep my commandments," John, xiv. 15.—"If a man *love* me, he will keep my words," ver. 23. and so Paul says, "the love of Christ constraineth us," 2 Cor. v. 14. How pleasant must that obedience be which is under such a constraint.—The institutions of the gospel are all means of corresponding with God, and of holding communion with him; and therefore must be delightful and pleasant to those who love him. "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! my soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God," Psalm, lxxxiv. 1, 2.—The joyful testimony of conscience attends the paths and ways of wisdom, which is no small source of joy. "For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our

conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward," 2 Cor. i. 12. "But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another," Gal. vi. 4.—The promise of special manifestation by the Spirit as the Comforter, is made to them who keep Christ's commandments; "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him," John, xiv. 21—23.—The lively hope of eternal life attends the ways and paths of wisdom: "And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end," Heb. vi. 11. "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls," 1 Pet. i. 5—9.—Lastly, Wisdom's ways are not only ways of pleasantness and peace in this world, but they land in everlasting peace and happiness beyond

death and the grave. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace," Psalm, xxxvii. 37. Those who are made free from sin, and become servants to God, have their fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life, Rom. vi. 22. It is the way, or path, which leads to life in the presence of God, where there is fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore, Psalm, xvi. 11. Thus I have briefly illustrated the proposition in our text, and shall now

III. Answer a few objections.

1. It is objected that "Christ declares the gate is *strait*, and the way *narrow* that leadeth unto life, how then can it be a way of pleasantness and peace?" Matt. vii. 13, 14. To which I answer, that this straitness and narrowness arises not from any thing in the nature of the way itself, but from something about ourselves which is very opposite to that way; such as our ignorance, unbelief, pride, self-righteousness, love of this present world, &c. Were we freed from these things, we should walk at liberty, and find the way full of pleasantness and peace.

2. But "it is a way which requires *self-denial*, which is rather painful than pleasant." I answer, The pain of self-denial is only felt by sinful self. Were we free of unlawful desires and propensities, we should not feel this pain. To deny ourselves *unlawful* pleasures is only to thwart our corruptions, the source of all our unhappiness. To deny ourselves in *lawful* things for Christ's sake, is only to exchange a less for a greater good, which every wise merchant will do with pleasure.

3. But "the *cross* is part of Wisdom's ways, and is far from being pleasant." I answer, Though the

cross attends the ways of wisdom in this world, yet it is not properly her ways, but the effect of the hatred and opposition of the world to them. The cross is not unpleasant to them who love Christ. They rejoice in tribulation, and in being counted worthy to suffer shame for his name, Acts, v. 41. Rom. v. 3. And, surely, those must be pleasant paths which make men joyful and happy even in tribulations, which in themselves are not joyous but grievous.

4. "*Sorrow and repentance* for sin do not appear pleasant." It should be noticed, however, that the sorrow and uneasiness of repentance is not the native fruit of duty and obedience, but of sin—nor is it peculiar to Wisdom's ways; for natural men have often deep remorse.—The pleasure of true repentance far surpasseth its pain; for true repentance is the exercise of love to God and hatred of sin, and is always attended with hope in his mercy, and more or less of a sense of pardon. It is our restoration to a state of happiness, from which impenitence necessarily excludes us. See the parable of the Prodigal son, Luke xv.

5. But "the fact seems to contradict all this. Many who seem very religious, do not appear very happy." Answer, All who appear religious are not really so; for many are very serious, who have never yet known the truth that makes free; and so they are labouring to establish their own righteousness, and are neither delivered from the guilt of sin in their consciences, nor from the dominion of sin in their hearts; consequently cannot have this peace and happiness, for they are not in Wisdom's ways. Again, there are many who take up a profession of religion, while it never had the chief place in their hearts. Such can-

not have peace and happiness in it. Conscience may prompt them to comply with outward observances; but if their heart does not relish it, or if their affections are divided betwixt God and this world, they cannot be happy in Wisdom's ways.—I may further add, that there are many who are sincere Christians, but their comfort is much marred by ignorance—by the weakness of their faith—by judging of their state from improper, or fluctuating evidences, such as passionate emotions, &c.—and there are some who are constitutionally of a melancholy cast. But none of these things can fairly and justly be attributed to Wisdom's ways.

Thus have I evinced the truth of the proposition in the text, that the ways of Wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths peace; and have also endeavoured to obviate the most plausible objections that are raised by the unbelieving heart against the Christian profession. Let me now, before I dismiss the subject, calmly expostulate with those, if any such there be, who are so unhappy as to have imbibed these unfounded prejudices against religion, or the ways of Christ. You are anxiously seeking after happiness; but alas, you are vainly pursuing it, in a course where it never yet was found, and where indeed it is impossible in the nature of things you ever should attain unto it! What a mercy must it be to you to be undeceived on a matter of such unspeakable importance. Perhaps you expect to find substantial bliss in the *pleasures* of the world; the gratification of your appetites and fleshly lusts; by living in softness, delicacy and effeminacy. But mark what Solomon says of this from his own experience: “ All things are full of labour: man cannot utter it; the eye is not satis-

fied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing," Eccl. i. 8. "Whatsoever mine eyes desired, I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy—but, behold all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun," ch. ii. 10, 11. It is absolutely impossible for any to be happy while under the dominion of tormenting, pernicious, contradictory, unsatisfied and insatiable passions. Perhaps you are seeking this blessing in the pursuit of *riches* and *honour*; but can these give ease to the soul, or is it possible to satisfy the inordinate cravings of covetousness and ambition? Listen again to the experience of Solomon: "I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces"—so that his possessions exceeded all that were in Jerusalem before him, Eccles. ii. 7, 8. But he found himself just as much disappointed of the object of his pursuit as ever. He sought it, too, in the acquisition of science, where certainly it is much more likely to be found than in pleasure, riches, or honour; but what says he to this? "I communed with mine own heart, saying, Lo, I am come to great estate, and have obtained more wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem: yea my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge: And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly; I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit; for in much (worldly) wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow," Eccles. i. 16—18.

Be persuaded then, you who are seeking happiness in similar courses, that the object is unattainable therein, and credit the decision of the same inspired teacher when he tells you in the words of our text,



that "Wisdom's ways, and they alone, are ways of pleasantness, and that all her paths are peace." Hearken to the voice that now speaks to you from heaven, through the medium of the written word, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest: Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls," Matt. xi. 28, 29. But beware how you trifle with subjects of such momentous concern. "Behold now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation." He that cometh to Jesus shall never hunger; and he that believeth on him shall never thirst, John, vi. 35. Oh, that he may never have it to say of any of you, "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand and ye regarded it not; but have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh—because ye hated knowledge, and did not chuse the fear of the Lord," Prov. i. 24—29.



## SERMON VI.

ON THE UNITY OF CHRIST'S DISCIPLES.



JOHN, xvii, 21.

*That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*

**T**HIS chapter presents to our view, the Lord Jesus Christ praying to his divine Father, that not only his apostles, but that also all who should believe on him through their word, may be one. Were we to understand this mercy of *visible* harmony, peace, and concord among his disciples, we should be at a great loss to see how this prayer of his was answered. After the first down-pouring of the Spirit there was indeed a most remarkable visible unity amongst the members of the church at Jerusalem; for it is said “the multitude of them that believed were of *one heart* and of *one soul*,” Acts, iv. 32. but in the course of a few years this unity was much marred by a number of Jewish converts, who were zealous for the peculiarities of Moses’ law, and strenuously urged it as a term of salvation upon the Gentile believers at Antioch, at which place, and at Jerusalem, it occasioned much disputation, Acts, xv. and notwithstand-

ing the apostolic decrees which were delivered to the churches upon this point, ver. 24—30. ch. xvi. 4. yet we find in Paul's epistles to the Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians, that this contest was in a great measure kept up to the subversion of some from the faith, and the marring of the unity and edification of many. In as far as this dispute affected the point of free justification by faith, the apostles reprobate it in the strongest terms; but when it respected only things indifferent, such as meats and drinks, he exhorts them to a mutual forbearance in love, Gal. v. 2—5. Rom. xiv. 1. 1 Cor. i. 8. In the church of Corinth there appear to be many other grounds of difference, for he charges them with envyings, contentions, strife, and divisions, 1 Cor. i. 11. and iii. 3. and with a factious and party attachment to their respective leaders, glorying in them to the disparagement of others, ch. iii. 4. The very gifts of the Spirit, which were conferred upon them for the edification of the body, were perverted into an occasion of envy, strife, and glorying over one another. Many other causes of discord took place in the apostolic age, and before the canon of revelation was completed. If we consult the most authentic records respecting the state of matters in the ages immediately succeeding, we shall find the causes of animosity more and more multiplied, together with a departure in many things from the purity and simplicity of the apostolic faith and order, and an addition of various inventions and traditions of men, which were stated as terms of communion, and made an occasion of dividing the disciples.—When the nations assumed a form of Christianity, and the man of sin was raised to his throne, he made use of the kings of the earth, who with

(μια νοση) *one mind* gave their strength and power to the beast to enforce a unity of opinion: but the unity thus produced was not that of the gospel, but a unity of subjection to the beast, and of opposition to the Lamb and his followers; and so we read that the effect of this union was their making war with the Lamb, and the called, chosen, and faithful that are with him, Rev. xvii. 13, 14.—When this diabolical union came to be broken in a great measure, and men obtained free access to the scriptures, it was far from producing that *visible unity* among the disciples which might have been expected. For though in protestant countries they all profess to agree that the scripture is the only rule of faith and practice, yet so different are their views and sentiments of this rule, that there never existed such a multiplicity of sects and opinions as at this very day. But what inference shall we deduce from this short sketch of church history? Is it that the disciples of Christ are not one, or that the prayer of Jesus in this particular was not heard? God forbid! for whether we consider the dignity of the petitioner's person, his relation to the Father as his Son, his interest in his love, or his appointment to the office of mediator and advocate, we may rest fully assured that his prayer was heard and answered, and that all his people are one, whatever appearances there may be to the contrary. We are ready to fall into mistakes here, through not distinguishing betwixt *visible* and *invisible* unity, and by our making this oneness to consist of such things as are not essential to it. I shall, therefore, point out from the scripture—

- I. Wherein the unity of Christians does consist.
- And
- II. Make some use of what may be said.

I. This unity consists in the following things.

1. In their being all members of Christ's *one mystical body*. This is one of the unities enumerated by the apostle, Eph. iv. 4. "*There is one body.*" To the same purport are the following scriptures: "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another," Rom. xii. 4. 5. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free," 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13. There are an innumerable company of spirits of just men made perfect in heaven, who have died in the faith from the foundation of the world, Heb. xii. 23. and there are also a goodly number of believers still in this world; but the difference of place or states in heaven and on earth, does not affect their unity as the body of Christ; for the things in heaven, together with those on earth, are gathered together in one in Christ, the common head of the body, Eph. i. 10. On earth again there are various distinctions among them; some are Jews, others are Gentiles, and these are of all nations, conditions, and sexes; but with respect to the distinction of Jew and Gentile, Christ "hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition betwixt them; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, in order to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby," Eph. ii. 14—17. As for the other distinctions, the apostle reduces them all to this unity of the

one body, where he tells us, "There is neither Jew, nor Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, male nor female, but all are one in Christ Jesus, who is all and in all," Gal. iii. 28. Col. iii. 11. There are many visible societies of Christians upon the earth, but they are only representations of Christ's catholic body, which at present is invisible to us; for Christ's body is not many, but one. And though many of the children of God may not discern one another in this world, so as to feel themselves at liberty to join together in the communion of the same visible society, yet they are all one in Christ, to whom they are united as the head; they are members of his one body, and so members one of another.

2. This oneness consists in a *unity of the Spirit*. The apostle tells us there is not only one body, but also *one Spirit*, which as the soul animates that body, Eph. iv. 4. Had the natural body different spirits, endued with different judgments, wills, and inclinations, it would create a strange unnatural schism in the body, and discord among its members; but as in the natural, so in the body of Christ, there is but *one spirit*, which animates, informs, and directs the whole, works effectually in the measure of every part, and gives a unity of design to all the members in their various functions. This one Spirit is the Holy Ghost, which Jesus when he ascended on high received of the Father; which dwells in him as the head of the body, and is communicated from him to all his members. So Jesus says, "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was

not yet glorified," John, vii. 38, 39. This Spirit belongs to the one body, and unites every member to it; "For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit," 1 Cor. xii. 13. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" ch. iii. 16. This Spirit is essential to every particular member of the body; for "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his," Rom. viii. 9. and is the surest evidence of our union with Christ; "By this we know that he abideth in us and we in him, because he has given us of his Spirit," 1 John, iv. 13. Indeed this participation of the Spirit of Christ constitutes our very union with him; "for he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit," 1 Cor. vi. 17. It is this which constitutes our bodies his members, ver. 15. even as in the natural body every member by virtue of the animation of one soul, make but one vital system, one whole man. Thus we are constituted "members of Christ's body, of his flesh, and of his bones," Eph. v. 30. Now it is this union of the Spirit with Christ the head, and with one another as his members, that Jesus in a particular manner prays for in the text. This will appear evident if we consider that he prays for a union of the same kind with that which he hath with the Father; "as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee—that they may be one, even as we are one." This does not mean, as some have supposed, his union of nature with the Father, whereby he is one God with him; but his union with him by the Spirit, which was conferred upon the man Christ Jesus by the Father, as mediator and head of his body the church; for "it pleased the Father, in the economy of redemption, that in him all fulness should dwell," as

the head of influence, and the medium of communication to his body, which is his fulness, whilst he fills all in all, Eph. i. 22, 23. Col. i. 19. In this capacity the Father gave him the Spirit without measure, John, iii. 34. and it is out of this fulness of the Spirit dwelling in him that we all have received, and grace for grace, *i. e.* grace answerable to what is in him, John, i. 16. It was by this Spirit of the Father dwelling in him that he was qualified to execute his mediatorial offices: by it he was anointed to preach the gospel, Luke, iv. 18.—by it he was qualified for government, Isa. xi. 1—6.—and by the same Spirit he wrought miracles, Matt. xii. 28. Now this Spirit dwelling in him and operating these works, he expresses by the Father's being *in him*, and he *in the Father*, John, x. 38. and when he promises the same Spirit to his disciples, he tells them, that “in that day ye shall know that I am *in the Father*, and *you in me*, and *I in you*,” John, xiv. 20. which is the very language whereby he expresses the oneness which he prays for in the text; and therefore it must be a unity arising from the same Spirit dwelling in the Father, in Him, and in them. This is put beyond all doubt by John, who uses the very same phraseology with respect to the indwelling of the Spirit: “Hereby we know that he *abideth in us* by the Spirit which he hath given us,” 1 John iii. 24. “Hereby know we that *we dwell in him*, and *he in us*; because he has given us of his Spirit,” ch. iv. 13. And this is still more evident from the end of this union, which is, saith Christ, “that the world may know and believe that thou hast sent me:” for it was by virtue of this Spirit that the disciples testified and made known to the world that the Father sent the Son, John, iv. 14. The apostles “were witnesses of



these things, and so was the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him," Acts, v. 32.

3. Their unity consists in all having *one faith*. The apostle tells us, there is but *one faith*, Eph. iv. 5. *i. e.* one doctrine of faith to be believed, which is emphatically styled *the truth*. There are, indeed, many different opinions in the world, but there is but one faith. Many think that the true faith of the gospel cannot be attained without great study, and being thoroughly acquainted with every point of a connected system of divinity; whereas the inspired writers repeatedly reduce the faith that saves to a single plain short proposition, such as that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," or that "God raised him from the dead," and declare that all who believe this truth upon the divine testimony shall be saved, John, xx. 31. Rom. x. 9. They who believe this must necessarily believe every thing that he hath revealed as soon as they know it; but faith does not depend upon the full knowledge of every truth. The first Christians are declared to have had true faith, when they knew only the first principles. In the rest they were to grow up. The testimony of God concerning the person and mission of his Son is the one faith with which salvation is connected. This is the *faith once delivered to the saints*, for which they must contend earnestly, Jude 3. the *faith of the gospel*, for which we must jointly strive, Phil. i. 27. with one spirit and mind. Now as all the children of God are partakers of the one Spirit of truth, and taught of the Lord from the least to the greatest, they must all necessarily be possessed of this one faith; they must all have like precious faith with the apostles in the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, 2 Pet. i. 1. They

have therefore a *unity of the faith and knowledge* of the Son of God, Eph. iv. 13. and they count all things but loss and dung for the excellency of this knowledge, Phil. iii. 8. They have, indeed, different measures of the knowledge of this truth, and different degrees of growth in the faith of it, and they are not altogether free from error in this world; but notwithstanding this, they are one in the faith that saves; they all know the truth, and that no lie is of it. They may, perhaps, have different speculations and controversies of words among themselves about what they esteem the faith, and this may greatly affect their visible unity, and lead them to look upon one another as heretics; but it will be found that these differences, ultimately are not about the faith itself, but about something which they have added to it, or some inference or deduction from it, which they hold of equal importance. The faith of the gospel is admitted on all hands, and dwells in each of their hearts, but in reasoning they may in many cases be led to different conclusions. These differences, however, it must be owned, arise from their not having attained the full perfection of this unity; and therefore Christ hath given gifts unto men for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of his body; till they all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; so that this is a unity into which they are to grow up till they come to the perfection of it, in opposition to their being in a state of children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine. They have still room to grow in the knowledge, and in the strength and stability of their faith.

4. They have a *unity of hope*. So the apostle says, "ye are called in one hope of your calling," Eph. iv. 4. *i. e.* they have one glorious inheritance in heaven which is set before them as the object of hope, and by a metonymy is called *the hope laid up for them in heaven*, Col. i. 5. It is called *the hope of their calling*, because God hath "called them unto his eternal glory, by Jesus Christ," 1 Peter, v. 10. and so it is termed *the prize of the high calling* of God, which they have in their eye in pressing forward in the christian race, Phil. iii. 14. As soon as they are called and justified they rejoice in hope of this glory, Rom. v. 1—3. To this lively hope of the inheritance they are all begotten by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 1 Peter, i. 3—6. This is the inheritance of children which they are all entitled to as joint heirs with Christ their elder brother and first born among them, who is risen from the dead to the possession of it, and who in this chapter prays that they may be with him where he is that they may behold his glory, verse 24. Of this hope the one Spirit is the earnest in their hearts, Eph. i. 13, 14. so that they are one in it. But this hope, as it is in their hearts, admits of growth; and therefore the apostle prays that they may *abound in this hope* through the power of the Holy Ghost, Rom. xv. 13. and in his epistle to the Ephesians, ch. i. 17, 18, 19, 20. he prays for the same blessing to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. They know not yet the full glory and extent of their inheritance; and they also need to be more and more established in the belief of that mighty power which raised Christ from the dead to the enjoyment of it, that their hope may be more strengthened respecting their own resurrection to it by the same power.

5. They have a unity of *love* to one another, from their love to him that begat, **1 John, v. 1.** for the truth's sake dwelling in them, **2 John, i. 2.** and for the hope that is laid up for them in heaven, **Col. i. 4, 5.** This bond of union is called "the bond of perfectness," **Col. iii. 14.** It is love that properly unites with its object. Without it the most shining gifts, the most beneficial works, and even martyrdom will be of no avail, **1 Cor. xiii. 1—4.** Christians cannot hate one another for the truth's sake, like Cain, who was of that wicked one. They cannot commit this sin, because the seed of God remaineth in them, and they are born of God, **1 John, iii. 9.** They may have many differences and quarrels, but it is not for their adherence to the truth as such, but for something they apprehend contrary to it; for they love all that are of the truth in as far as they perceive it dwelling in them, and heartily wish grace, mercy, and peace, to all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. But in this also there is room for growth and increase, **1 Thess. iii. 12.**

6. They have all one *Lord*, viz. Jesus Christ the Saviour, **Eph. iv. 5.** the only Sovereign and Head of his church, who purchased it by his own blood, **Acts, xx. 28.** to whom all authority and power is given both in heaven and in earth, **Matt. xxviii. 18.** and to whom, therefore, the church is bound to be subject in all things, even as the wife is to her own husband, **Eph. v. 23, 24.** This one Lord they confess to the glory of God the Father, as "the Lord their Righteousness," their alone King, Lawgiver, and Judge, acknowledging no other Lord or Master in his kingdom, **Matt. xxiii. 8—12.** esteeming all his laws of indispensable obligation—laws which they are bound to obey from the heart; and so studying to observe all things whatsoever he hath commanded, **Matt. xxviii. 20.**

7. Their union consists in having all *one God and Father*, who is "above all," as the Father of the whole family, Eph. iii. 15. and even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ in the economy of redemption, ver. 14. who is "through all," by his Son as the medium of his grace; and "in them all," by the inhabitation of his Spirit, ver. 16. according to the Saviour's prayer, "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us—I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me," John, xvii. 21, 23.

II. I come now to consider how this unity becomes *visible* in the world, and what belongs to it in that view.

I. This union becomes visible to us in the *outward profession* of the one faith and hope of the gospel. Though the children of God are all one in the particulars mentioned in the first head, and are all visible to the omniscient God, who searcheth the heart, and knoweth them that are his; yet to us, who can only judge by outward appearances, this unity is not visible till with the mouth men make a scriptural confession of the faith and hope that is in them. Accordingly we find that the apostles admitted none into the visible unity of Christ's body, but such as made this profession. When they confessed with the mouth that Jesus was Lord and Christ, and gave his death and resurrection as the reason of the hope that was in them, both for acceptance and eternal life, then, and not till then, did they acknowledge them as members of Christ's one body, Acts, viii. 37. Rom. x. 9. This confession must be scriptural in its matter, and couched in such a form of sound words, as is expressive of the

faith once delivered to the saints.—It must appear to be hearty, and the effect of a person's own knowledge and inward conviction from the word of God, in opposition to an implicit assent to custom, traditions, or the authority of men. In short, it must appear to be the effect of divine teaching, in so far as we can judge the state of the mind from the expressions of the mouth.

2. Another thing which belongs to the visible unity of Christ's disciples is the *one baptism*. The apostle tells us there is but *one baptism*, Eph. iv. 5. This is not the baptism of the Spirit, as some affirm; for the apostle mentions the one Spirit before, ver. 4. and therefore cannot be supposed to repeat it again in this enumeration. It is distinguished from the Spirit in several places as the outward sign is from the thing signified. So the subjects of Christ's kingdom are said to be *born of water*, as well as of the Spirit. John, iii. 5. and to have the *washing, laver, or bath of regeneration*, as well as the renewing of the Holy Ghost, Tit. iii. 5. Regeneration was an epithet applied to baptism in water by the first Christians, as is plain from Iræneus, Justin Martyr, and Clemens of Alexandria. Though it is essential to every member of Christ's body to have the Holy Ghost in his enlightening, comforting, and sanctifying influences; yet that which the scripture calls *baptism in the Holy Ghost*, properly signifies those miraculous and extraordinary gifts of the Spirit which were given to the first Christians for the spread and confirmation of the Gospel; compare Acts, i. 4, 5. with ch. ii. 33. and ch. xi. 15—18. with ch. x. 44—47. and therefore, in this view, cannot be the one baptism which belongs to the whole body. But supposing the term baptism applied to

the ordinary gift of the Spirit common to all believers, yet this is so far from superseding baptism in water as needless, that Peter considers it as the strongest argument for it; and that the refusal of it upon such a clear call would be no less than a withstanding God. Acts, x. 47. ch. xi. 17. Those then who make light of water baptism from a presumption that they are baptised in the Spirit, would do well to consider what they are about. But the baptism in water must be the one baptism, because it is the only baptism which Christ hath instituted, and commanded to be administered to those who are made disciples in every nation of the world, Matt. xxviii. 19. Antichrist hath indeed changed both this ordinance and its subjects, and hath invented many things falsely called baptism; but Christ has instituted only one baptism to be observed to the end of time; and that is the immersion of believers in water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is the one baptism which belongs to Christ's one church, or spouse, which he loved; for the Apostle says, Ephes. v. 25, 26. he "gave himself for her, that he might sanctify her, *i. e.* cleanse her in the laver of water by the word." Three things are mentioned here in sanctifying and cleansing the church.—1. Christ's *giving himself for her* to sanctify and cleanse her by his blood; so he suffered without the gate that he might sanctify the people, Heb. xiii. 12. *i. e.* separate them from all others to himself, and also wash them from their sins.—2. The *laver of water in baptism* as the sign, pledge, and visible application of this; and so they are said to be baptised for the remission of sins, Acts, ii. 38. 3. The *word* of the truth of the gospel, which reveals the truth and import of the two former, and by the Spirit brings the be-

liever under the influence and enjoyment of them. Thus we are clean through the word which Christ hath spoken, John, xv. 3. and sanctified through the truth, which is his word, ch. xvii. 17. Let none think that this is making too much of baptism; for our Lord places it in the very entry to his kingdom, John, iii. 5. and joins it in the commission with believing and being saved, Mark, xvi. 16. and so in executing this commission, the apostles call upon men to be baptised *for the remission* of sin, Acts, ii. 38. or that they may *wash away their sins*, ch. xxii. 16. and baptism is said to *save us* by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. iii. 21. Surely, such expressions place it in a very important point of view; and though it is fully granted that it is neither our faith nor baptism that properly saves; but *that* which we believe, or the *thing signified* in baptism, yet to separate what God hath so connected, is both daring and dangerous, and this after our Lord hath declared, that it is he that believeth and is baptised that shall be saved.

But then it must here be carefully noticed, that this one baptism belongs only to the *visible* members of Christ's body. For this I need produce but one argument which amounts to a demonstration, namely, that the administration of it is committed to men. Now as men cannot discern the members of Christ's body, but by the confession of the one faith, it follows, that they cannot according to the scripture administer baptism to any of them but such as make this confession. It is plain then, that baptism belongs to the *visible unity* of Christ's members. It also appears to be an *essential* article in that union; because of the authority of Christ who hath expressly appointed it as the one baptism of all his visible members; the first sign



of their union with him in his death, burial, and resurrection, and whereby they visibly put him on, Gal. iii. 27. and because the apostles admitted none into the visible unity of Christ's body without it. Though men, therefore, should make an unexceptionable profession of the faith—though their conduct should in general correspond with that profession—and though we must unavoidably respect them in so far as we perceive their conformity to Christ; yet should they either make light of the one baptism which Christ hath appointed, or content themselves with that which Antichrist hath substituted in its place; however honest and sincere we may suppose them in this matter; and whatever allowances we may make for the prejudices of education and their mistaken views of some texts of scripture, we can have no *visible* church union, or fellowship, with them according to the New Testament.

Let none say, that by this partition of baptism we break the Christian unity and separate the body of Christ; for this partition is not set up by us, but by the great head of the church; and for us to break it down would be to shew less regard to his authority, than complaisance to the ignorance and prejudices of men. The absurdity and impiety of such complaisance will appear the more striking if we extend it to other things; for by the same rule we ought to give up with every article of visible unity that any professor of the faith has not light to comply with. The christian *visible* church unity is broken not by those who stand to the rule, but by those who depart from it, or come not up to it. We are grieved that the children of God should be divided about this ordinance wherein they ought to be one—we exhibit unto them the primitive institution both in our doctrine and prac-

tice; we earnestly invite them to visible unity and fellowship with us therein; and we pray to their Lord and ours, that he would dispel the mist of ignorance and prejudice from their hearts in this respect. But we dare not meet them any nearer, or step over the boundaries which Christ hath prescribed, in order to give them the right-hand of fellowship.

3. A third thing which belongs to the visible unity of the disciples, is their *separation from the world* in their religious fellowship. When God chose Israel of old for his peculiar people, he separated them from all the nations of the earth, and prohibited them under the severest penalties to have any intercommunity of worship with the Heathens; so that it was said of them, "the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations," Num. xxiii. 9. When the Lord delivered them out of the Babylonish captivity he called them again to this separation, Isa. lii. 11. But this was only a type, or figure, of the New Testament separation. God doth not now separate any particular nation of the world from the rest as he did the nation of Israel; nor does he take all the nations of the world for his people; in which case there could be no visible separation, nor any *peculiar* people. But when he broke down the middle wall of partition betwixt Jews and Gentiles, and visited the nations to take out of them a people for his name, then he established another visible distinction betwixt the true Israel and the world; and so he calls the disciples to separate both from the Jewish church and heathenism, 2 Cor. vi. 14—18. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what con-

word hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temples of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." Agreeable to this call, we find the Apostles separating the disciples, Acts, xix. 9. and exhorting them to go forth to Jesus without the camp, bearing his reproach, Heb. xiii. 13. The laws and ordinances which Christ hath enjoined his disciples suppose this separation, and are calculated to preserve it. Nor are they called to separate merely from professed Jews and Heathens, but also from the corrupt professors of Christianity. So we find the Lord calling his people to separate from the false church that bears the Christian name, even as he formerly called Israel out of heathen Babylon, Rev. xviii. 4. "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." It may be asked, Have not the Protestant nations obeyed this call in separating from the communion of the Romish church? I answer, No. That separation is not the visible separation of Christ's people from the world pointed out in the New Testament, and exemplified in the days of the Apostles. Protestant nations are as really the world as Popish nations are, though their professed creed may in some particulars be more scriptural, and their political principles more tolerant. Any nation of this world professing to be the spouse,

or church, of Christ, must be antichristian; because her establishment and form as a church must be derived from the civil power, in direct opposition to Christ's kingdom which is not of this world. Because the greater part of such a church must appear visible infidels, which Christ hath expressly excluded from his church.—And because the very constitution of such a church visibly joins the children of God with the world in their religious fellowship, in direct opposition to Christ's call to them to come out from among them and be separate.—Lastly, Because the peculiar love which Christ hath enjoined his disciples to one another, the mutual offices of this love, together with the order, laws, and ordinances which he hath instituted for them as his visible body, cannot be exercised or observed in such an unscriptural connection, which is formed in direct contradiction to every law of his kingdom. Though, therefore, the people of God should make a scriptural confession of the one faith—though they should be baptised according to our Lord's institution; yet while they continue joined with the world in their religious fellowship, they can have no visible church unity with the body of Christ.

4. Another thing necessary to the visible union of the disciples, is, their being formed into *visible church order*. As scattered individuals among the nations, their unity cannot appear, nor can they in that situation represent the one body of Christ. Indeed their unity is never brought to a proper test till they are visibly joined together, as members one of another, having the same love, being of one accord, and of one mind, Phil. i. 27. and ii. 2. In this view the union of a company of disciples who come together into one place to observe Christ's institutions and the

purposes of public worship, is compared to that union which subsists between the different members of the human body; which, though many in number, and variously disposed, constitute one whole man.—“For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office, so we being many, are one body, and every one members one of another,” Rom. xii. 4, 5. The same subject is beautifully illustrated by this apostle, 1 Cor. xii. and the inference which he deduces from it is, “that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care one for another; and whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or if one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.” This visible union constitutes them “the body of Christ,” and each of them members in particular, ver. 27. The union of believers in a church state is but little accounted of by many in the present day, and the reciprocal duties and privileges connected with it, perhaps still less so. Yet the Psalmist, anticipating it by the Spirit of prophecy, could exclaim, “Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments; as the dew of Hermon, that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore,” Psalm, cxxxiii. A great part of the apostolic precepts are founded upon this state of union, and plainly imply it: nor can any proper view of their meaning be taken abstractedly from it. Such as the following: “Now I beseech you brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there

be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment," 1 Cor. i. 10. "Be perfect, (or perfectly joined together) be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you," 2 Cor. xiii. 11. See also Phil. i. 27—30. and ii. 15, 16.—Col. iii. 12—14.—1 Thess. v. 11—15.—Heb. iii. 12—14. and x. 23—25—1 Pet. v. 5. It is with a particular view to this state of things that Christ bestows gifts upon men for the work of the ministry, the perfecting (or bringing into joint) the saints, and edifying his body," Eph. iv. 11, 12. And when these gifts are exercised agreeably to his will, by "speaking the truth in love, they grow up into Christ, their head, in all things," and thus, "the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, to the edifying of itself in love," ver. 15, 16. Peculiar consolations are promised to disciples, thus walking together in love.—"He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him," John, xiv. 21. "Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty," 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18.

Having thus shewn wherein all Christ's disciples are one, and what is necessary to their visible unity, *viz.* The confession of the one faith—their partaking of the one baptism—their separation from the world in religious fellowship—their joining together as a vi-

sible body in church order—their joint observance of the ordinances and laws of Christ as a body—their walking together in love among themselves, and standing fast in one spirit with one mind, jointly striving for the faith of the gospel—I come now to conclude the whole by a few observations and practical uses. And I remark, that when we compare the *true invisible unity* of Christ's body with its *visible appearance* in this world, we shall find the former far excelling the latter. For,

Visible unity is founded in the agreement of our sentiments about the rule of God's word, and our outward conformity to that rule as we understand it. But real invisible unity is founded on our connection with Christ, and our conformity to him in the hidden man of the heart, whose praise is not of men, but of God. Hence it follows, on account of our inability to discover the real state of men,

That we must, according to the rule of God's word, join in visible unity with some who are not really united to Christ. Many are now united with the churches of the saints, and have a very fair appearance, who are not members of Christ's true body, animated by his Spirit, or possessed of the faith, love, and hope of the gospel, and whom Christ will disown in that day when he makes up his jewels, and severs the goats from the sheep, and that notwithstanding all their knowledge, and gifts, and zeal about the externals of religion. Such may get access into visible churches, notwithstanding all their vigilance and care either in admission or discipline to prevent or rectify it. But they shall not enter within the gates of the New Jerusalem; for no unclean thing can have access there, or elude the scrutiny of omniscience. The use we ought

to make of this consideration, is to examine ourselves with respect to these things wherein the reality of our connection with Christ consists. Hence it also follows, on the other hand,

That many cannot join in visible unity who yet may be really united to Christ. This arises either from their not being able to discern one another, or, if some of them should, from their not being of the same mind in the things which belong to their visible unity. All Christians have the *one faith*; but all are not alike clear and consistent in the confession of this faith so as to satisfy others. All of them are subject to the *authority of Christ*; but they do not all alike know their master's will. All of them have *his law of love* written in their hearts; but from various causes they may be led to differ about such of his ordinances as depend upon positive institution. Visible unity, however, requires that they should be agreed in all these things wherein they are to walk together as a body, and keep the ordinances of Christ as his apostles delivered them to the churches. A society united together upon the professed principles of forbearing one another in the neglect of what they esteem the plain laws of Christ, is a monstrous absurdity; and is so far from being a visible unity of subjection to Christ, that it is a visible combination against him, or an agreement to dispense with his laws. The children of God may honestly differ in their judgments about some of Christ's ordinances; but to unite upon the avowed principle of dispensing with them, is inconsistent with subjection to Christ, brotherly love, or the visible unity of saints. But though the children of God, cannot according to the scripture thus join together in visible union, but are obliged to be separate



upon the common principle of subjection to Christ; yet Christ by an invisible bond unites them all in himself. He hath indeed circumscribed the terms of our visible fellowship by the open rule of his word, and we are still farther circumscribed by the imperfection of our own knowledge; nay, we are even obliged by his express authority to cut off some whose spirits may be saved in the day of the Lord. But his omniscience discerns, and his generous heart contains all those for whom he laid down his life, however much they may differ and lose sight of one another in this world. And when he shall at last collect the whole redeemed company into one general assembly, and present them to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; then I make no doubt we shall be agreeably surprised, and happy to find many united to that blessed society with whom we could have no visible fellowship here. This consideration ought to make us beware of judging any thing before the time, until the Lord come; "who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart; and then shall every man have praise of God," 1 Cor. iv. 5. This is, indeed, the time to judge of the objects of our visible fellowship, or those that are within, 1 Cor. v. 12. for a great part of our obedience to Christ depends on this judgment. But it is before the time to judge those that are without, or to determine their final state by present appearances. Their judgment belongs only to God who shall judge us all, and the time of this judgment is when the Lord comes. We cannot indeed help having a good or bad opinion of men according as they appear to us to approach to, or recede from, the rule of the scripture in their pri-

ciples and practice, whether they are connected with us or not. This is a necessary consequence of our love to the truth itself. But we are not called to form any determinate judgment respecting such, as our visible union is not concerned in it. How unbecoming is it then to unchristianize all who are not connected with us in visible unity! and how much more so to have the strongest opposition to those who make the nearest approaches to the rule, unless they see with us in every thing! We are ready to excuse ourselves here by alleging that such are the more inconsistent and inexcusable, and that they must be wilfully resisting the light. Their inconsistency is allowed; but that they are resisting the light as it shines in their own minds, is what only God and their own consciences can certainly determine. Such a conduct as this arises from a party spirit; and we may know this spirit by the following marks—It leads us to think more of that particular wherein we differ from all other professors than we do of all the other things wherein Christ's people are one.—It makes us run every thing into this one, and to make it the sole test of visible Christianity, and so judge of men accordingly.—It makes us to see with pain, or disposes us to disparage every other part of Christianity as it appears in those who agree not in this; and on the other hand, it makes us put up with a very superficial form of Christianity in such as agree with us upon our favourite point. But what is worst of all—It tends to deceive us with respect to our own state, by leading us to plume ourselves upon what distinguishes us from others, and to be less attentive to real communion with, and conformity to Christ wherein others may far outstrip us.

Visible unity may fluctuate and decrease, but invisible unity is still advancing, and will continue its progress till all the saints are gathered in and perfected. The antichristian apostacy has proved fatal to the visible union of Christ's people in the world, by drawing a corrupted form of Christianity over whole nations, and connecting it with the political constitutions of the various kingdoms and states which were subject to the man of sin. And even since they have begun to cast off the yoke imposed on them by that monstrous power, they are still partially suffering from its baneful influence. But we are not left destitute of hope, that even in this world, a period will arrive, when the sanctuary shall be cleansed, and the watchmen of Zion see eye to eye—then will the worship, order, and discipline be restored to their primitive purity, and reduced to the standard of the New Testament, in a much greater degree than at present, though it does not appear that there will be any perfect state of the church on earth, Matt. xiii. 24—39. and xxv. 32. But I conclude with one observation more; which is this;

Visible union will come to an end in this world; but invisible unity will continue for ever. The true church's union with Christ is indissoluble. She shall at last be presented unto him as a bride adorned for her husband. Having loved her and given himself for her, that he might sanctify and cleanse her, he will then present it to himself a glorious church, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; and then shall the marriage be solemnized in endless felicity, when she shall be brought into the palace of the king, to behold his glory and to be for ever with him. Then, too, shall the children of God be one among them-

selves. Now they see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now they know only in part; but then shall they know, even as also they are known. "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, and I will write upon him my new name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches," Rev. iii. 12, 13.

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## SERMON VII.

THE STUMBLING BLOCK REMOVED, AND THE  
BELIEVER STRENGTHENED.



PSALM, LXXIII. 25, 26.

*Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee: my flesh and my heart fail; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*

THESE are the words of the Psalmist, after having been delivered from a most dangerous temptation, or doubt in his mind, which struck at the root of all religion, and of which he gives us an account in the foregoing part of this Psalm.

“As for me,” says he, “my feet were almost gone; my steps had well-nigh slipped,” ver. 2. As men stand by faith, Rom. xi. 20. so unbelief, or doubting, is said to be a *staggering*, or *stumbling*, and, when it comes to its highest degree, it is called a *falling*, Rom. iv. 20.—xi. 11, 12. Heb. iv. 11.—and that which causes doubting, or unbelief, is called a *stumbling-block*, an *offence* or *scandal*, an *occasion to fall*, Rom. xiv. 13, 21. The Psalmist here uses the same metaphorical language with respect to the doubts of his mind. But then it must be noticed that his unbelief

was partial; his feet were not altogether, but *almost* gone—his steps had not entirely, but *well-nigh* slipped. This may serve to show that there are different degrees of apostacy; but the first and lowest degree ought to alarm our fears, lest it should issue in the last.

The grounds of his doubt were the prosperity of the wicked, and the afflictions of the people of God. “I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no bands in their death; but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men—their eyes stand out with fat; they have more than heart could wish.” Then he takes notice of the bad effect their prosperity has upon them—“Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment. They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression; they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens; and their tongue walketh through the earth,” ver. 3—10. This observation suggested to him the following perplexing and atheistical thoughts, which he puts as it were in the mouth of God’s people, “How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High? Behold these are the ungodly who prosper in the world, they increase in riches. Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning,” ver. 11—14. The prosperity of the wicked, notwithstanding all their contempt of God, and the distress of the people of God, notwithstanding all their endeavours to please him, were what he could not reconcile with God’s righteous government of the world; and therefore he began to doubt the existence of a divine providence,

or whether the Most High had any knowledge of, or concern in, human affairs; and, consequently, whether there was any profit at all in serving him; since from all that appeared, the advantage seemed to lie on the side of irreligion. Thus his mind was almost unhinged and overset; and all his own reasonings could not repel or overcome the temptation: "When" says he, "I thought to know this, it was too painful for me," ver. 16. that is, I could not reconcile it with any idea I had of the divine character and government, or with the views which I have of the misery of the wicked and the happiness of the righteous. Upon this I observe,

1. That doubts of this kind are not so uncommon as some may imagine. There is a natural Atheism in the heart of man; and the blasphemy which would shock the ear when expressed in words, is an habitual governing principle in the heart of the irregenerate, as is evident from their practice; and it sometimes even darts into the minds of the children of God, as in the case of the Psalmist, now before us. But I remark further that,

2. Nothing gives the children of God more pain and distress than a temptation of this kind, because it strikes at the root of all their happiness and hopes; and hence the Psalmist says, "My heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins," ver. 21. He was grieved lest there should be any ground for his doubts; and he was grieved and shocked at the unbelief of his own heart, for entertaining them. But the wicked in general are entirely easy in such a situation; nay, their only refuge under a sense of guilt is infidelity.

3. The Psalmist, however, through ignorance and

earthly mindedness, lay too much exposed to this temptation: he seems to have forgotten for a time, that the prosperity of fools destroys them, I. 10v. i. 32. that whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, Heb. xii. 6. and that a man's life or true happiness does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesseth.— He seems to have taken his eye off the things which are not seen and eternal, and so begins to judge of the love or hatred of God by the outward dispensations of his providence in the distribution of things seen and temporal. The things of this world seem to have expanded too much in his eye, and to have had too large a place in his affections; and this led him to envy the prosperity of the wicked; for the things which do not affect men can never excite their envy. In this state of mind he lay exposed to the force of the temptation, which owed its whole strength to worldly affections, and a measuring the justice of the divine government by maxims formed upon worldly principles. From this we may see that unbelief is seated as much in men's carnal dispositions as in their ignorance or want of evidence. The god of this world blinds the minds of those who believe not. How? by exciting the love of worldly pleasures, riches, and honours. While these pre-occupy the affections, they prejudice the mind and blind the judgment with regard to spiritual things; and in as far as they take place in the hearts of any of God's children, they must in proportion have the same effect. And this may shew us the meaning of our Lord's injunction to his disciples in Matt. v. 29, 30. where he enjoins them to pluck out the right eye and cut off the right hand, when they become an occasion of stumbling to them.



Let us now see how the Psalmist was delivered from this dangerous temptation. All his own reasonings from carnal and worldly principles only served to increase his doubts and difficulties; for it was impossible he should resist the Devil on his own ground and with his own weapons. When he thought to solve the doubt by worldly maxims, like our modern deistical philosophers, the task was too painful for him; until he went into the Sanctuary of God, and then he understood their end, ver. 17.

The Sanctuary was the place where God met with his people, where they sought and worshipped him, where his word was searched into, and his mind revealed; here he found a solution of all his doubts, and a most satisfying discovery of God as his own portion and happiness. From this we may observe the great benefit of divine ordinances and institutions for edifying and establishing the children of God in the most holy faith, and even for recovering them from temporary attacks of unbelief; and no wonder those who neglect them, or attend them in a careless and formal manner, should fall a prey to Satan and an evil heart of unbelief.

In God's Sanctuary the Psalmist got a discovery of the *end* of the wicked, *i. e.* of their miserable end.

1. He saw that all their enjoyments in this world were but of a short and momentary duration. However eminent and affluent their circumstances, and however much they flattered themselves with their stability and durableness; yet he saw they were set on *slippery places*, where they could not by all their circumspection and precaution insure their standing one moment; and that their fall was as certain, as it would be sudden and unexpected.

2. He saw that the utmost date of their happiness was but this present life, which at longest is but a point of time when compared to the life to come, and that there was no profit in gaining the whole world if they lost their own souls; that they could carry none of their enjoyments hence; but must for ever bid adieu to every thing wherein they now place their happiness.

3. He saw that if their misery did not commence in this world in visible judgments, it would infallibly commence in the world to come. "Thou castest them" says he "down into destruction. How are they brought into destruction as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest thou shalt despise their image." He saw they were treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. That God was at present bearing with them a little, as one silent or asleep; but that he would at last awake in tenfold vengeance to devour his adversaries.

4. He saw that their worldly prosperity, so far from being an advantage to them, made them forget their true interest, heightened their wickedness, and accelerated their destruction. It caused pride to compass them as a chain, and violence to cover them as a garment; it occasioned them to speak loftily, and to set their mouth against the very heavens, ver. 6, 8, 9. So that through their impenitent hearts and abuse of the divine goodness, it became both the occasion and means of their treasuring up for themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; when the Lord would awake against them in fiery indignation, and

bring them into everlasting destruction in a moment, ver. 19, 20.

5. On the other hand, he saw that the afflictions and chastisements of the children of God were so far from being tokens of his hatred, that they were evidences of his love. That in these he dealt with them as his children, chastising them for their profit, that they might be made partakers of his holiness: "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure: but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby," Heb. xii. 6—11. "It is good for me that I have been afflicted," Psalm, cxix. 71. Add to which, —That their afflictions were but light and momentary, and would soon be exchanged for a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 2 Cor. iv. 17.—Psalm, xxxiv. These views fully reconciled his mind to the justice of the divine administration, and effectually cured him of his envy at the prosperity of the wicked.

He then professes his faith in God to uphold him, and his purpose of heart to cleave henceforth unto

the Lord. "*Nevertheless I am continually with thee,*" or, (as others render it) "Now shall I be continually with thee:" as if he should say, "I will cleave unto thee henceforth, and rest satisfied with thy wise and holy government, fully persuaded that all thy ways are mercy and truth to them that fear thee."

"*Thou hast holden me by my right hand.*" Here he ascribes his deliverance to God alone. He had said before that his feet were almost gone, and his steps had well-nigh slipt; answerable to which he here represents the Lord as taking hold of him by the right hand, and not only preventing his falling utterly, but perfectly establishing him.

"*Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel.*" Having experienced such a remarkable deliverance, he is emboldened to put his confidence in the Lord for the future, that he would keep him from again falling into the same snare, guide him by the counsel of his word and Spirit, and keep him by his power through faith unto salvation.

"*And afterwards receive me to glory;*" *i. e.* After I have finished my course here by thy guidance and direction, thou wilt receive me to the everlasting enjoyment of thyself in heaven."

In opposition, therefore, to all the prosperity of the wicked in this world, which had formerly raised his envy, he now returns unto his true rest, and finds all his happiness in God, as his chief good, and the real portion of his immortal soul. This he expresses in these words, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever," ver 25, 26.— Here we may observe,

1. That he renounces every other ground and source of happiness but God himself. "Whom have I in heaven but thee?" *i. e.* there is no other. He had been looking back to the world for happiness, and when he beheld the prosperity of the wicked, it excited his desires, raised his envy, and almost led him to deny God; but now that he is delivered by a discovery of the vanity and danger of these things, and a fresh view of God as an all-sufficient portion, he renounces all happiness in the creature, and takes up with God alone, exclusive of every thing else. Whom have I in heaven but thee? Let the wicked enjoy their prosperity, and solace themselves with their worldly riches, pleasures, and honours; they enjoy them unenvied by me. I renounce all these things without so much as a wish or hankering thought after them; for God is my portion and inheritance, and in him I have my heart's desire, Psalm, xxxvii. 4.

2. God now possessed his heart and his supreme affections to such a degree, that the whole creation was as a blank to him in comparison thereof. He takes a view both of heaven and earth; but he finds nothing in either that can give him happiness besides his God. *Heaven* is the blessed residence of angels, and of the spirits of just men made perfect; but he can think of no happiness in their society without the enjoyment of his God. He can think of no heaven or blessedness but this. "Whom have I in heaven but thee?" *Earth* is a convenient habitation; furnished with many comforts suited to this present life. Here also he had friends and relations, and the society of the saints, the excellent ones of the earth; but notwithstanding all this, he says, "there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." His love to

God was not only supreme and *predominant*, but it was *undivided* betwixt God and the creature. He could, no doubt, enjoy the comforts of God's bounty; but it was only as they came from God, as enjoying God in them, and as used to the glory of God. He loved the people of God, and the ordinances of God; but it was all for their relation to God, their resemblance of him, and the manifestation of God in them.

3. He finds an abundant happiness in God, in the midst of the greatest temporal afflictions: "My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." The failing of his flesh and heart may respect either the *afflictions* of this present life, under which God bore up his heart, which would otherwise have failed, see Hab. iii. 17—19. or *death* itself, whereby his outward man would perish like the grass, or the flower of the grass; and then it respects his triumph in God in the view of his dissolution, as his everlasting portion, which was not like those whose portion is only in this world; thus, "Deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword; from men which are thy hand, O Lord, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure: they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes. As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness," Psalm, xvii. 14, 15.

I shall conclude this subject with a few general observations. Such as,

1. That the justice of the divine administration can never be perceived by those who do not extend their views beyond this present world. God's *love* of holiness and *hatred* of sin, cannot be seen in his

distribution of the good things of this life. We must take spiritual enjoyments into the account, and the rewards and punishments of a future state, if we solve the difficulty. "He hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead," Acts, xvii. 31.

2. We may hence learn wherein the true happiness of man consists, *viz.* In the enjoyment of God. No finite good can satisfy the *boundless* desires of the human soul. No man can be perfectly happy in any thing which he knows will *come to an end*. But such are all earthly enjoyments; and, therefore, to urge men to be content with these, without regard to the enjoyment of God, is to debase human nature to a level with that of the brute creation.

3. The enjoyment of the divine favour is sufficient to communicate happiness amidst all the troubles and afflictions of life. It is an effectual cure to every inordinate passion; an antidote against the influence of the things of this world; such as riches, pleasures, honours, &c.—And consequently an antidote for every envious and malevolent disposition towards men; all of which arise from an unsatisfied heart. I remark further, that

4. Since man lost the enjoyment of God by his apostacy, there is no way of obtaining it again, but through Jesus Christ, "who hath made peace by the blood of his cross." In him God displays himself to be LOVE; and presents himself as a satisfying and everlasting portion to his people; so that when men believe the gospel, they have peace with God—rejoice in the hope of his glory—and count all things loss

for Christ. This was held forth to the Psalmist by promise : but unto us, the same things are declared and testified in the most express and forcible terms : “ Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, and rejoice in hope of his glory—and not only so, but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement,” Rom. v. 1, 11. “ Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord : for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him,” Phil. iii. 8, 9. May this be the happy lot of each of us ; and may God grant it for his great mercy’s sake. Amen.

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## SERMON VIII.

ON THE DUTY OF KEEPING THE HEART.



PROV. IV. 23.

*Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.*

THE *heart* here, and in most other places where it is mentioned in scripture, signifies in general the inner man, or the soul with all its powers and faculties. Accordingly we are said to understand, believe, incline, desire, rejoice, love or hate with our heart.

The *life*, which issues out of it, signifies the course or tenor of a man's life or conduct. This is the stream which perpetually issues from the heart as its source, or fountain; and so must be either good or bad, according to the state or quality of the heart from which it proceeds. True, indeed, in relation to human laws, a man's life may be outwardly just, and even beneficial to society, whilst the principles, motives, and dispositions of his heart are essentially wrong; but, according to the divine law, the life is always judged of according to the quality of the heart out of which it issues. And though we cannot with certainty judge of one another in this manner,

yet every one of us should judge of himself according to the state of his heart, because we have to do with him to whose eyes all things are naked and opened, and who searcheth the hearts and reins. This text, therefore, deserves our most serious attention, wherein we have,

I. A *duty* enjoined.—“Keep thy heart.”

II. The *manner* of performing it.—“With all diligence.”

III. The *reason* or *motive* enforcing it.—“For out of it are the issues of life.”

I. The *duty* enjoined is that of keeping the heart. But before I proceed it may be proper to premise a few things: such as, That the heart of man in its *natural state* is full of enmity and rebellion against God, disordered in all its faculties, deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.—In *regeneration* a new heart is given him, whereby he knows, loves, fears, and delights in God as his true happiness; so that in his predominant and habitual character, he can with propriety be denominated a new creature. Yet in this life he is not totally and perfectly renewed; “The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would,” Gal. v. 17. This remainder of the corrupt principle creates a conflict within him, wars against his soul, and if not attended to, will gather strength, and produce dangerous consequences. Hence the many exhortations to watchfulness, self-denial, mortification, and crucifixion of the flesh, to put off the old man, and to take heed of an evil heart of unbelief; and lest we should

be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, &c. From all which we may perceive the propriety of the duty here enjoined, and how necessary and important it is in our present imperfect state.

I would farther observe, that there are various ways by which men excuse themselves from this duty: such as—That all attempts to keep the heart must be a self-righteous labour, a seeking to find something good about themselves as a ground of hope in opposition to the righteousness of Christ. As if our believing in Christ for righteousness made us perfectly indifferent as to how our minds stood affected to him!—Others will reply, that it is beyond their power to keep their hearts, and therefore it is a vain and fruitless attempt. But this objection militates against the most of the exhortations in the word of God. We can as easily keep our hearts as we can believe in Christ, abide in him, fight the good fight of faith, &c. Every thing that is matter of exhortation is matter of duty: and though it is proper we should be sensible that these duties are above our natural power; yet nothing but unbelief can make us give them up as impossible, since that is always possible to the believer which he can do through Christ who strengtheneth him. It is the Lord that keeps the hearts of his people; but not without exciting their own care and diligence in this duty. He puts his *fear* in their hearts that they may not depart from him; and this fear is a stimulative active principle, which sets them upon their guard, and keeps them attentive to their duty. There is a beautiful connection between our working out our salvation with fear and trembling, and God's working in us to will and to do of his good pleasure—between our keeping ourselves in the love

of God, or keeping our heart, and his keeping us by his power through faith unto salvation.

We shall now proceed to consider the duty here exhorted to. Some think there is an allusion to a city besieged by a powerful army from without, and ready to be betrayed by treacherous citizens within, and where the soldiers are commanded upon pain of death to keep a strict and unremitted watch on all sides. But whatever the expression alludes to, it is certainly the case with the human heart; and the duty of keeping it is as much more important as the concerns of the soul exceed those of the body. Keeping the heart imports,

1. A careful examination of the principles, motives, aims, and dispositions of our minds. We must study to have a particular acquaintance with our own hearts, otherwise we can never keep them. It is not enough that we know in general that our hearts are corrupt, but we must study to be sensible of the particular plague of our hearts, and the sin that doth most easily beset us; without this we cannot be properly upon our guard against the temptations which are suited to it. The Apostle thus exhorts Christians to examine themselves, "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup," 1 Cor. xi. 28.—"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobate?" 2 Cor. xiii. 5. And he cautions the Hebrews particularly against departing from God; "Take heed brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God," Heb. iii. 12. Our Lord blames the Pharisees for their inattention to their hearts amidst

all their outward shew of sanctity ; and this is what he principally condemns in the seven churches of Asia, wherein he discovers himself to be the searcher of the reins and hearts. In short, if we would keep our hearts we must study to know them by careful examination.

2. It imports a constant attention to and guard over our hearts in every situation of danger and temptation. We are to keep our hearts at all times ; but there are particular seasons which call for our utmost diligence in this respect.—In the season of *prosperity* we are in danger of pride, forgetfulness of God, taking up with the world as our portion, and of indulging in softness and intemperance ; putting the evil day far off.—In a time of *peace* and *rest* we are apt to sink into lukewarmness and carnal security.—In the time of *affliction* we are in danger of despising the chastening of the Lord, or fainting when we are rebuked of him, or of murmuring and repining against him. In times of *persecution* for the gospel's sake we are apt to be offended, to fear him that can only kill the body more than God, and so to temporise and keep measures with the world.—In *poverty* and *want* we are apt to distrust God, to repine against him, to be overloaded with anxious cares, and to take improper methods for our relief.—When we meet with *injuries* and *abuse* from men, we are in danger of indulging resentment, and the motions of revenge and hatred. There are also circumstances which tend to foster spiritual pride and presumption, and there are others which tend to distress and overset the heart with unbelieving fears and discouragements. In these, and all such like situations, the heart must be carefully attended to, and kept with all diligence.

Neither is this all: for even the children of God need to be continually excited to vigilance, lest the things of this world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, get such hold of their affections and appetites as to immerse them in sensuality, and obliterate the impressions of divine things from their minds: "Take heed to yourselves," says our Lord, "lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares," Luke, xxi. 34. There are two things exceedingly remarkable in this text. The first is, that our Lord does not deliver this exhortation to the world at large, but to his own immediate disciples, who believed on him. Compare Matt. xxiv. with Luke, xxi. *throughout*. The other is, that he should connect the cares of this world with such bestiality as surfeiting and drunkenness—so as to insinuate that there exists any similarity between the danger arising from the one and the other: and yet he who knew what was in man, has thought proper to intimate this connection, and to put even his own children upon their guard against the danger arising from these sources. "Watch ye, therefore, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things, and to stand before the Son of man," ver. 36.

There are also particular duties which require that the heart should be wholly engaged in them, and its best affections awakened and excited, such as the religious duties of divine service. In these the heart must be specially attended to lest it grow cold, formal, and hypocritical, or inattentive, trifling, and wandering. Solomon says, "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear

than to give the sacrifice of fools; for they consider not that they do evil," Eccl. v. 1. On such occasions our hearts and all that is within us should be collected, united, and stirred up, without which we we can have little correspondence with God in his worship.

3. As to the method of keeping our hearts, I would just mention three general directions—1. We must study to draw off our thoughts from such objects and motives as are temptations and incentives to sin. The more we dwell upon and revolve them in our minds, the greater power will they have over us. Our safety is in flying from them, or banishing them from our thoughts. In order to this, we must carefully avoid every occasion of recalling them to mind. Thus we must abstain from all appearance of evil, and guard against temptation in its first approach, that we may not enter into it.—2. We must carefully recollect, and studiously impress upon our hearts the principles and motives of the gospel, both to check the irregular motions of the heart, and also to promote, strengthen, and confirm every fruit of the Spirit. It is only by the truth through the Spirit that we are sanctified, and overcome this world and all its temptations and lusts. It affords a sovereign remedy for every malady of the human heart, an effectual balm for every wound, and a cordial for every fear. It also contains the strongest motives to holiness in heart and life, with which it connects our own consummate and everlasting happiness. But it produces no effect upon the hearts of men till once they believe it. In keeping our hearts, therefore, we must—See that we are keeping the *faith*. The scripture abounds with cautions and exhortations to this, which shows

the necessity and importance of it: "We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip," Heb. ii. 1.—"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God," ch. iii. 12.—"Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things that we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward," 2 John, 8. Disciples are exhorted, "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me," John, xv. 4.—"If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister," Col. i. 23.—"Walk ye in him, rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving," ch. ii. 6, 7. If the heart is not kept in the faith it is not kept in any respect, but is void of every principle that can establish it. On the other hand, if the heart is kept in the faith, the faith will keep it in every other respect; for faith purifies the heart, works by love, and overcomes the world; and the heart is established with that grace which it believes, Heb. xiii. 9. We must, therefore, pay particular attention to this, without which, all our endeavours to keep our hearts will be but a fruitless self-righteous labour. But keeping the faith requires diligence, and the use of such means as God has appointed.—Again: If the heart be kept in the faith, it will also be kept in the *love* of God. It is by faith we perceive the loveliness of the divine character, particularly his amazing love and grace



towards us in Christ; this must necessarily draw out our love towards him. The heart is never properly kept till it is deeply interested and its affections engaged; whatever object has its supreme affections, becomes the center of all its motions. When, therefore, the love of God takes place in the heart, this attracts and holds it towards him as the needle to the pole; which, though it may vibrate, cannot settle at any other point. Its desire will be towards him, and its meditations sweet of him. We must study, therefore, to keep our hearts in the love of God, by believing and meditating on his love, and guarding against such unworthy unbelieving thoughts of him as tend to make him the object of terror and aversion to us.

Moreover, if the heart is kept in the faith, it will be also kept in the *hope* of the gospel; for faith is the conviction of things hoped for, Heb. xi. 1. Christians are exhorted not to be moved away from the hope of the gospel, Col. i. 23.—to “hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end,” Heb. iii. 6.—to be “rejoicing in hope,” Rom. xii. 12. Hope is the joyful expectation of future good. The object of hope presented in the gospel is everlasting life and complete happiness beyond death and the grave, which is the greatest good that can possibly be enjoyed. In proportion as this hope takes place in the heart it draws it off from earthly happiness, preserves it from fainting in tribulations, keeps its view steady to the prize of the high calling of God, and is an anchor to the soul both sure and steadfast, entering into that within the veil. Thus the heart is kept by hope; and therefore in keeping our hearts, we must always keep in view the grounds of hope, *viz.* the

death and resurrection of Christ, and the faithfulness of him who hath promised; we must gird up the loins of our minds, and be sober and hope to the end, and shew the same diligence to the full assurance of it; for the heart is kept by the certain prospect of happiness. It might easily be shown how faith, love, and hope have an influence upon every other fruit of the Spirit.—Lastly: To all our own endeavours to keep our hearts we must join earnest prayer to God, who alone can keep them effectually. It is he that keeps us through faith, that sheds his love abroad in our hearts, and that makes us abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.

II. The manner in which we are to keep our hearts is, “with all diligence;” or, as it is forcibly expressed in the margin of our Bibles, “above all keeping;” which seems to include the following things:

1. That it is a *difficult business*, requiring great attention and our utmost care and diligence. The difficulty, indeed, can only be fully estimated by those that have been practically employed in the arduous undertaking; who have had experience of the deceitfulness of their own hearts, their proneness to turn aside like a broken bow, and the continual inclination inherent in them to fall in with the allurements of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Hence the numerous exhortations with which the word of God abounds, to “stand in awe and sin not”—“to watch and be sober”—“to walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise”—and “to be in the fear of the Lord all the day long.”

2. It also denotes that we must *persevere* in this duty with constancy to the end of our lives; for until then we shall never be beyond the reach of danger,

or the power of temptation. It is not sufficient for us to have given up with the world as our portion, and to have made the Christian profession, however sincerely this may have been done. We must "fight the good fight of faith" that we may lay hold on eternal life, maintain the conflict with all our spiritual enemies, be denied to every worldly lust, and ever keep steadily in view that it is only "he that endureth to the end" that shall obtain the immortal prize. There is no period in the life of a Christian on this side the grave, during which he can relax his diligence over his own heart or abate his vigilance. "The just shall live by faith, but if any man draw back, the Lord will have no pleasure in him," Heb. x. 38. And it is a consideration well suited at all times to alarm our fear and stimulate our utmost exertions, that we are expressly told, "the backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways," Prov. xiv. 14. I add,

3. That it should be our main or *chief business*; for we must keep it "above all keeping;" that is, more than life itself, and as we value our immortal souls. In order that we may be properly principled for this, let us seek to possess our minds with a full conviction of the *dangers* to which we are constantly exposed while in an enemy's country, surrounded with foes both external and internal; and of our own *insufficiency*, without divine assistance, to maintain the warfare, subdue our corruptions, resist the force of temptation, and keep ourselves from falling. And let it be our continual prayer, that we may "be filled with the knowledge of the will of God, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding—that we may be strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto

all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness," Col. i. 9—11.

I may further remark on this particular, that in order to make the keeping of the heart the chief business of our lives, it may be very useful to us to meditate much on the vanity of the world, the shortness of life, and the near approach of death, judgment, and eternity. The deep conviction of these realities has a powerful tendency to moderate our instinctive love of life, and impress us with the importance of "the one thing that is needful." The imaginary degree of importance, which the neglect of such meditation suffers us to bestow on temporal things, is one great cause of our vehemence in desire and our eagerness in the pursuit of them. We are naturally disposed to attach ourselves to the objects that are around us, as if we could enjoy them for ever, forgetting that "the fashion of this world passeth away." Let us reduce all human things to their proper standard; and from vain thoughts and frivolous pursuits recall our attention to objects of real importance; to our great concern in life; remembering that "the world passeth away and the lusts thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever," 1 John. ii. 17.

I come now in the last place,

III. To notice the *reason* by which this duty is enforced, *viz.* "For out of the heart are the issues of life:" or, in other words, It is the source and fountain of all vital actions and operations: the first mover or main spring of the whole life and conversation of a man.

Nothing is more certain than that the *quality* of the life will always correspond to the state or quality of the heart from which it proceeds; for the stream must

partake of the quality of its fountain; and the fruit of that of the tree on which it grows, whether that be good or bad. If, therefore, the heart be essentially wrong, it is a radical evil which will run through the whole life, and cannot afterwards be rectified. Hence our Lord says, "Make the tree good, and its fruit shall be good also. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit," Matt. vii. 16—18.—"Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness," Mark, vii. 21, 22. All these abominations proceed out of the heart of man.

Again: though the life should be *externally fair* in the sight of men, yet if the principles, motives, and dispositions of the heart be corrupt, the most specious religious profession will be no better than abominable hypocrisy in the sight of God; for he looks not at the outward appearance, but judges of the life by the heart. "The Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed," 1 Sam. ii. 3. In vain would we draw near to him with our mouth, and honour him with our lips, while our hearts are far from him. He demands the heart, and will be satisfied with nothing short of it. "My son, give me *thy heart*," is his own express injunction, Prov. xxiii. 26.

Without *faith* it is impossible to please God; whence it follows, that such a heart as he approves must be purified by the truth of the gospel dwelling

in it, and so it must be the effect of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned, 1 Tim. i. 5. This faith must operate by *love*, or charity, which is the end of the commandment, and without which the most self-denied actions will profit us nothing, 1 Cor. xiii. 3. Nay, without *supreme affection* to God as our chief good, and the portion of our souls, our obedience to him will be but a secondary consideration; it must, in the nature of things, be very partial and yielded with reluctance; suited rather to quiet the clamours of conscience, than to draw forth the joyful testimony of conscience. This is not that free, spontaneous, and voluntary obedience which is dictated by the noble motives of the gospel; and it shews that there is something wrong in the state of the heart—something that requires rectifying. Persons of this description are not wholly set free from the spirit of bondage, and made to enjoy the spirit of adoption, which is the privilege of the children of God. These see the reasonableness of giving their hearts to God, they feel the constraining influence of a father's love, and at the same time are filled with regret that other objects should have shared so much of their hearts, and drawn them off from God their heavenly Father.

To conclude; Let us all take warning by this subject, and beware how we make light of the duty of cultivating the religion of the heart. There is much presumption and want of piety in the manner that some professors affect to treat this subject, who represent it as a self-righteous labour, and brand it with the opprobrious name of *Pharisaism*. “Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth

to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting," Gal. vi. 7, 8.—"If any among you seemeth to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain," James, i. 26.—"But ye, beloved brethren, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, *keep yourselves in the love of God*, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life," Jude, 20, 21.



## SERMON IX.

### THE CHRISTIAN RACE.



#### I PET. I. 13.

*Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind ; be sober ; and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

**T**HIS epistle was written to the believing Jews of the dispersion, whom the apostle terms *strangers* and pilgrims, ch. i. 1. and ii. 11. as having no inheritance or citizenship in this world like old Israel, but like the faithful patriarchs sojourners in a strange land, and passing through it as pilgrims in quest of the heavenly inheritance and city to come which God hath prepared for them, Heb. xi. 13—17. He blesses the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who had begotten them again to the lively hope of this inheritance by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, who has taken possession of it, has it in reserve for them, and has them also in his keeping and under his safe conduct through this wilderness until he bring them to that heavenly rest, ver. 3—6. He observes, that they greatly rejoiced in the prospect of this, notwithstanding the manifold trials and difficulties they had to encounter by the way. Their



lively *hope* of the inheritance, their firm *faith* in, and supreme *love* to an unseen Christ, made them rise superior to all opposition in prosecuting the end of their faith, the final salvation of their souls, ver. 6—10. He then gives them several exhortations answerable to their present pilgrimage state, their privileges, and their future prospects. As pilgrims, he bids them gird up the loins of their minds, that they might be fit for their journey.—*To be sober*; not intoxicated with the intemperate desire or use of worldly things, which must infallibly divert them from their course; but using them like travellers by the way, who are intent on their journey, and purely in subserviency to it.—*And hope unto the end*, just as travellers, who under all the toils and hardships of the way are invigorated by continually revolving in their minds, and anticipating their happy arrival at home among their dearest friends when all these toils shall be ended: “Wherefore gird up the loins of your minds; be sober; and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

With a view to a more enlarged illustration of this great subject, I propose,

- I. To unfold the import of these exhortations.
- II. To consider the object of hope set before us: and,
- III. Conclude with a few inferences by way of improvement.

The Apostle introduces these exhortations with the word *wherefore*, which shews that they come from the foregoing context by way of inference; as if he

had said, Seeing ye are begotten again unto a lively hope of the heavenly inheritance, and have such revelations and encouragements with respect to future and eternal blessedness,

1. *Gird up the loins of your mind.* This alludes to the long garments which are worn in eastern countries, and which they gird up about their loins, both to strengthen them for service, and to prevent entanglements and encumbrances in travelling, running, fighting, or any other exercises. So Israel were enjoined to gird their loins in eating the passover, that they might be in readiness to set out from Egypt for the land of Canaan, Exod. xii. 11. This practice is frequently alluded to in the New Testament, and sometimes, as here, transferred by a metaphor from the body to the mind. Our Lord exhorts his disciples, to let their loins be girded about, their lights burning, and they like men waiting for their Lord, that they may open to him immediately, Luke, xii. 35, 36. and Paul makes it necessary for the Christian warfare to have the loins girt about with truth, Eph. vi. 14. The exhortation, therefore, must signify,

1. That the mind be firmly established in the *belief* of the truth of the gospel. How else can the loins of our minds be girt about with it? If we hold the truth in a loose, unsettled, and doubtful manner, it can never answer that purpose to our minds which a tight girdle or belt does to our bodies. There are many similar exhortations to this in scripture, such as Phil. i. 27. Col. i. 23. 2 Tim. i. 13. Heb. iii. 6, 14. ch. x. 23. ch. xiii. 9. 1 Pet. v. 9. 2 Pet. iii. 17, 18.

2. That we be bold, strong, and courageous in our profession, in opposition to timidity, fainting, or wearying. We are exhorted to add to our faith virtue, *i. e.*

courage or fortitude, 2 Pet. i. 5.—to be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might, Eph. vi. 10.—to lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees, Heb. xii. 12.—It is connected with our standing fast in the faith, that we quit ourselves like men, and be strong, 1 Cor. xvi. 13. *i. e.* that we be firm, resolved, and courageous, ready to go through every difficulty that stands in the way, and to repel every assault. The girdle is a part of the Christian armour, which girds on the rest, and strengthens and fits us for action. To gird up the loins of the mind, therefore, must signify that our minds be strongly fortified with the encouragements held forth in the gospel; that they be as it were braced tight with them as with a girdle, so that we may be resolute, firm, and courageous, as well as prompt and ready for the combat, journey, or race.

3. It signifies also that we lay aside every thing that unfits us for, or impedes and entangles us in the work of the Lord. It was one use of the girdle, to gird up the loose garments that otherwise would entangle and unfit them for any service that required activity and dispatch. We must, therefore, if we would run the Christian race with success, lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, Heb. xii. 1.—we must not be cumbered with many things, or entangle ourselves with the affairs of this life, if we would please him who hath chosen us to be soldiers, 2 Tim ii. 4.—Instead of having our hearts divided and fluctuating betwixt the ways of God and the course of this world, like those who put their hand to the plough and look back, or who pretend to run the race whilst they mind the things which are behind, we must have our thoughts and desires

gathered in, and as it were girded up from the cares, riches, pleasures, honours, and encumbrances of this life, and our whole souls must be collected, united, and directed in resolution, affection, and aim, to the mark for the prize of our high calling. Thus the loins of our minds are girded up, and thus we are in a constant promptitude and readiness for the Christian work, warfare, and race.

2. The next exhortation is (*νηφοντες*) be sober. The word signifies either to be sober or vigilant; and so in 2 Tim. iv. 5. it is translated *watch*. Sobriety and watchfulness are often joined together, as "Let us watch and be sober," 1 Thess. v. 6.—"Be ye therefore sober and watch unto prayer," 1 Pet. iv. 7.—"Be sober, be vigilant," ch. v. 8. We shall therefore consider the exhortation in both senses—

Sobriety is the due moderation and government of our affections, desires, passions, and appetites, with respect to the things of this world, and is opposed to the intoxication of avarice, pride, and ambition, but more frequently to that of intemperance and sensuality. This sobriety is absolutely necessary for all that exercise for which we are to gird up the loins of our minds, such as—For running the race: "Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things," 1 Cor. ix. 25. and this temperance he explains in his own case, to be a keeping under the body, and bringing it into subjection, ver. 27.—For *fighting* the fight of faith; and so we find it connected with having on the Christian armour; "Let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breast-plate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation," 1 Thess. v. 8. and in order to our resisting the devil we are exhorted to be sober and vigilant, 1 Pet. v. 8, 9.

Nothing is so opposite to that hardiness, activity, and vigilance requisite to the military life, as luxurious softness, intoxication, or intemperance.—For discharging with faithfulness the work and trust committed to us by our Lord in the view of his coming; and so it is opposed to the conduct of the wicked servant, who says in his heart, *My Lord delayeth his coming*, and then lays aside all sobriety, by beating his fellow servants, and by eating, and drinking, and being drunken, Luke, xii. 45. This insobriety made him too high for a servant, elated his pride above the rest, and made him despise and act the tyrant over them, and also set him off his guard, and made him secure as to the consequences at his Lord's coming.

It signifies also to *watch*, or be *vigilant*. This is a duty often inculcated by our Lord and his Apostles, in connection with sobriety. This watchfulness respects three things—The state of our minds in the service of Christ, and implies that we should be lively, zealous, and unremittingly attentive to our duty, watching thereunto with all perseverance, and that in opposition to a lifeless, sleepy, lukewarm, and slothful disposition. Thus the church of Sardis, who is blamed with having a name to live whilst she was dead, is exhorted to “Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die;” and is threatened, “If therefore thou wilt not watch, I will come upon thee as a thief,” &c. Rev. iii. 1—4. see also 2 Tim. iv. 5.—Watchfulness also respects our enemies, and is a military duty in the Christian warfare, so we are exhorted to “be vigilant, because our adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour,” 1 Pet. v. 8. We must keep a continued and sharp look-out lest we be ensnared by his

stratagems, or overcome by his temptations; and watch and pray that we enter not into temptation from the devil, the world, or the flesh.—Lastly, it respects the coming of Christ, and implies that we should be in constant expectation of, and preparedness for it, like porters ready to open the door at his first knock, and to give an account unto him of the trust committed to us; for this read the following passages, Mark, xiii. 32—37. Luke, xii. 35—49. Matt. xxiv. 42—51. 1 Thess. v. 1—9. Now, in order to this watchfulness it is absolutely necessary we should be sober and temperate both with respect to our desires after and use of the things of this world, which otherwise will infallibly intoxicate and put us off our guard. Our moderation should be conspicuous to all men, from the consideration that the Lord is at hand, Phil. iv. 5.

3. The last exhortation in the text is, *hope to the end*, or rather (τελειως) *perfectly*. Hope is the joyful expectation of future good things; for what a man seeth why doth he yet hope for? but if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it, Rom. viii. 24, 25. This hope is part of the Christian armour which we are to put on in this militant state, 1 Thess. v. 8. Eph. vi. 17. Now in order to our serving, running, fighting, watching &c. we are exhorted to *hope perfectly*, not only in opposition to absolute despondency, but in opposition to a weak, wavering, and unsettled hope. We ought not only to hold fast the general profession of hope, but the *rejoicing of hope*, Heb. iii. 6. and to give all diligence to the *full assurance of hope*, ch. vi. 11. In this chapter it is called a *lively* or *living* hope, accompanied with joy unspeakable and full of glory, ver. 3, 8. This hope

we are exhorted to hold fast and continue *unto the end*, Heb. iii. 6. and that in opposition to our fainting or drawing back, by losing sight of the object of it, or doubting the foundation on which it is established, *viz.* the merits of Jesus Christ, and the grace, power, and faithfulness of God. Indeed we are not called to hope at any rate, whatever be our state or conduct, as some rashly speak. We are to know that there is a way that leads to destruction, as well as to life, and that we can only have the well-founded hope of our own salvation while walking in the latter. In believing in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, we believe our own salvation; in abounding in the work of the Lord, we know that our labour is not in vain; in running the Christian race, we are animated by the sure prospect of obtaining the prize; and in fighting the good fight of faith, by the joyful hope of obtaining the crown. It is a hope in this connection that corresponds with the promise. We are begotten to this hope on our first believing the gospel—by this we are attached to Christ, and influenced to obey him—and as we proceed, our hope is more and more strengthened and confirmed by additional and experimental evidence of our interest in, and connection with him. In this way, therefore, we are to hope perfectly, giving all diligence to the full assurance of it, for he is faithful that has promised.

II. The next thing to be considered is, the *object* of this hope, or what it is we are to hope for. The text says, “For the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

By the revelation of Jesus Christ I understand his second coming to judge the world, when he shall punish the wicked and reward his faithful servants,

So he is said to give his saints rest when he shall be *revealed* from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, &c. 2 Thess. i. 7, 8. Christians are encouraged under their sufferings for Christ, with the hope that when his glory shall be *revealed* they may be glad with exceeding joy, 2 Pet. iv. 13. and this revelation of his glory is described thus, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory," &c. Matt. xxv. 31. which throne is his judgment seat, as appears from what follows. The revelation of Jesus Christ is the same with what is so often called his *appearing*, or *coming*, and which is connected with judging the quick and dead, the righteous and the wicked. Paul charges Timothy before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead *at his appearing*, 2 Tim. iv. 1. and he tells us himself, that *when the Son of man comes* in his glory—before him shall be gathered all nations, wherein he expressly includes both the righteous and the wicked, Matt. xxv. 31—46. We read only of two personal appearances of Christ: the first, Heb. ix. 26. "But now once in the end of the world (or Jewish age) hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." The second follows in ver. 28. "And unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without a sin (offering) unto salvation. The text cannot mean the first, because it was already past, and so not the object of hope. It must, therefore, be his second appearing to judge the world that is intended; that *appearing* of Christ at which the faith of the saints will be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, ver. 7. This is the blessed hope and glo-



rious appearance of the great God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ, which the saints look for, Tit. ii. 13. Now the grace to be brought unto them at this revelation of Christ is,

1. The redemption of their bodies from the grave. This is evidently the first act of Christ's power when he descends from heaven; "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the arch-angel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first," 1 Thess. iv. 16. They that are Christ's shall be raised *at his coming*, 1 Cor. xv. 23. The saints shall be raised up before the living are changed, and those of them that are alive and remain at his coming, shall not sleep, but be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52. So that the resurrection and change are instantaneous, both of them are effected in the same moment; for the living shall not prevent them that are asleep, 1 Thess. iv. 15. That we may perceive the grace of the resurrection, we must take particular notice of the change that shall then take place upon the bodies of the saints. The Apostle describes this in 1 Cor. xv. 42—45.—"It is sown in *corruption*, *i. e.* mortal, with a tendency to dissolve and putrify. It is raised in *incorruption*, *i. e.* pure, lasting, immortal, and unfading, "Neither can they die any more," Luke, xx. 36.—It is sown in *dishonour*," *i. e.* mean, loathsome, and unsightly, and so is called our *vile body*, or (*σῶμα τῆς ταπεινώσεως ἡμῶν*) the body of our humiliation. "It is raised in *glory*," *i. e.* comely, beautiful, majestic, resplendent, and shining. They are said to "shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever," Dan. xii. 3. to "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their

Father," Matt. xiii. 43. and to be fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body, Phil. iii. 21. for Christ's glorified body is the exemplar of our risen body. He indeed did not immediately put on the shining glory when he rose, because it would have rather dazzled and confounded than convinced his disciples of the truth of his resurrection, as we see was the case when he appeared in glory upon Mount Tabor, and to Paul on his way to Damascus; but he was clothed with shining glory upon his ascension, and when he shall appear, the saints shall also appear with him in glory, Col. iii. 4. even as Moses and Elias did on the mount, Luke, ix. 31.—“It is sown in *weakness*,” *i. e.* feeble in its operations, liable to sickness, pain, weariness, faintings, and all kinds of infirmities and diseases, and subject to injuries from the smallest external causes, Job, iv. 19. “It is raised in *power*,” *i. e.* strong and healthful in its nature, free of all inward or constitutional infirmities, and unsusceptible of injuries from without; nimble, active, vigorous, and unwearied in its operations, so as to keep pace with the glorified soul in all its exalted exercises and employments.—“It is sown a *natural* body.” The word ψυχικόν) rendered *natural*, properly signifies *animal*, and is sometimes used to describe a person in a natural irregenerate state, in opposition to his being spiritual, or having the Spirit. So the Apostle says, “The *natural* or animal man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God,” 1 Cor. ii. 14. James speaking of the wisdom of irregenerate men, says, it is earthly, *sensual*, or animal, devilish, ch. iii. 15. and Jude speaking of false teachers, says, they are *sensual*, or animal, having not the Spirit, ver. 19. Now the animal or sensual man is one who is governed by the principles

and inclinations of the animal life; whose judgment, reason, affections, and pursuits are all subservient to that inferior part of his nature which he has in common with the brutes, though his superior sagacity may lead him to use greater variety, refinement, and decorum than the lower animals. The epithet  $\psi\upsilon\chi\iota\kappa\omicron\nu$  comes from  $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$  the soul, and literally may be rendered a *souled body*. Now the scripture distinguishes between the soul and spirit of man; thus the Apostle prays for the Thessalonians, "that their whole spirit and soul, and body be preserved," &c. 1 Thess. v. 23. and says, that the word of God divides asunder the soul and spirit, Heb. iv. 12. When soul and spirit are thus distinguished, the soul is always to be understood in an inferior sense to the spirit; it signifies the animal part of man's nature, which he possesses in common with the brutes, and includes the senses, passions, and appetites. The spirit in this distinction signifies the nobler and immortal part of man, whereby he is distinguished from the lower creation, and fitted to correspond with his Maker, and its powers are judgment, reason, conscience, will, and affections. When, therefore, this earthly tabernacle is called a *souled, animal, or sensual, body*, it signifies that it is suited to the purposes and functions of the sensitive and animal life which are common to us with the lower animals, such as feeding on the fruits of the earth, vegetating, and producing its kind—that it is endued with appetites and desires after earthly objects, and is sustained, recruited, and gratified by food, drink, sleep, and air. "It is raised a *spiritual body*," *i. e.* a body of a rarified and refined contexture, purged of all its earthly grossness—divested of all its sensual and animal appetites, whereby it was attached to, and

dependant upon the things of this earth for its subsistence; ; for "they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more," Rev. vii. 16. True, indeed, Christ ate and drank with his disciples after his resurrection, Luke, xxiv. 41—43. John, xxi. 5, 13. Acts, x. 41. but then it was not from any need he had of f<sup>o</sup>o<sup>d</sup>, but to convince his disciples of the truth of his resurrection, as is plain from the history, and was therefore peculiar to himself, and upon an extraordinary occasion; so that we cannot from this infer that the spiritual bodies of the saints will then feed upon the gross corruptible things of this earth, or have any need of such sustenance. The Apostle says, "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats; but God shall destroy both it and them," 1 Cor. vi. 13. In the resurrection, therefore, they shall neither eat nor drink, neither shall they marry nor be given in marriage, for they are equal unto the angels, Luke, xx. 35, 36. It is a spiritual body, as being possessed and actuated by the Holy Spirit, who shall raise it from the dead, Rom. viii. 11. and as being entirely fitted for the exercises and enjoyments of the spiritual, heavenly, and eternal life, in perfect unison with the soul, and not as now clogging its operations, and warring against it by the law in its members. This, therefore, is part of that grace which we are called to hope for at the appearing of Christ, viz. that he will change our vile bodies, and fashion them like unto his glorious body, Phil. iii. 20, 21. and that when he appears we shall be like him, 1 John, iii. 2. bearing the image of the heavenly man, the Lord from heaven, 1 Cor. xv. 49. and this is the adoption for which the saints wait and groan, even the redemption of their body, Rom. viii. 23.

2. The next thing which is connected with Christ's

second coming, is the grace he will show his saints in acknowledging and acquitting them in the judgment. His second coming, or appearing, is not only to raise and change the bodies of his people; but also to judge the whole world of quick and dead, and to render to every one according to his works. This final and general judgment seems to be pretty closely connected with his coming, and is expressly declared to be the great end of it. So it is said, "he will judge the quick and the dead." When? "at his appearing," 2 Tim. iv. 1. He tells us very plainly himself, that "he shall sit upon the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations"—All nations means both the righteous and the wicked, for it follows—"and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on the right hand, but the goats on the left," &c. Now when shall all this happen? It is expressly said to be, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him," Matt. xxv. 31--33. Then it is that the dead small and great shall stand before him, Rev. xx. 12. And this necessarily supposes the resurrection of the wicked also, according to Dan. xii. 2. John, v. 28, 29. The children of God and the wicked dead are raised promiscuously; then the Judge separates them as a shepherd does his sheep from the goats; his people are caught up from the earth to meet him in the air, 1 Thess. iv. 17. and placed on his right hand, the place of honour and dignity. Then he confesses and acknowledges them before his Father, the holy angels, and an assembled world; wipes off every aspersion, disgrace, and reproach, which they suffered for his name; recounts their works of faith

and labour of love, and pronounces upon them the sentence of approbation and eternal blessedness, Matt. xxv. 34—41. Then the judgment of the wicked follows, in which the saints shall have the honour to join as Christ's assessors; for the saints shall judge the world, and even angels, Matt. xxv. 41—46. 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3. Matt. xix. 28. Rev. ii. 26. ch. iii. 21. O what sovereign and unmerited grace will appear in all this, when the saints will reflect, that the awful sentence now passed upon the wicked was what they themselves deserved as well as them: when they think (and how can they but think?) upon that love that made the difference, and that precious blood that washed them from their sins, and delivered them from the dreadful wrath now come upon the wicked, what transports of joy, wonder, love, and gratitude will then fill their souls! Then, indeed, will Christ "be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe," 2 Thess. i. 10.

3. Lastly, They shall obtain the kingdom at the revelation of Jesus Christ; for then the Judge will say unto them, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," Matt. xxv. 34.

This kingdom he says is *prepared* for them from the foundation of the world. It was prepared of his Father, Matt. xx. 23. when he elected and predestinated them unto it, which was before the foundation of the world, Eph. i. 45. 2 Tim. i. 9. It was also prepared by Christ's resurrection and ascension into heaven, "I go to prepare a place for you," John, xiv. 2, 3.

This kingdom is *in heaven*; for it is called the kingdom of heaven; "Blessed are they who are per-

secuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," Matt. v. 10. It is the kingdom of their Father in which the saints shine as the sun, Matt. xiii. 4. It is the kingdom and glory to which they are called, 1 Thess. ii. 12.—the heavenly kingdom into which they are preserved, 2 Tim. iv. 18. It is the place of the saints' reward; but "great is their reward in heaven," Matt. v. 12. It is the place which Christ is preparing for them, and where he is gone as their fore-runner; but Christ is gone into heaven, 1 Pet. iii. 22. and entered within the veil into the holiest of all, even heaven itself, Heb. ix. 24. and when he comes again he hath promised to take them to the place where he now is, John, xiv. 3. This kingdom is the same with the inheritance mentioned in this chapter, ver. 4. but that inheritance is reserved in heaven for the saints—the hope laid up for them in heaven, Col. i. 5.

It is an *everlasting* kingdom. So Peter says that those who give all diligence to make their calling and election sure, by adding to their faith virtue, &c. shall have an abundant entrance administered unto them into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, 2 Pet. i. 11. It is not, therefore, limited by a term of years, but everlasting and unfading.

It is a kingdom wherein there shall be no *wicked*, but an eternal separation from them as well with respect to place as state; for when this kingdom shall take place it is said, "the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal," Matt. xxv. 46. It is an inheritance not like this world defiled and polluted by the sins of men; but is uncorrupted and undefiled, where no unclean thing can enter.

It is a kingdom of eternal and complete *blessedness*. There they shall be free from all the effects of the fall: "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them to living fountains of water; and God shall wipe all tears from their eyes," Rev. vii. 16, 17. "And there shall be no more pain for the former things are passed away," ch. xxi. 4. There they shall not only be free from all the afflictions incident to this mortal state, but they shall be with Christ, and enjoy his blissful presence; they shall see him as he is, behold his glory, and partake of it; they shall abide with him for ever without any more absence or distance, John, xii. 26. ch. xvii. 24.

From all that has been said, I infer, that the *appearing* of Jesus Christ, of which the Apostle speaks in our text, is not that "brightness of his coming," whereby he effects the destruction of Antichrist and his supporters, as some in our day contend. (2 Thess. ii. 8. Rev. xix. 11. and which is expressed in similar language to that used for the destruction of Jerusalem; compare Joel, ii. 31. and Mal. iv. 5. with Acts, ii. 20. and Matt. xxiv. 27, 28.) That *appearing* is antecedent to the reign of the saints on earth, but this spoken of in our text succeeds it. The former is his coming in his providence and power—the latter is his coming in *person*, 1 Thess. iv. 16. That being attended with the binding of Satan—this with his being cast into the lake of fire, Rev. xx. 3, 10. The former is not attended with the general resurrection, the final judgment, the separation of the righteous and the wicked, and their eternal rewards and punishments; but this in our text is accompanied with all these stupendous events.



Let us learn then the unspeakable importance of the exhortations contained in our text. "Gird up the loins of your minds" with courage, resolution, and promptitude for the service of your Lord and Master. "Be sober," *i. e.* not intoxicated with pride, passion, or worldly lusts, so as to be off your guard; but be temperate and watchful in all things. And lastly, "hope to the end," for the grace which shall be brought unto you at the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ. Remember that "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing, then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness.—Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may found of him in peace, without spot and blameless," 2 Pet. iii. 10—14.

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## SERMON X.

THE OLD AND NEW MAN DESCRIBED.



COLOSSIANS, III. 9, 10.

*Ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.*

**T**HAT is no inconsiderable argument for the truth of the scriptures which is deduced from the fact, that the account which they give of the total depravity of mankind is attested by the history of all nations and of every age. Does revelation teach us that “by one man sin entered into the world,”—that by the transgression of our first parents human nature became corrupted at the fountain, and that the contagion has extended to all his descendants, so that there is none naturally righteous, no not one? However mortifying this doctrine may be to the proud heart of man, it is a stubborn fact, against which it is vain to dispute: for wherever we find the race of men, we find them universally the subjects of sin. Nor have any external advantages of education and government been found sufficiently efficacious to counteract this inherent malady. The blessings of civilization may confer a polish on the exterior; legis-

lators may enact wholesome laws for restraining anarchy and violence in the earth; and philosophy may lend its feeble aid in communicating the benefits of knowledge; but after all, where these advantages have been enjoyed in the greatest perfection, what has the history of human nature been under all these favourable circumstances, but the history of human depravity displaying itself in crimes and rebellion against God. The gospel, or the doctrine of Christ crucified, which always supposes and implies this awful state of guilt and ruin, is the only sovereign and effectual remedy for it, which has ever been promulgated in the world. "It is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth it."

The city of Colosse is said to have been a great and wealthy place in the days of the apostles. Its inhabitants were then sunk into a state of the grossest idolatry, practising those lascivious rites, even in the worship of their heathen deities, which are perfectly adapted to the corruptions of the human heart, but concerning which the Apostle expressly says in a preceding verse of this chapter, that "for which things' sake, the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience." But the word of the truth of the gospel was sent unto them, revealing the true grace of God in a full, free, and everlasting salvation; and in the beginning of this epistle Paul attests its blessed effects among them. It brought forth fruit immediately on their first hearing of it—the fruits of *faith* in Christ Jesus, and of *love* to all the saints, ver. 4–6. So that although they had formerly lived in the practice of "fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and of covetousnes," which he pronounces to be idolatry, they now put off all these vi-

cious practices, which he denominates “the old man,” and had put on “the new man,” which is renewed in knowledge after the divine image.

In endeavouring to illustrate this subject, I shall,

I. Shew what is meant by the old and the new man : and

II. What is intended by the putting off the one and putting on the other.

I. By the old man we are not to understand this or that particular sin in heart or life ; for the Apostle distinguishes this old man with his lustings and actings as cause is distinguished from effect : “Ye have put off the old man with his deeds.”

But by the old man is meant that natural and corrupt state which we derive from Adam by our connection with him in our first birth, whereby we are subjected to the dominion of sin both in its guilt and power. It is called a *man*, because it is a complete frame or constitution of sin commensurate to the whole man—a *body of sin* with all its *members*, and a *carnal mind* suited to such a body, in all its faculties, powers, and principles of action, and so it forms a complete whole man, which is opposed to the new man.

It is also called the *flesh*, Rom. viii. 8. because it comes from the natural *fleshly birth*, whereby we are constituted sons of Adam, for we are shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin, Psalm, li. 5. and that which is born of the flesh is flesh, John, iii. 6. Because all its views, desires, and pursuits respect earthly and fleshly things ; for they that are after the flesh do mind or affect the things of the flesh, Rom. viii. 5.

And also because the lusts, sensual appetites, and passions of animal nature, which have their seat principally in the body or flesh, are the governing principles of such a state, and work in the members to bring forth fruit unto death, Rom. vii. 5. And so we find the Apostle describing the works of the flesh, (which are the same with the deeds of the old man) Gal. v. 19—22. the most of which are the fruits of the bodily appetites and passions, with which also the mind concurs; for our Lord says these things proceed out of the heart of man. To walk after the flesh is to follow the course of this world, in fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, Eph. ii. 3.

The old man, or flesh, not only consists in what is more gross and sensual, and which all the world agree to condemn; it not only occupies the inferior animal part of man's nature, but extends to the nobler powers of his mind, and to such things in man as are reckoned the most excellent according to nature. The old man has a *conscience*, Rom. ii. 15.—*wisdom*, 1 Cor. i. 20. James, iii. 15.—*reason*, Acts, xxviii. 29. 2 Cor. x. 5.—It will take in the most refined system of moral virtue, with all the principles of it. Nay, it may have a kind of *faith* in, and *zeal of God*, James, ii. 19. Rom. x. 2. and give a strict and conscientious obedience to his law, Phil. iii. 6. The old man is capable of great reformation by means of education, custom, example, the law of God, and is sometimes made to feel impressions even from the gospel, Matt. xiii. 20. and yet after all still continue the old man or flesh in its radical and governing principle.

To this old man or flesh belongs *sin*—the body of sin, Rom. iv. 6.—the law of sin, Rom. viii. 2.—the motions of sin, ch. vii. 5.—Sin in its *guilt* and power

to condemn—in its *principles* and motions in the heart—in its *dominion* and power as a commanding, governing, and impelling principle in the life, working in the members to bring forth fruit unto death.

To this state also belongs the *law*, and while men are in it they are said to be under the law, Gal. iii. 5. and to be married to it, Rom. vii. 1—4. But what connection has the holy law of God with the old man or flesh? It belongs to it only as the ministration of death and condemnation. It urges its claim of perfect obedience, discovers sin, and curseth the sinner. This is so far from producing love and obedience, that it has the opposite effects upon the old man; for in proportion as it shows to persons in that state their duty, sin, and danger, in the same proportion does it work in them an *evil conscience*, cut off their *hope* of life, fill them with a *dread* of the divine displeasure, and increases their *enmity to God* and his law. Thus sin, instead of being mortified, is rather provoked and irritated in natural men by the holy, just, and good law of God. Agreeable to this Paul says, “When we were in the flesh, the motions of sin which were by the law did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death,” Rom. vii. 5. and that we might not think he was blaming the law for this, he says, “But sin taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence; for without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came sin revived, and I died. And the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death: for sin taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good. Was then that which

is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful," ver. 8—14. But however holy, just, and good the law is in itself, yet the Apostle shews us that there is no deliverance from the dominion of sin, but by a deliverance also from the law in that respect wherein it has to do with the flesh, or old man, ver. 6.

Death and eternal misery belong also to this state, it being the curse threatened in the law against sin. While men are in the flesh, or in their natural state, the motions of sin work in their members to bring forth fruit unto death, Rom. vii. 5. It is expressly declared, that "the end of those things is death," ch. vi. 21. that "the wages of sin is death," ver. 23. that "to be carnally minded is death," ch. viii. 6. and that "if we live after the flesh we shall die," ver. 13.

It is very remarkable, that sin, the law, and death, have a mutual connection and relation among themselves, and also a joint dominion over men in their natural state. Where no law is, there is no transgression, for sin is the transgression of the law, Rom. iv. 15. ch. v. 13. 1 John, iii. 4. Again, there can be no law with a penalty but in relation to sin: for the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, 1 Tim. i. 9. The law has nothing to say to an innocent person, unless it be to guard him against transgression; for against such there is no law, Gal. v. 23. Further, there can be no death inflicted by a righteous Judge without the law; for death is the sanction and penalty of a law; nor can it be inflicted without sin, for death is the wages of sin, Rom. vi. 23. It was only by sin that death en-

tered into the world, ch. v. 12. and it was by sin and the law that death was enthroned to reign as a king over the human race, ver. 17. In short, the Apostle shews that sin, the law, and death co-operate and work, as it were, to one another's hands in their dominion over men in their natural state; "The sting of death" says he, "is sin, and the strength of sin is the law," 1 Cor. xv. 56. Sin furnishes death with a mortal sting to kill and destroy its subjects, and that not only by the dissolution of soul and body, which the saints themselves must undergo, but also by infixing in the conscience a sense of the divine wrath, which is the very venom of death's sting. The law again gives strength to sin in this respect, both by giving the knowledge of it, and denouncing the divine wrath and curse against it.

This, then, is that state or constitution of things which is called the old man, or the flesh. A state under the dominion of sin, the law, and death. And from this we may see that it is a state every way desperate, and incapable of being renewed. Urge upon it the law, with the reasonableness, equity, and justice of its demands; ply it with the motives of danger, duty, and interest; set before it the joys of heaven, the terrors of hell; life and death, it will stand proof against all, and only be the more exasperated: or whatever transient emotions it may feel, it continues radically the same.

2. The *new man* is that new state into which we are brought by virtue of union with Christ, including all the principles and privileges which belong unto it. In this state we are set free *from the guilt and dominion of sin*: "If the son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed," John, viii. 36. "For sin shall not have



dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace," Rom. vi. 14.—From the *law*, as the terms of acceptance, or the condition of life: the letter which killeth. Hence the same Apostle says, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become *dead to the law* by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God: for when we were in the flesh, or old man, the motions of sin, which were by the law, did work in our members, to bring forth fruit unto death," Rom. vii. 4, 5. Again: In this state believers are set free from *an evil conscience* and the *fear of death*, of which the Apostle speaks to the Hebrews, ch. ix. 14. and x. 2. and ii. 15. and I may also add, from the *wrath to come*, 1 Thess. ii. 10. So that the new man will be found to consist in the following things:

*Faith*, or the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. This is the leading blessing of the new covenant. "All shall know me from the least unto the greatest," Heb. viii. 11.—"Ye are all the children of God by *faith* in Christ Jesus," Gal. iii. 26. And with this is connected their *justification*, which is another thing included in this state; for "we are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," Rom. iii. 24. And with this stands inseparably connected, *peace with God*; for says the Apostle, "Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God," Rom. v. 1, 2. Another privilege included in this state, is the *adoption of sons*. Hence we read, that "in the fulness of time God sent forth his Son to redeem them that were

under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons:”—for “ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus,” Gal. iii. 26. and iv. 5. *Holiness* in heart and life, in conformity to Christ, also belongs to this state; for it is written, “He hath chosen us, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love,” Eph. i. 4. “But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life,” Rom. vi. 22. I may further add, that the sensible manifestations of God’s love to the soul, or the conscious enjoyment of his favour, is a privilege peculiar to this state. “The love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit given unto us—so that we joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement,” Rom. v. 5, 11. Hence “We have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love: and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him,” 1 John, iv. 16. And to close the whole, the lively *hope* of everlasting life is included in this new state; for believers “rejoice in hope of the glory of God,” Rom. v. 2. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,” 1 Pet. i. 4, 5.

This new state is called the *spirit*, in opposition to our former state which is called the *flesh*, Rom. viii. 9. and because in this state we have the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us as the Spirit of light, life, holiness, and consolation. This reason is given expressly by the Apostle, “But ye are not in the flesh but in the

Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Those who are in this state are said to *live* in the Spirit, Gal. v. 25.—to be *led* by the Spirit, Rom. viii. 14.—to *walk* not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, ver. 1, 4.—and the *law of the Spirit of life* in Christ Jesus has made them free from the law of sin and death, ver. 2. I proceed now to show,

II. What is meant by putting off the old man, and putting on the new.

1. I have already observed, that the old man can never be converted or improved into the new man, any more than sin can be converted into holiness, law into grace, or death into life. The text does not say, Seeing that ye have *reformed*, or *converted*, the old man; but "Seeing that ye have put off (*απεκδυσσάμενοι*) the old man." It must be entirely thrown off, as a man would do with a pestilential garment. Now this implies,

A real and deep conviction of our sinful, miserable, and helpless state by nature; "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are all become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit: the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace have they not known; there is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and

all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight : for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets," Rom. iii. 10—21. " And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins ; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience ; among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind ; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others," Eph. ii. 1—4. To put off the old man also implies,

A renouncing entirely all hope of life by the works of the law, whether natural or revealed, ceremonial or moral ; being fully convinced that all our own righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and that by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in God's sight, Rom. iii. 19, 20. Thus Paul, though he had more cause to glory in the flesh than any other man, being, as it respected the righteousness which is in the law, blameless ; yet he renounces it all as loss and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, and to be found in him not having his own righteousness, Phil. iii. 8—10. Another thing included in it is,

A giving up with the earthly life, and renouncing this present evil world as our portion and happiness ; being crucified and dead to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, Rom. vi. 12—23, Gal. vi. 14. Paul not only renounces his own righteousness in point of justification ; but along with this

he also gives up with the pleasures, riches, and honours of the world, and suffers the loss of all earthly things for the sake of Christ; he becomes dead in his affections and desires to this earthly life, or the things of the flesh, and presses with might and main after fellowship with, and conformity to, Christ in his death and resurrection from the dead, Phil. iii. 10, 11. This includes that self-denial which Christ makes absolutely necessary for his disciples; that mortification of the desires and deeds of the old man, or flesh, which the Apostles press home with so much earnestness, declaring that "if we live after the flesh we shall die; but if we through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body we shall live," Rom. viii. 13. and they describe those that are Christ's to be such as "have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts," Gal. v. 24.

*Self-dependence* and *self-indulgence* are the two component parts of the old man, both of which must be put off. To pretend to renounce our own righteousness in point of acceptance, without self-denial and crucifixion to the world and its lusts, is to continue in sin because grace doth abound, Rom. vi. 1.—because we are not under the law, but under grace, ver 15.—and to use our liberty for an occasion to the flesh, Gal. v. 13. There is nothing, perhaps, hardens the heart more against the fear of God, or more effectually stops up every avenue of conviction, than perverted notions of divine grace; as if Christ had died to procure an indulgence to the flesh.—On the other hand, to attempt the crucifixion or mortification of the old man with his deeds, as the ground of our acceptance with God, and independent of the cross of Christ, and of the grace and strength which the gospel

administers for that purpose, is both a self-righteous and fruitless labour; for sin will certainly have dominion over us, both in its condemning and enslaving power, if we are under the law, and not under grace, Rom. vi. 14. This leads me to consider,

2. What the Apostle means by *putting* on the new man. "And have," says he, "ενδυσσασμενοι, put on the new man." The expression is borrowed from the act of putting clothes upon our bodies, and signifies an entire change both of our state and character. Upon which I observe,

That there can be no true change of our *hearts* and *lives* in any degree till our *state* is first changed. I have already described the old and new man, and shewn that they not only mean dispositions and actions, but also the states with their respective principles which influence our dispositions and actions. Now while we are in that state called the *flesh*, or *old man*, the Apostle assures us that the motions of sin by the law will work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death; and that we must be delivered from the law, being dead to that wherein we were held, and married to him that is risen from the dead, before we can bring forth fruit unto God, Rom. vii. 4—7. We must first be united to him as our head, engrafted in him as branches into the vine, before we can bear fruit, John, xv. 1—6. for he assures us, that without him, or separate from him, we can do nothing.

This new state is not to be wrought out by ourselves, or attained by our own endeavours; but is already prepared and complete to our hand in Christ Jesus. He, as the public Head of all his people, hath already obtained deliverance from the curse of the law, by being made a curse for them. In him

there is redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins—in him there is a fulness of the Spirit to quicken whom he will—the adoption of children—the sanctification of the spirit—the hope of glory, &c. In short, all things wherein this new state consists, are ready and prepared in him, who is made of God unto his people wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. But as this is a doctrine which deserves our particular notice, I shall point out a few among many texts to this purpose.

The Apostle says, Rom. vi. 6. that “our old man was crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we might not serve sin.” He does not here say, that their old man was crucified *in them*, *personally* considered, but that it was crucified *with Christ*, when he suffered on the cross to take away the guilt and power of sin; and he uses this as an argument why the old man should be crucified in our persons also; for it was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we might not serve sin. As, therefore, this crucifixion of our old man with Christ is stated as the cause and argument of sin being crucified in our persons, it cannot be the same thing. In the same sense we are said to be *dead with Christ*, ver. 8.—to be *crucified with Christ*, Gal. ii. 19, 20.—to be dead to the law by the body of Christ, Rom. vii. 4. *i. e.* We are dead to sin and to the law, by his dying for our sins, and suffering the curse of the law in our stead; for when he was offered a sacrifice, our sin was condemned and punished in his flesh, Rom. viii. 3. and by his dying for sin once, we are exhorted to reckon, or account, ourselves dead indeed unto sin, Rom. vi. 10, 11. or to judge that if one died for all,

then all have died, (*οἱ πάντες ἀπέθανον*) 2 Cor. v. 14. *i. e.* they all died, not personally, but *in him*, by his dying for them.

Again: they are said to be *quickened together with Christ*, even when personally dead in sins, Col. ii. 13. Eph. ii. 5. and to be raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ver. 6. *i. e.* all his people by his quickening, rising from the dead, and living unto God, were quickened and raised in him; and so they are exhorted to reckon themselves alive unto God (*εἰς*) in Jesus Christ their Lord, Rom. vi. 10, 11. And the use they are exhorted to make of this reckoning is, "Let not sin therefore, reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof, but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead; and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God," ver. 12, 13. And they are thus to judge of their dying and rising again in Christ's death and resurrection, that they should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again, 2 Cor. v. 15. It is plain, therefore, that putting off the old man and putting on the new is done in no other way than by putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, who hath crucified our old man with himself upon the cross, and by his rising from the dead, and our union or marriage with him thus risen, we are partakers of the new man *in him*.

We *actually* come into this new state, or put on the new man, not working, but *believing*. As it is no where to be found but in Christ, in whom it is perfect and complete, nor known to be in him but by the divine testimony, we must receive it just as we receive Christ himself, *i. e. by faith*. There is no other



way whereby we can receive and enjoy unseen things, but by knowing and believing the truth of them upon testimony:—when, therefore, the divine testimony concerning the Son of God having died for our offences and risen again for our justification, stands true in our minds, we are as really partakers of what we believe as of the food we eat, or the liquid we drink, John, vi. 50—59. “For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end,” Heb. iii. 14. and *faith* is this *confidence*, ch. xi. 1. Having, therefore, Christ dwelling in our hearts, and living in us by this faith, we are at once divested of our old state of sin and death by the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, Rom. viii. and sin shall not have dominion over us, for we are not under the law, but under grace, Rom. vi. 14. We are then actually dead, and quickened, and raised with Christ, by the *faith* of that operation of God that raised him from the dead, Col. ii. 12. It is, therefore, by the same faith whereby we receive Christ, that we put on the new man, and not by working it out of ourselves.

This new man consists not merely in a *change of state*, but also of the *heart and life*, in consequence thereof; for the Apostle says, that the new man is after God created in righteousness and true holiness, Eph. iv. 24. and renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him, Col. iii. 10. But then it must be carefully noticed, that this *knowledge*, in which the new man is renewed, is no other than the matter of our faith, the excellent knowledge of Christ Jesus, whereby we enjoy the comfort and happiness of our new state. This *image of God* is nothing else than the effect of the glory of the God of love shining from

the face of Christ into our hearts, and changing us into the same image, 2 Cor. iii. 18. And what is this *righteousness* and *true holiness*, but the influence of the truth by the Spirit working effectually in us, and conforming us to Jesus Christ; and so it is called in the original (ὁσιότητι της αληθείας) *the holiness of the truth*. It is a holiness which takes its rise from our new state, and is excited by the belief and conscious enjoyment of the privileges of that state. The sum of it is love to God because he first loved us, and from the same motive loving those who are begotten of him by the word of truth. It is by faith that we are in Christ himself, and if any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are done away, and all things are become new, 2 Cor. v. 17. It is by the incorruptible seed of the word, which by the gospel is preached unto us, that we are born again, 1 Pet. i. 23. It is by faith, not by works, that our hearts are purified, Acts, xv. 9. It is by the truth which we believe that we are sanctified, John, xvii. 17. It is by the faith that Jesus is the Christ that we overcome the world, 1 John, v. 4. It is by the cross of Christ we are crucified to the world, Gal. vi. 14. It is by Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith, comprehending the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of his love, that we are filled with all the fulness of God, Eph. iii. 17—20. What, then, is true gospel holiness in heart and life, but faith working by love to Christ, in whom we are complete, and have all our salvation and desire, Gal. vi. 15. This is the new creature, ch. v. 6. We are holy only just in so far as the truth abides in us, believing and loving it, (which is the same with Christ dwelling in us) and no farther; for as this subsides, the old man and the law in our members gain proportionable strength.

We are not entirely free from the old man and the body of sin and death while in this world, Rom. vii. 23, 24. and so have still need to be exhorted to put him off, and to put on the new man more and more, Eph. iv. 23, 24. "If ye have learned Christ, and been taught the truth as it is in Jesus, see that ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and holiness of the truth." "Mortify your members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry; for which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience; in the which ye also walked some time when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, filthy communication, out of your mouth: lie not one to another, seeing that ye put off the old man with his deeds," Col. iii. 5—9. Hence the word of God abounds with such exhortations to the disciples of Christ as the following, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light: let us walk honestly as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but *put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ*, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof," Rom. xiii. 12—14. "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would," Gal. v. 17. But the fullest view that we have of this subject is in Rom. vii. to which I have already had occasion so

often to direct your attention, and I cannot close this part of our subject better than by laying before you the account which the writer of that chapter gives us of his own experience: "For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin: for that which I do I allow not; for what I would that I do not, but what I hate that I do. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not: for the good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that when I would do good evil is present with me: for I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."

I have now finished what I proposed. I have endeavoured to explain what is meant by the old and the new man; and also what is included in putting off the one and putting on the other. It only remains, therefore, for us to consider what use or improvement we should make of this subject. And on this I remark, that,

1. It suggests an important question of self-examination to each of us—"Which of these two op-

posite states is ours?" Are we in the flesh or in the Spirit? In one of them we are certainly walking, for there is no middle path; and it is of unspeakable importance to us, that we be well satisfied in our own minds on this great point. "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death," Prov. xiv. 12. "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die, (die eternally) but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live," Rom. viii. 13.

2. Have we put off the old man with his corrupt deeds, and put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him? Let us remember our Lord's rule, "By their fruits shall ye know them," Matt. vii. 16. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth; for ye are (professedly) dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory," Col. iii. 1—4. "But they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts."

I add, that,

There are the strongest motives imaginable to induce us to put off the old man and to put on the new daily; for,

3. Consistency with our profession requires it. "His servants ye are, to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness," Rom. vi. 16. If then we are dead to sin and worldly lusts; if we are really risen with Christ to newness of life, and have our life hid with Christ in God, let it be

our continual aim and pursuit, to walk worthy of the exalted state of privilege to which we are called. For if we do not, if our affections and pursuits are more set upon the things of this world, under whatever pretext this may be done, we are altogether inconsistent, and our profession hypocritical. To which I add, that,

4. Our state and character will be determined by the tenour of our conduct in this respect. Let us beware of attempting to reconcile these two states, or to form a coalition between them. No man can serve two masters; ye cannot serve God and Mammon. Consider what it cost the Son of God to redeem us from this present evil world, and to purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you with all malice; and be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Imitate him, therefore, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ hath also loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savour," Eph. iv. 31, &c.

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## SERMON XI.

ON THE WORLD'S HATRED OF CHRIST'S  
DISCIPLES.



JOHN, XV. 19.

*If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*

**IT** was foretold in ancient prophecy, that the Messiah, who was to be “a Sanctuary” to the wretched, should also prove “a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel,” Isaiah, viii. 14. And the same inspired writer intimates the reason of it, when he says, “He shall grow up as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground, without form or comeliness, having no beauty why they should desire him,” ch. liii. 2. The advent of the Messiah was, indeed, an event which the nation of Israel anticipated with the fondest hopes and expectations: but when Jesus appeared at the appointed time, as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, although even this part of his character had been faithfully portrayed, he was despised and rejected of men, notwithstanding the rays of divinity which

sometimes burst through the thin veil of humanity that obscured them; and so it is said, "they hid their faces from him, he was despised, and they esteemed him not," ver. 3. The Evangelist tells us, that "He came unto his own, but his own received him not," John, i. 11. But though this was the general state of affairs during the Saviour's personal ministry, yet by a few his divine mission was acknowledged; and to these he granted the privilege of becoming the sons of God, that is, to such as believed on his name; being born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God, ver. 12, 13. In the estimation of these his doctrine possessed such traits of heavenly wisdom that they could boldly say, "To whom, Lord, shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe and are sure, that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," John, vi. 68, 69. Jesus, who was at all times deeply solicitous for their comfort and establishment, being now about to be removed in person from them, and foreseeing the persecutions that would assuredly come upon them on account of their attachment to his cause in the world, addressed them in the language of my text: "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

What I have in view at this time is,

- I. To explain the words.
- II. Shew why the world hate Christ's disciples: and
- III. To improve the subject.

I. Our Lord here forewarns his disciples of the



hatred and opposition they were to meet with in the world, that he might cut off from them all worldly prospects, lead them to count the cost, prevent their being disappointed with false hopes; and thus he converted what otherwise might have offended and stumbled them into a ground of confirmation and establishment. Thus in chap. xv. 1—5. “These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father nor me. But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them: and these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you; but now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?”

By the *world* in our text is meant, the men of the world in a natural state, whether of a dissolute or strict, a profane or religious character; and so the Jewish religionists are included in this designation. When he says, “the world *loves his own*,” it must be understood with some limitation. Men in their natural state are represented as “hateful and hating one another,” Tit. iii. 3. and this must necessarily be the case from their selfish passions, insatiable lusts, and jarring interests in the universal scramble for riches, pleasures, and honours. There are also characters pernicious in society, which the world in general detest. By the *world's own*, therefore, our Lord means such characters as decently conform to the world, court its favour, flatter its pride, are obsequious to its humours, and throw a specious vail over its defor-

mities. These the world cannot hate, (John, vii. 7. but loves them as its own; and it will love them the more if they are dextrous in accomodating religion to the fulfilment of its creditable lusts, and in soothing the mind in the broad way to destruction, 1 John, iv. 5. These are characters which are highly esteemed among men, which all men speak well of, but against which Christ denounceth a woe, Luke, vi. 26. Such were the false Prophets and Pharisees among the Jews, and such are the false teachers in what is called the Christian world. Again, when Christ says that his disciples "are *not of the world*, but *chosen out of it*," he does not mean that they are so merely in the secret purpose of God, or in the sight of him who searcheth the heart; but he means that they are also *visibly* so, otherwise they could not be the objects of the world's hatred on that account. There must, therefore, be something striking and noticeable in their profession and conduct, something very opposite to the course of the world, either in its profane or religious form, which thus raises its hatred and enmity against them. Let us now attend,

## II. To the cause of this hatred.

This does not arise from the world's aversion to superstition, falsehood, and absurdity; for in fact it hath in all ages embraced with greediness the grossest fables, and the most abominable, unnatural, and absurd superstition that can be conceived; and that, too, even under the Christian name. But supposing that it was in general averse to these things, the Christian religion gives it no ground of hatred on that account, it being every way opposite to all superstition and absurdity, agrees with our best reason, and commends itself to every man's conscience in the

sight of God. Nor do the world hate the Christian *morality* in so far as they find it subservient to public or private worldly utility. They see that justice, benevolence, temperance, fidelity, &c. are conducive both to the good of society and happiness of individuals in this life. There are things which are held true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report by the world, and which they esteem virtuous and praiseworthy. These things Christians are exhorted to think on, and consequently are part of the gospel morality, Phil. iv. 8. The Christian morality is, indeed, the purest and most perfect that ever was adopted by any religion; but there never was a religion in the world without some system of morality. Many of the Heathens have said excellent things on that subject; yet the world loved them as its own, and they are still admired even in the Christian world. The mere morality of the gospel, therefore, cannot be the reason why the world hate the disciples of Christ. Neither is the world averse to a kind of *form* of Christianity. The nations called Christians have adopted a corrupted form of it, and seem to sit as easy under it as under any other profession, because it is accommodated to the course of this world, and does not interfere with their favourite pursuits. Why then do the world hate Christians? In answer to this let it be considered,

That upon the fall of man we find an irreconcilable enmity put between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, Gen. iii. 15. This enmity is originally between Christ and the Devil, and of consequence between the saints and the world. The Devil is the prince or god of this world, John, xiv. 30. 2 Cor. iv. 4. the spirit that worketh in the

children of disobedience, Eph. ii. 2. and the whole world lieth in the wicked one, 1 John, v. 19. Christ on the other hand, is the notable seed of the woman, who was to bruise the serpent's head, and with him all the children of God stand connected as their Head. These are not of the world, even as he is not of the world. The world and they are therefore two opposite parties. The declared end of Christ's coming into the world was to destroy the works of the Devil, 1 John, iii. 8. The world, as being under the influence of Satan must have been against him; and so he speaks of it as an enemy which he had to overcome; "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world," John, xvi. 33. Consequently it must be an enemy to all his real followers, as it is every where represented, "I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world," John, xvii. 14. "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved," Matt. x. 22. "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you," 1 John, iii. 13. "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world," ch. iv. 4. "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God," James, iv. 4.—and all attempts to reconcile this opposition is in so far to give up or desert the cause of Christ, which admits of no concord or coalition with the world.

The enmity of the serpent and his seed against Christ and his people, has been more or less visible from the beginning of time. But when Christ himself came to bruise the serpent's head, destroy his kingdom, and deliver his people from his power, then the rage of Satan and of his subjects was most signally displayed in plotting against the Lord and against his Christ, and ever since the dragon hath continued to make war with the remnant of the woman's seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ, Rev. xii. 17.

In tracing the grounds of the world's hatred to the disciples of Christ, we must consider what were the causes of their enmity to Christ himself when he appeared in the flesh; for we must observe that their enmity is chiefly, and in the first place, levelled against him: "Ye know that it hated me *before* it hated you," John, xv. 18. Nay, he tells them they would be hated of all nations *for his sake*, Matt. x. 22. John, xv. 21. The ground of the quarrel, therefore, is their attachment and conformity to Christ. Here we may remark, that,

1. The world hated Christ because he told them *the truth* which he had received of God, John, viii. 40. To this end was he born, and for this cause came he into the world, that he should bear witness unto the truth, John, xviii. 37. This truth is the gospel testimony concerning his person, mission, and work, as the alone Saviour of the guilty. This truth shows the situation of all mankind by nature to be guilty and desperate. It pays no regard to that upon which men value themselves in the sight of God; but levels all the boasted distinctions among men, and even throws contempt upon all their wisdom, righteousness, and

strength, as unavailable for obtaining the divine favour; whilst it points out a free and sovereign salvation through Christ alone, as the only way, the truth, and the life, John, xiv. 6. This truth the world cannot receive: they are insensible of their need, and it is contrary to their pride and desire of living by their own righteousness. Now Christ's disciples are of this truth; they believe it, they love it, they glory in it, and hold it forth as the sole ground of hope, and this excites the enmity of the world against them. So Christ says, "I have given them thy word, and the world hath hated them," John, xvii. 14. This was to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness, 1 Cor. i. 23. and so it is to the world in general at this day.

2. The world hated Jesus, because they knew not him that sent him, John, xv. 21.

The world are ignorant of the character of the true God, and when it was displayed in Jesus and the work of salvation by him, the god of this world blinded their minds lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them, 2 Cor. iv. 4. Had they known and loved the true God, they would have recognised his character in Christ, they would have seen his glory shining in his face, 2 Cor. iii. 18. in seeing him they would have seen the Father, John, xiv. 9. But they had false notions of the character of God; they hated the true God, and consequently him in whom he was manifested, John, xv. 23, 24. And this is also the cause why they hate his followers, ch. xvi. 3.

3. The world hated Christ because he was not of this world, John, viii. 23. Satan had given them to expect a secular Messiah, one who should gratify

their covetousness, pride, and ambition, and whose kingdom was of this world. Such a Messiah they would have loved and embraced: but Jesus was every way opposite to this—he had no worldly figure, pomp, or splendour about him; no worldly honours, riches, or pleasures did he propose to his followers: on the contrary, he cast contempt on this world, and every thing that men hold dear in it; and taught them that they must renounce all these things for the kingdom of heaven's sake. They could have borne a religion that was subservient to the gratification of their worldly lusts in a decent way, or that was consistent with the reputable course of this world. But the doctrine and example of Jesus were directly opposite to the world, and irreconcilable with it in all its most plausible shapes and decent forms. He made every thing give place to the kingdom of heaven; and thus manifested that he was not of this world. For this cause the world hated, and still do hate Christ, whatever profession they may have of his name. For the same reason do they hate his disciples; “Because ye are not of the world,” says he, “but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you,” John, xv. 19.—“and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world,” ch. xvii. 14.

4. Our Lord, speaking to his relatives according to the flesh, gives another reason why the world hated him; “The world cannot hate you, but me it hateth, because I testify of it that the works thereof are evil,” John, vii. 7. He testified not merely that the works of the licentious and profane were evil; this every body acknowledged; but he also testified that the works of those in highest repute for religion were evil; and he faithfully opened up their hypocrisy, self-

righteousness, covetousness, want of love to God and humanity to man; representing them as the most abominable of all characters in the sight of God, however highly esteemed of men, and receiving honour one of another. This excited the keenest resentment from the reputable and religious part of the world, who could be satisfied with nothing less than his life. This also is a cause why the world hate his true and faithful followers. Their doctrine and example condemn the world even in its most religious appearance; therefore the world hates them, and that even from a religious principle, as thinking they do God service in persecuting them, ch. xvi. 2.

5. They hated the Son of God, because his kingdom admits of no coalition with the kingdoms of this world. Not only is his kingdom *not of this world*, but its very nature, spirit, maxims, laws and institutions form a perfect contrast to the course of this world. We are told that upon one occasion the disciples came unto Jesus and asked him, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." Matt. xviii. 1-4. I need not take time here to show how altogether opposite this is to what takes place among the kingdoms of this world, nor yet how utterly absurd any attempt must be to establish a secular kingdom upon these principles of humility and self-denial. We know that attempts have been made to form a coalition between the kingdom of Christ and the



kingdoms of this world—but the result has been a monstrous, unnatural compound of things spiritual and things temporal, an heterogeneous mixture resembling Nebuchadnezzar's image, partly iron and partly clay—and the whole constituting Antichrist—the man of sin—the son of perdition, against which the vials of the wrath of Almighty God are poured out, and which shall be utterly consumed by the brightness of Christ's coming. With this impure mixture of things the kingdom of the Son of God will have no fellowship, or intercommunity. It refuses its friendship, declares it an enemy to God and his Christ; it will not even compromise or halve matters with it; but claims the conquest of it or nothing—the service of God and that of mammon being entirely incompatible. On this account then, the hatred of the world must naturally be excited against such of Christ's people as are steadfast in their allegiance to him, and refuse to acknowledge any other Lord, or lawgiver in his kingdom.

Thus have I laid before you some of the reasons why the world which lieth in the wicked one naturally hates both Christ and his people, and I now proceed,

III. To shew what improvement we should make of the subject. And here I remark that

I. We may learn from what has been said, the true grounds and reasons of the opposition that has been manifested towards the cause and interest of Christ in every age of the world. "I am come," said he "to send fire on the earth—Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you nay, but rather division: for from henceforth, there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the

son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother: the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law, against her mother-in-law." Luke xii. 49—53. We are sometimes apt to wonder whence it comes to pass, that such contentions, and animosities, and enmity as we are called to witness, should be the effect of Christ's coming into this world, who is himself the Prince of peace, meek and lowly of heart, full of benevolence and love—who came to make peace by the blood of his cross—whose gospel is the word of peace—and whose kingdom is described as a kingdom of peace, unity, and concord, Isaiah, xi. 5—10. —a kingdom consisting in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, Rom. xiv. 17. But the answer you see is easily given. The native and genuine effects of the gospel of Christ must necessarily be peace, unity, and concord, nay, fervent love and affection, but then these effects are only produced upon those who believe and love it, and that only in so far as they do so. On the other hand, those who do not believe the truth, and receive it in the love thereof, on such it will have the opposite effect; for as it is diametrically opposite to all their natural prejudices, corruptions and lusts, so it will draw forth their hatred and enmity against all those who profess it in its purity and appear to be under its real influence.

2. We may remark, that this division and enmity has appeared more or less *visible* in the world ever since, for it is eternally radicated in the two seeds. It consists in the opposition of light to darkness, righteousness to unrighteousness, Christ to Belial, between whom there can be no possible concord, 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15. This enmity and division first appeared

in Cain, "who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother" Abel; and the grounds of that quarrel was this, "because his own works were evil and his brother's righteous," 1 John, iii. 12. This sets the controversy upon its true footing, whatever other causes people may pretend. For this the Lord banished Cain from his gracious presence, together with his posterity, who followed his example, Gen. iv. 16—25. while he had his church and people among the posterity of Seth, ver. 26. But in process of time the professing people of God began to entertain more favourable views of the excommunicated wicked race of Cain, and forgetting the grounds of their separation, joined in the nearest alliances with them, and became at last wholly corrupted. Thus the controversy was almost buried, which so provoked the Lord that he swept them all away with a flood except Noah and his family, who were preserved in the ark, a figure of salvation by Christ, 1 Pet. iii. 20, 21. But that the controversy might not fail by the destruction of the ungodly world wicked Ham is preserved. In process of time the descendants of Noah, not liking to retain the knowledge of God which they had received from him, became vain in their imaginations, and sunk into idolatry; and then the controversy seemed again to be almost extinguished.

In this situation of affairs God called Abraham, gave him the promise of Christ to come of his seed, and separated him and his seed after him to be a peculiar people to himself. They were separated from the idolatrous nations by circumcision and the old covenant, and the law of commandments contained in ordinances, and were strictly forbid any intercommunity with the Heathen under the severest penalties.

But though the Lord had his children among them who believed the promise, yet considered as a nation, their separation from the Heathen was not that true division and enmity which God originally established between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, but only a figure of it. Our Lord declares, that among the natural seed of Abraham the Devil had his children visibly manifested by doing his deeds, John, viii. 37. with ver. 41, 44. The greater part of them were a generation of vipers, Matt. iii. 7. who when the seed of the woman came, persecuted him to death, and so were cast off from being God's people. But this only opened the way for his blessing all nations: for by his death he broke down the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles, and slew the enmity which subsisted between them, by removing the grounds of it, Eph. ii. 14—16.

But though Christ has thrown down the distinction between Jews and Gentiles, and slain that enmity which subsisted between them, yet he has not reconciled the enmity originally put between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. On the contrary, he hath drawn the true line of distinction between these two parties, which was not done in the separation of old Israel, and hath established the division and controversy between them upon its proper grounds; and hence he declares that he came not to give peace on the earth, but rather division. This division, then, is not between Jews and Gentiles, but between believers and unbelievers, of whatever nation; between the children of God, and the world that lieth in the wicked one.

3. Our Lord shows that this division and enmity was to be *particular*; not the political division of

nations or states, but such a division as would extend to private families, and set at variance the nearest and dearest natural connections: "For," says the Lord, "from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother, &c. and a man's foes shall be they of his own household," Matt. x. 35, 36. The nearest ties of blood, the most amiable qualities, and the most dutiful and winning conduct on the part of the believer, cannot reconcile this enmity of the seed of the serpent. Nay, though natural affection should strongly plead in their behalf, yet such is the rooted antipathy of the carnal mind to Christ and his genuine followers, as to overcome every natural attachment to their nearest relations.

Our Lord saw that this would be a great trial to his disciples, and have a powerful influence to stumble them, and therefore he adds, "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me," ver. 37:

The carnal world will bear with a fashionable, formal profession of the name of Christ, and perhaps join in it for decency's sake; but this does not lessen their enmity to the real power of religion wherever it appears; but, on the contrary, makes them more dangerous opposers of it. But they never can bear with the ancient gospel in its purity, nor with its genuine effects appearing among the disciples, as it opposes self-righteousness and conformity to the world, or leads to self-denial and bearing the cross.

4. I may now remark, that God hath manifested

his signal displeasure against all attempts to reconcile his kingdom with the kingdoms of this world, since it cannot possibly take place but at the expence of corrupting the religion of Christ, as is evident from the history of the church in all ages. There is no concord between Christ and Belial. It, therefore, behoves Christians to beware of losing sight of the difference or ground of the controversy, and to be carefully upon their guard against all measures which have a tendency to reconcile the church and the world. Hence they are called to guard against the influence of natural attachments, and of their nearest connections, and also of that spurious charity which throws down the distinction, by sharing equal complaisance to truth and error, and thus seeks to heal the division. I may also here just mention that they ought to beware of forming connections in life, particularly in the marriage state, which may prove a snare to them, and perhaps turn them aside in the good profession they have made of the name of Christ before men.

5. Let us all individually bring the subject home to our own minds, and ask ourselves, "Are we hated of the world?" And if so, let us see that it be on the same grounds, and for the same causes that it hated Christ and his primitive disciples; for unless this be the case, it is of no consequence whatever persecutions we may endure, or however much we may have our names cast out as evil. If it be not for Christ's name sake, we do not suffer for him, and consequently are not entitled to the promised consolation. On the contrary, if we are hated on his account, it is an evidence of the truth of his word, of our connection with him, and that we are engaged in

the same cause. But if the world hate us not, then either we must be of the world, and so it loves us as its own, or as belonging to it; or we are not making a proper open profession of Christ's name, and walking as he walked, and in that case we must be criminally conforming to the world, and keeping measures with it. I only add one thing more, and that is, in the

6th and last place, That if the world hate us because of our steady attachment to Christ, and our faithful adherence to the despised cause of truth, let us take the consolation which his word so amply administers—"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"—"blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven," Matt. v. 10—12. Let us not forget that Christ, our divine Master, hath gone before us in this work of patient suffering; the world hated him *before* us; we may therefore be well content to suffer with him, who endured such hatred on our account and for our sakes. It is our *honour* to be thus conformed to him: "If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him:" if we have fellowship with him in his sufferings, we shall also participate with him in his glory. But let us remember that the former is indispensable to the enjoyment of the latter; for whosoever is ashamed of him in this sinful world, of that man will the Son of God be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with all the holy angels.

## SERMON XII.

ON THE DUTY AND PRIVILEGE OF PRAYER



2 THESS. v. 17.

*Pray without ceasing.*

**PRAYER** in general is the putting up of our desires to God in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, for things that are agreeable to his will.

I need not tell you that it is a most important duty in the Christian life, and a duty that is frequently inculcated upon us in the word of God. Indeed it is not only a duty, but it is an unspeakable privilege to be permitted to draw near unto a throne of grace, and to make our requests known unto God, who has condescended to reveal himself as the hearer of prayer. I purpose, therefore, under divine assistance,

**I.** To illustrate a little the general nature of prayer.

**II.** I shall endeavour to shew the great benefit arising from this duty : and

**III.** I shall answer a few objections that may be started on the subject.

**FIRST**, then, I am to illustrate a little the general nature of prayer, which I shall do by an induction of the following particulars :



1. PRAYER is the offering up to God of the real and earnest desires of our hearts. So the Psalmist says, "Blessed are they that seek thee *with the whole heart,*" Psalm, cxix. 2.—"With my *whole heart* have I sought thee," ver 10. It is called a *pouring out* the heart before him, in allusion to the drink-offerings under the law, Psalm, lxii. 8. "Ye people, pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us." It is also described as a *lifting up* the soul unto him, Psalm, xxv. 1. "Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul." And again, Psalm. lxxxvi. 4. "Rejoice the soul of thy servant; for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul." And all this in opposition to an hypocritical, formal, or lifeless address, while the heart is disengaged and far from him.

2. The *object* of prayer is God alone, who commands us to call upon him, Psalm, l. 15. "Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." Hence he is styled, the *hearer of prayer*, Psalm, lxxv. 2. "O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come." Our Lord enjoins us to pray unto him as unto our Father who is in heaven, Matt. vi. 6. "When ye pray say, Our Father, who art in heaven." We have instances, indeed, of prayer being addressed to the Son of God, as in the case of Stephen, Acts, vii. 59. but in general we are directed to address the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Eph. i. 17. ch. iii. 14, 15.

3. The *name* in which we are to present our prayers unto God, is that of Jesus Christ his Son, as he himself directs us, John. xiv. 13, 14. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it." And again ch. xvi.

23, 24. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." He is the only Mediator betwixt God and man; officiates as our High Priest at the throne of grace; presents the prayers of the saints perfumed with the incense of his own merits, and accompanies them with his own most powerful intercession, Rev. viii. 3. and Rom. viii. 34. This is the new and living way in which we are to draw near to God, John, xiv. 6. and Heb. iv. 14—16. ch. x. 19—22.

4. With respect to the *matter* of prayer, it must be for things agreeable to the revealed will of God, 1 John, v. 14. "This is the confidence which we have in him, that if we ask any thing *according to his will*, he heareth us; and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." And this stands opposed to our asking amiss, to which James refers, ch. iv. 3. and for improper purposes. "Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." Whatever we ask in prayer from God should be a matter of promise, or correspondent with it: and we must ask it from proper motives, and for proper ends.

5. Our text directs us to pray *without ceasing*. This does not imply that we should be immediately engaged in this duty without the least intermission. The sacrifice which was offered under the law evening and morning, was called the *continual sacrifice*, Numb. xxviii. 24, 31. Dan. viii. 11. The Apostles are said to be *continually* in the temple praising God, Luke, x. xiv. 53. that is, *daily* at the appointed times, evening

and morning, Acts, ii. 46, 47. To pray without ceasing imports our *continuing instant* in this duty as the Apostle expresses it, Rom. xii. 12.—our watching thereunto with *all perseverance*, as it is expressed Eph. vi. 18.—or, in the language of our Lord, to *pray always*, and not to faint, Luke, xviii. 1. And he has given strong encouragement to this persevering importunity in prayer, from the influence which perseverance and importunity have even upon bad men, Luke, xi. 8. and ch. xviii. 4, 5. and assures us, that God will much more hear and answer his own people; nay, that he is much more ready to hear and grant their requests than the most affectionate parent is to grant the reasonable and necessary request of his son, Luke, xi. 11—14. But,

6. In order to our continuing instant in prayer, or praying with fervency and persevering importunity, it is of the greatest importance to us to cultivate an *habitual spirit of devotion*; for it is impossible we can comply with the exhortation to “pray without ceasing,” unless we are habitually possessed of “the spirit of grace and supplication,” Zech. xii. 10. Without this, our prayers will be cold, formal, hypocritical, and burdensome. I shall, therefore, here suggest a few things on the spirit of prayer, or what is implied in it; which may serve, through the blessing of God, to direct us how to comply with this important exhortation.

By the spirit of prayer, I mean that state or temper of mind produced by the influence of the Holy Spirit, whereby we are habitually disposed and inclined to have constant recourse unto God as the source of all our happiness, and the supplier of all our wants. This must imply in it—A deep conviction

that our true happiness lies wholly in the favour and enjoyment of God: "Whom have I in heaven but thee?—It is good for me to draw near unto God," Psalm, lxxiii. This excites *love* and *desire*.

It also includes the knowledge and belief of the way in which we are *interested* in his favour, and obtain every blessing, and of the way of successful *approach* unto him through Jesus the Mediator. Without this we could not draw near unto him with a true heart in the full assurance of faith; nor could we have any ground for that filial boldness and confidence in approaching God. The spirit of prayer is a spirit of faith in Christ's atonement and mediation; and without this faith our prayers will both be heartless and unsuccessful, see James, i. 6, 7.

Another thing included in the spirit of prayer, is a deep feeling and experimental conviction of our own guilt, corruption, weakness, and manifold wants, with the misery which is connected with them; such as may effectually humble us before God, and excite our real hatred of sin, and our highest esteem and earnest desire of spiritual blessings. The spirit of grace and supplication is a spirit of humility, sensibility, contrition, and repentance for sin, arising from a view of Christ crucified, Zech. xii. 10. Every thing, therefore, which removes the sense of our own wants, weakness, and imperfections from us, must necessarily unfit us for prayer; such things, for instance, as pride, self-conceit, insensibility, or impenitence. We can never pray in earnest for things which we do not see our need of, and which we do not highly esteem. "The wicked through the pride of his heart will not call upon God."

*Spiritual-mindedness, self-denial, and crucifixion*

to the world, are also included in the spirit of prayer. Without these it is impossible we can have the spirit of prayer. If we do not mind habitually and prevalently the things of the Spirit; if we do not love the blessings of Christ's kingdom supremely, how is it possible that our souls can breathe out after them? If our minds are attached unto, or too much engaged with even the lawful things of this world, we may pray as often as we will, but we want the spirit of that duty. What we shall eat or drink, or wherewithal we shall be clothed, or how we shall gratify such and such lusts, is the real desire and prayer of the heart, whatever our words may be.

Singleness and *sincerity of soul* in the sight of God, is another ingredient in the spirit of prayer. If we confess the guilt of which we are not convinced, or for which we are not humbled, (as will appear from our justifying ourselves before men) or if we pray for things which we do not really desire, such as to be kept from temptation and all appearance or occasion of evil, whilst yet perhaps we may eagerly rush into them, (and in this we often deceive ourselves, not attending to the import of our own requests, and being averse to the necessary steps for attaining them :) This is insincerity, and inconsistent with the spirit of prayer.

I must add, that a life and conversation corresponding to our prayers, is included in this frame of mind. If the tenor of our temper and conduct is a continued contradiction to our prayers—praying for humility, but indulging pride—for crucifixion to the world, but indulging the lusts of it, &c. then we have not the spirit of prayer; neither can we have the answer of our petitions; for “if we regard iniquity in

our hearts, the Lord will not hear us." It is impossible that we can live one way, and pray with heartiness and success another. But further,

The spirit of prayer implies the necessity of the Holy Spirit of God, not only to dispose the heart of a believer into a suitableness to this divine exercise, but also to help his infirmities in the duty. It is hence the Apostle says, Rom. viii. 26. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." I shall endeavour to open up a little the nature of this assistance, before we proceed to the second division of our subject.

I remark, then, that the Holy Spirit assists us in the duty of prayer, by convincing us of our sin, and giving us a humble, broken, and contrite heart for it. "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplication; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his first born," Zech. xii. 10. And thus he gives that broken and contrite heart which the Lord will not despise, Psalm, li. 17. For God makes his abode with such, and manifests himself unto them, Isaiah, lvii. 15. and ch. lxvi. 2. "To this man will I look, even to him that is of a poor and contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word; to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the hearts of the contrite ones." We may see this exemplified in the case of the Publican, Luke, xviii. 13. Thus the Holy Spirit helpeth our infirmities in prayer, by giving us a sense of our emptiness and

manifold wants, with the constant need we have of mercy to pardon, and grace to help in time of need, Heb. iv. 16. Whenever we begin to imagine that we are rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing, the spirit of prayer will soon flag, though, like the Pharisee, we may retain the form of it, Rev. iii. 17.

But further, the Holy Spirit communicates divine assistance in prayer, by leading us to behold in the Lord Jesus Christ that *fulness* which is more than adequate to the supply of all our wants. He takes of the things that are Christ's and shews them to us, thus making us to know the things that are freely given to us of God. Hence he excites our desires after them, and leads us to the throne of grace for them. He also strengthens our faith in God's promises, and gives us confidence that we shall receive the things that we ask, Col. i. 19. John, i. 16. ch. xvi. 13—15.

I shall only add on this head, that the Holy Spirit assists believers in the exercise of prayer, by giving them the knowledge of their adoption, and thereby enabling them to draw near unto God as unto their heavenly Father. "For because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father," Gal. iv. 5, 6. Rom. viii. 14—16. He also gives them fellowship with Christ in his intercession; causes them to see the efficacy of it, and their interest in it, and so gives boldness and confidence of access through it. In fine, he fills their mouths with arguments, and their hearts with earnest groans and desires after the very same things that the self same Spirit intercedes for in their glorified Head before the mercy seat.

I come now,

II. To consider the great privilege of prayer, and the benefits resulting from a right performance of it. And here let me remind you,

I. What an unspeakable privilege it is, that we have *access* to God to present our requests unto him! Consider what would have been our situation, had God upon our apostacy cut off all communication betwixt him and us, and for ever shut the door of access, declaring, "When ye spread forth your hands I will hide mine eyes from you, and when ye make many prayers I will not hear," Isaiah, i. 15. Reflect for a moment upon such a hopeless situation, and say, What in such a case should we have given for only one hour of a favourable audience; how eagerly should we have embraced it, and with what fervour and importunity should we have poured out our hearts to him in the accepted moment? You that know God and live near to him, say, What should you have left behind that could yield you any satisfaction, were you deprived of access to your God, your chief joy? When the first man fell, fear and shame made him fly from God to hide himself; he never could have had confidence, or perhaps inclination, to approach to God again. But behold the love and grace of our merciful Father! he calls after the guilty fugitive, and opens up the communication afresh by the promise of the seed of the woman. This promise he at various times, and with increasing clearness, made to his ancient chosen people; and all who were strangers to this covenant of promise, were without God and without hope in the world, Eph. ii. 12. But now that the promise is fulfilled, and Christ ascended as our High Priest within the heavenly sanctuary, the way



into the holiest of all is made fully manifest, and sinners of all nations, as well as the Jews, have access by one Spirit unto the Father by him, ver. 18. and therefore we are exhorted to draw near with true hearts in the full assurance of faith, having access with boldness and confidence through the faith of him. This access is to *God* the inexhaustible source of all happiness—it is in *every place*—at *all times*—and in *all circumstances*. O what a privilege is this! how highly should we prize it! how diligently should we improve it!

2. In prayer we have not only access, but a *gracious hearing and acceptance*; and for this we have his faithful promise, Isa. lxxv. 24. “Before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear.” Psalm, cii. “He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.” Psalm, cxlv. 19. “He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him; he also will hear their cry and save them.” 1 John, v. 14, 15. “And this is the confidence we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will he heareth us; we have the petition that we desired of him.” This confidence was founded on Christ’s promise: “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him? Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to

you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets," Matt. vii. 7—12. "And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full," John, xvi. 23, 24.

3. In the exercise of this duty believers obtain a renewed *sense of pardon* communicated to the conscience. When by an untender walk guilt has accumulated upon the conscience, our peace and fellowship with God is interrupted, and we can find no rest nor ease, but are like a bone out of joint. In such a case we cannot reason ourselves into comfort, or obtain relief by the mere dint of speculations upon the gospel. But when we are led to approach unto God as the Father of mercies through the atonement, to pour out our hearts before him, confessing our sins, and disburdening our souls in his bosom; how often do we find his promise accomplished, that while we were yet speaking he hath heard? Our views of the atonement have been brightened, a sense of pardon communicated, and our hearts melted down with a mixture of self-abasement, wonder, joy, and gratitude. Thus in drawing near unto God in this duty we have found him draw near unto us, James, iv. 8. Thus the father of the repenting prodigal meets him while yet a great way off, and cuts short the penitential address with paternal embraces, Luke, xv. 20—22. When the Lord calls backsliding Israel to return, he puts a penitential prayer in their mouth, and confirms it with a most gracious answer, Hos. xiv. 1—9. No sooner does he hear Ephraim penitently bemoaning himself, than he comforts him with the most endearing

expressions of paternal love, Jer. xxxi. 18—21. The Psalmist, who experienced the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, found the sense of this communicated to his conscience as the answer of his prayer. “I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord”—it immediately follows, “and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin,” Psalm, xxxii. 5. and to shew that this was not his peculiar attainment, but the privilege of all God’s children, he adds, “For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found,” ver. 6. If we confess our sins he is faithful to his promise, and just through the atonement to forgive them, 1 John, i. 9. and therefore in prayer we ought to come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy. For this end our Lord hath taught us to pray daily, “Father, forgive us our debts,” Matt. vi. 12.

4. In prayer believers often obtain a *deliverance* from all their *troubles*; so he hath promised, Psalm, l. 15. “Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee.” Accordingly it is said, “The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles,” Psalm, xxxiv. 17. This the Psalmist experienced in his own case; “I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears,” Psalm, xxxiv. 4. Again, “I called upon the Lord in distress; the Lord answered me, and set me in a large place,” Psalm, cxviii. 5. Many are the instances of deliverance granted as the answer of prayer, both from temporal and spiritual troubles. But then we are not to faint or be discouraged in this duty because we may not always obtain immediate relief. Our Lord hath delivered a parable to encou-

rage us in cases when God seemeth to delay an answer, see Luke, xviii. 1—9. and shows, that if even an unjust judge was gained upon by continued importunity, how much more would not God regard the cries of his own elect, though he bear long with them. In this world he hath given us to expect tribulation; and there is a necessity for it; yet our prayers are answered with respect to them, when we are supported under them, when they work for us the peaceable fruits of righteousness, and when they lead us to fix our minds on the eternal weight of glory. Our Lord prayed that the cup might pass from him: it did not, however, pass from him till he drank it; yet he was heard, in that he feared, Heb. v. 7. he was strengthened under his sufferings, and obtained a glorious deliverance; for the Lord gave him his heart's desire, and did not withhold the request of his lips, Psalm, xxi. 2. When Paul had a thorn in the flesh, and the messenger of Satan to buffet him, he besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from him. Did it therefore immediately? certainly not; yet his request was heard and answered to his satisfaction, so that he obtained present relief; "My grace," says he, "shall be sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness." This was enough for Paul; he was fully relieved in his mind, contented, and happy; for he says, "Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me," 2 Cor. xii. 7—10. Thus there may be a happy relief in answer to our prayers, whilst yet the outward affliction may continue for a time, by his giving grace to help in time of need.

5. In prayer we obtain a *supply of all our wants*. "They that seek the Lord shall not want any good

thing," Psalm, xxxiv. 10. When the soul has access to God the fountain of all fulness; when he manifests himself unto them as their God, their portion, and their all; then every want of the soul is supplied; they delight themselves in God, and he gives them the desires of their heart, Psalm, xxxvii. 4. Since man apostatized from God, he finds an insatiable want and emptiness in his soul which the whole creation cannot supply. He seeks for satisfaction in the creature, but finds himself constantly disappointed. The more his faculties expand, the less will be his satisfaction, and the greater his wants. The soul was originally made for the enjoyment of God, and nothing less can satisfy it. These wants will be greatly increased in proportion as he is led to see his condition as a fallen creature, and as he extends his views into futurity. But when these views are directed to God as the source and center of all happiness, then he hungers and thirsts after righteousness; the favour, the image, and enjoyment of him becomes his chief desire; and when he has access to God, and gets a manifestation of him as the portion of his inheritance, then he is satisfied; his soul returns into its rest, and he desires no more; all his wants vanish, and he possesseth all things in him.

6. *Conversing with God by prayer is a blessed mean of conforming us to God, even as worldly conversation and correspondence have a strong tendency to conform us to the men and manners of the world. Moses in conversing with the Lord derived a glory from him which shone upon his face; so we approaching unto God, and obtaining a more near and full view of his glory as it shines in the face of Christ, are changed into the same image, Exod. xxxiv. 29—31 2 Cor. iii. 7, 13, 18. ch. iv. 4—6*

7. In prayer *the fruits of the Spirit are excited, strengthened, and increased*—faith, love, hope, joy, humility, heavenly-mindedness, patience, &c. because thereby we come to have a nearer view and stronger impression of the object which excites them; “For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God,” Eph. iii. 14—19. Heb. v. 7—9.

8. It is in the exercise of this duty that *the other ordinances of the gospel become delightful and profitable to us*. We ought, therefore, to wait attentively upon the Lord in them by prayer and supplication, for his blessing upon them; otherwise they will soon dwindle into a dead and lifeless formality. Hereby also we shall be enabled to exhort and edify one another, when we come together with our hearts full of God, and the savour of divine things; then our affections will be warm and lively, and our speech seasoned with salt will minister grace to the hearer, Col. iv. 6. Eph. v. 18—20. Phil. iv. 6.

9. By this duty our *desires after the full enjoyment of God are excited*. In heaven we shall be free from all our present indispositions in his service, and shall serve him without weariness day and night in his temple. Then we shall have no more the dead, the cold, and the wandering heart; weak faith, languid love,

faint hope, and interrupted comfort; but shall be like unto our Lord in holiness and happiness, and be made pillars in the temple of our God, to go no more out. When the praying Christian goes to heaven he does not go to a strange God, but to that God with whom he has had much familiarity and sweet communion here below; who has been his refuge in the time of trouble; the portion of his soul, and his exceeding joy, Psalm, xliii.—xlvi.—lxii.—lxiii.—lxxiii. 25, 26.

I have now discussed the first two heads; and shall therefore proceed to answer some objections. For instance, it may be asked,

1. “Why should we be so earnest and constant in prayer? Does not God know all our wants?”

*Ans.*—Yes: it is not to inform him; but then God has a certain order of bestowing his blessings. He first makes us *sensible* of our wants—excites our *value* for, and earnest *desires* after, the things we stand in need of—leads us to see and acknowledge himself as the source and giver of all good—and actually to apply to him for the blessings he means to bestow. Thus he first *prepares the heart*, and then *causes his ear to hear*, Psalm, x. 17. The Lord, making large promises to his people, points out the order in which he was to accomplish them thus; “For these things will I be enquired of to do it for them,” Ezek, xxxvi. 37. Blessings received as the answer of our prayers are double mercies. What enjoyment could we have of things whereof we did not know the want? what relish could we have for things which were never the objects of our desires? And if we are insensible of the source of our mercies, to what shall our love and gratitude be directed? On the other hand, how savoury is food to the hungry soul! what exquisite

enjoyment have we in the fulfilment of our ardent desires! but above all, how exceedingly sweet and delightful must it be to receive all our mercies as *from God*, the inexhaustible source of all good; and to obtain them as the *answer* of our prayers through the mediation of his Son! Does not this enhance the blessing, and ravish the heart with wonder, that God should in very deed correspond with sinful mortals, hear their prayers, and grant their request? Though God then know all our wants, yet he would have us to know them ourselves, and to know himself as the great supplier of them, and apply to him accordingly, and so enjoy himself in his benefits.

2. “But has not God decreed, and Christ actually purchased, all blessings for us? Is not prayer then needless?”

*Ans.*—This is so far from being an argument against prayer, that it is the highest encouragement to it. The intention of prayer is neither to suggest any new thing to God, nor to prevail upon him to alter his decrees, or make new ones; for he is of one mind, and who shall turn him. On the contrary, we pray that his will may be done. Whatsoever is the subject of promise is matter of prayer, though we know he is faithful and will accomplish his promises. God decreed and promised that Christ’s kingdom should come, yet he taught his disciples to pray that it might come; he had decreed to send forth labourers into his vineyard, yet they were to pray that he might do so. How much love appears in making that the answer of our prayers which is the fixed purpose of his will! Herein he appears at once as the sovereign Lord and the hearer of prayer—fixed in his purposes, yet condescending to our request; or rather bringing



up our wills and desires into a consonancy with his own, and giving us fellowship with himself in fulfilling them both together. As to the *purchase of the Redeemer*, that is the ground of our plea in all our prayers, and the foundation of our hope that we shall obtain the things we ask.

3. "But does not God say, "I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest to them that asked not after me," Rom. x. 20.

*Ans.*—He was so, first in sending the gospel to the nations who were without God, and could never believe on him of whom they have not heard, nor call on him in whom they had not believed, ver. 14. He is also thus found of every individual before they seek him; he presents them with a discovery of himself, else they would never seek him. But then the first effect of this unsought for discovery is their calling upon the name of the Lord, and seeking his face with their whole hearts' desire. Thus he is first found of them who sought him not, and makes them seek him; then he is found of them in consequence of their seeking him, and he hath given them no ground to expect any good thing from him but in this way, now that the correspondence is opened up and established.

4. "But does not Christ make continual intercession for us? What need then for our prayers?"

*Ans.*—He also maketh intercession in us by his Spirit, Rom. viii. 26, 27. and if any man have not this Spirit of Christ he is none of his; and consequently has no ground to think that Christ intercedes for him in heaven. Christ intercedes in heaven that these very prayers may be heard, which are dictated by his Spirit on earth in the hearts of his people, and vented in earnest and unutterable groans.

5. "But we are to be careful for nothing."

*Ans.*—True; but this is so far from being an argument against prayer, that in opposition to carefulness, we are in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, to make our requests known unto God, Phil. iv. 6.

6. "But we do not observe the answer of our prayers."

*Ans.*—Because it is not every one that really prays in faith, nothing doubting, James, i. 6, 7.—Perhaps we ask amiss, ch. iv. 3.—or regard iniquity in our hearts, Psalm, lxxvi. 18.—It may be that we do not love or forgive the brethren; we must therefore first be reconciled before we offer our gift, Matt. v. 23, 24. we must first forgive before we can expect to be forgiven, ch. vi. 14, 15. But prayer may be answered whilst the particular request is not granted, and that in a way best for us. We are, perhaps, not solicitous about the answer, or duly attending to, or waiting for it like the Psalmist, Psalm, v. 3.

But I conclude this discourse with a few remarks by way of improvement; and,

1. If prayer is both that important duty and that exalted privilege, which we have endeavoured to shew it to be, how necessary is it that we should abound in it at all times. And in order to this, let us take particular care that we have a proper and pointed *end* in view in all our prayers, arising from the sense of our need, and a suitable estimate of the value of spiritual blessings. This, and this alone, can excite earnestness in prayer, and persevering importunity at a throne of grace.

2. Let us cultivate a firm *faith in God*, as the hearer of prayer, and as faithful to his promises.

True to his word, God gave his Son,  
To die for crimes which man had done ;  
Best pledge ! he never will revoke  
A single promise he hath spoke.

They are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus ; ratified and confirmed by the blood of the everlasting covenant, to the glory of God the Father.

Fear not that he will ere forsake,  
Or leave his work undone ;  
He's faithful to his promises,  
And faithful to his Son.

3 Let us, then, be waiting upon God with patience and perseverance in the exercise of this duty, and that without fainting. Let us beware of resting satisfied without our spirits really drawing near to God in that duty, and without having access to him ; for whatever falls short of this is not prayer, properly speaking. And let us see that we are looking for an answer to our prayers, yet resigned to his holy will as to the time and manner of granting our petitions ; anxious about nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let our requests be made known unto God ; and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep our hearts and minds, through Christ Jesus, to whom be praise and glory everlasting. AMEN.

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## SERMON XIII.

ON THE DUTIES WHICH CHRISTIANS OWE TO  
MAGISTRATES.

*(Preached during the Late War.)*



1 TIM. II. 1—4.

*I exhort, therefore, that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men : for kings, and for all that are in authority ; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty ; for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.*

AS true religion is substantially the same under every dispensation, so we may remark that there is an entire correspondency between the duties enjoined upon the people of God, in reference to rulers and civil governors, both under the Old and New Testament : with this exception, however, that the latter is more definite and express than the former on every thing relating to this subject ; and this not merely as to the outward performance of them, to which we may be

compelled, but also as it respects the inward principles and dispositions by which we are to be influenced.

When God's ancient people, Israel, were captives in Babylon, the prophet Jeremiah addressed a letter to them, in which he enjoined it upon them, that they should behave as industrious, quiet, and dutiful subjects in the land of their captivity; and in particular, that they should "seek the peace of the city whither the Lord had caused them to be carried away captives, and to pray unto him for it," Jer. xxix. 7. for in the peace of the city they themselves were to find peace. This precept enjoined upon them the duty of seeking the tranquility of the city of Babylon, by exemplifying a quiet and peaceable behaviour there; by a becoming respect for, and a dutiful submission unto, its government in every thing that did not interfere with the law of their God: and all this in opposition to murmuring, disrespectful speeches, or seditious combinations against it;—they were to seek its peace by praying unto the Lord for it, and studying to maintain it by every lawful means.

The state and condition of the people of God in the present day, is not very dissimilar to that of the Jews in ancient Babylon. They also are aliens in a foreign land; strangers from the place of their nativity, and their father's house; yet similar duties are incumbent on them; for they too are commanded to pray "for kings, and for all that are in authority over them, that they may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty," 1 Tim. ii. 2.

In these words we have three particulars which require consideration.

I. A duty to which Christians are exhorted.

II. A description of the persons for whom it is to be performed: and,

III. The arguments, reasons, and motives, by which this duty is enforced.

I. The duty exhorted to is expressed in these four words, *viz. supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings*. Though these expressions are often included in the word prayer, and some of them may be taken in that large sense where they occur singly; yet here, where they are enumerated one by one, there must be some peculiar idea affixed to each, otherwise it would be an entire tautology. We may, therefore, understand this exhortation as comprehending every kind of address to the Divine Majesty in behalf of others which their various stations, conditions, and circumstances may require. *Supplications*, or rather ( $\delta\epsilon\sigma\sigma\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ ) *deprecations*, are earnest intertreaties for averting or removing those penal evils and calamities which men by their manifold provocations have justly deserved. *Prayers* ( $\Pi\rho\sigma\sigma\epsilon\upsilon\chi\alpha\iota$ ) in this enumeration are petitions put up to God for all spiritual and temporal blessings in behalf of our fellow creatures. *Intercessions* ( $\epsilon\upsilon\tau\epsilon\upsilon\chi\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ ) sometimes signify a complaint made unto God against persons, as in Rom. xi. 2. but most frequently a pleading in behalf of the guilty, as in Rom. viii. 34. Heb. vii. 25. in which last sense it must be here understood. *Thanksgivings* ( $\epsilon\upsilon\chi\alpha\rho\iota\sigma\iota\alpha\varsigma$ ) are grateful acknowledgments made unto God for the innumerable blessings and favours which he bestows upon the children of men. Let us now consider,

## II. For whom we are to perform this duty.

1. It is to be done for *all men*; that is, men of all nations, whether Jews or Gentiles; of all characters and conditions, good or bad; and of all ranks and degrees, whether high or low. Our heavenly Father is the common parent of all mankind; in him they live, move, and have their being: he is the saviour or preserver of all men, and extends the bounties of his providence to the whole human race, in doing them good, and giving them rain and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness. From these considerations we are commanded to do good to, and pray for, all men; and by universal benevolence, and diffusive beneficence, to imitate our Father who is in heaven, who maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust, Matt. v. 45. This universal benevolence is farther inculcated by our Lord in his explication of the command to love our neighbour, as illustrated in the parable of the merciful Samaritan, Luke, x. But as our ability of *doing* good is but of small account, and confined to a very narrow circle, we are enjoined to make supplications, prayers, and intercessions for all men unto God, who is perfectly acquainted with the wants of all his creatures, and fully able to supply them.

Our prayers ought to respect the *spiritual*, as well as *temporal*, interests of all men. The Lord hath commanded the gospel to be preached to every creature under heaven, and therein has declared his grace and good-will to all without exception, whom he commands every where to repent and believe it unto their salvation; and though all men shall not be saved, yet this warrants us to pray for the salvation of all. Many are afraid lest their prayers should be more ex-

tensive than the divine purpose of election ; but God's secret purpose is not the rule of our prayers ; for this very reason—because it is secret. Were we to pray for none but those of whose salvation we are absolutely certain, we should pray for none at all ; at least we could pray for no particular person. Paul knew that the bulk of the Jewish nation were rejected ; yet his heart's desire and prayer to God for them, was that Israel might be saved, Rom. x. 1. The Apostles preached the gospel to all nations, and we have no reason to doubt that their prayers were as extensive. But the text is quite express, and exhorts us to pray for all men ; for this reason—that God would have all to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

As we are to pray for men of all nations, so we are also for men of *all characters*, even the most wicked and abandoned. As all the human race are alike concluded under sin ; and as the salvation of any of this guilty multitude is of mere sovereign free mercy ; so that mercy in its exercise keeps no measures with the supposed comparative worth of the creature, but sets at nought every distinction of character, and magnifying itself in the very unworthiness of its object, runs counter to all that men naturally esteem the moral fitness and congruity of things. Those who are duly sensible of the riches, sovereignty, and freedom of divine grace towards themselves, will never see cause to despair of the salvation of any, or to exclude from their prayers and intercessions the very worst of mankind.

Prayers for our *enemies* are also included in prayers for all men, and that by our Lord's express command, Matt. v. 44. “ But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate



you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." This he exemplified himself on the cross, and was heard in the salvation of many of them. Stephen also made intercession for his enemies, and Paul's conversion was a notable instance of his being answered. This duty, though essential to the character of a Christian, is but little attended to by many. Few admit the precept in its genuine sense, and fewer still practise it with any degree of heartiness and sincerity. It consists in such a real good-will to our enemies, as will show itself in doing them good for evil; and in such a hearty concern for their repentance and salvation, as will lead us to return them blessings for cursings, and to make unfeigned and fervent intercessions for them at a throne of grace. This, indeed, is true greatness, fortitude, and generosity of soul. It is an attainment entirely supernatural, peculiar to the true Christian, and can only be produced by a proper view and real belief of the grace and love of God commended towards us in giving his Son to die for us when enemies.

In praying for all men, surely we ought not to forget the civil community of which we are members. If a man is enjoined in the first place to care and provide for his own house and kindred, 1 Tim. v. 8. by parity of reasoning his country, in the next place, must claim his attention. Accordingly we find Paul touched with a particular concern for his countrymen, the Jews, though he knew their particular relation to God was then dissolved, Rom. ix. 1, 2, 3. ch. x. 1. Indeed that love of one's country which leads men to seek its aggrandisement at the expence of the just rights, peace, liberty, or lives of others, appears to be none of the Christian virtues. But as the gospe!

does not dissolve our natural and civil obligations as men and members of society, but strongly enforces them, we ought in a particular manner to seek the peace of that community where providence has ordained our lot, whose privileges we share, and with the civil peace of which our own is so intimately connected, Jer. xxix. 7. And when can our deprecations, prayers, and intercessions for our country be more seasonable than at present, whether we consider the wickedness of the nation, or the dangers with which it is threatened. Never was there a people who enjoyed such national privileges, both civil and sacred; and never was there any who so greatly misimproved, or grossly abused and perverted them. It is not my intention to give a detail of the reigning national enormities; suffice it to say, that there never was a time since the profession of Christianity when open infidelity, contempt of the gospel, profanity and blasphemy, have made more daring advances; nor when the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, have been pursued with greater avidity than at this day. The world, indeed, has always been wicked since the original apostacy; and we have no ground to expect it shall be otherwise until the end; but there are certain degrees of national guilt and depravity, which, both in the nature of things, and in the just judgment of a righteous God, must bring upon communities the greatest calamities.

Scripture furnishes us with many signal instances of the wrath of God being revealed from heaven against the unrighteousness and ungodliness not only of individuals, but of nations and communities. He brought the flood upon the whole world of the ungodly; destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah with fire and

brimstone for their unnatural lusts; plagued Egypt for their contempt of him and oppression of his people; exterminated the Canaanites by the sword of Joshua, when their iniquity was full; and when his own peculiar people, the Jews, (the only earthly nation he ever selected from the rest of mankind) had filled up the measure of their sins, his wrath came upon them to the uttermost. Many other examples might be produced both from sacred and profane history. True, indeed, the Lord punished Israel according to the tenor of that peculiar covenant which he had made with them; we cannot, therefore, from his procedure with them trace the line of his conduct towards any other nation of this world; yet these things happened to them for ensamples to Christians, and they are written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the world are come, 1 Cor. x. 11. being typical both of his chastising his people in love, and some of them of his punishing the despisers of the gospel. But the other instances above-mentioned of divine judgments are not confined to that peculiar dispensation; nor is it any way inconsistent with the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom, that he should in his providence punish the nations even with temporal judgments for their sins. Can any be so blind as to imagine that the Sovereign Ruler of the world is less attentive to the affairs of men at this day than he was formerly; that he is not so averse from sin; or that because he bears long, he will not punish it? Can any suppose that the righteous Judge of all the earth will be partial to Britain; and that *he who chasteneth the nations* will not chastise this as well as others when the measure of its iniquity is filled up.—Indeed the tokens of his displeasure have already appeared.

The councils of the nation have been divided in their sentiments at home; a formidable rebellious combination has been formed abroad; already has the sword been drawn from his scabbard, and bathed in kindred blood; every man's hand is against his neighbour, and reason as well as revelation teaches us, that a kingdom thus divided against itself cannot long stand. Nor is this all, two powerful neighbouring kingdoms, each of whom, humanly speaking, might be a match for Britain, have now openly abetted the unnatural rebellion, formed a powerful confederacy against us, and have already commenced hostilities with success. But I need not enlarge upon what is so well known. Nothing is more evident than that the present aspect of affairs is very alarming and threatening. The Lord's hand appears to be stretched out, and what the event will be is only known to himself. It is indeed our comfort that all things shall work together for good to them that love God, and that our true interest is secure though the earth be removed, and the mountains carried into the midst of the sea; but are Christians to be so selfish and insensible as not to feel for the calamities of mankind? Thousands and ten thousands have already perished in the quarrel; still the work of death is going on; and who can picture out the wretchedness and distress of their surviving widows and orphans? These things loudly call upon every fearer of God, every disciple of Christ, to give heed unto the apostolic exhortation, earnestly to *deprecate* deserved judgments, and to make *supplications* unto God, who stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people, that he would be graciously pleased to open men's

eyes to their true interest—quell the turbulent spirit of pride, faction and rebellion—restrain and set bounds to these wicked lusts and passions of men on allsides, from whence come wars and fightings—put a stop to the farther effusion of human blood—and restore the blessings of peace to the nation.

The duty of humiliation and prayer in such circumstances is not founded simply on Christianity. Every one who believes there is a Divine Being who made the world, and governs it in righteousness, has a sufficient foundation for repenting in dust and ashes, and applying to him in distress. The case of Nineveh is a striking instance of success in this duty. The Lord denounces destruction upon the heathen inhabitants of that city for their sins; but upon their fasting and crying mightily unto the Lord, and turning every one of them from his evil way, and from the violence that was in their hands, the threatened temporal judgment was averted, *Jonah, ii. 7—10.* Our Lord upbraiding the cities Chorazin and Bethsaida tells them that if the heathen cities of Tyre and Sidon, Sodom and Gomorrah had enjoyed their privileges, they would have repented in sackcloth and ashes, and remained until that day, *Matt. xi, 21—24.* plainly intimating that the temporal judgments which came upon these cities would have been averted by their repentance.

If we are to pray for our personal enemies, we must be also warranted to pray for our national enemies—Whatever they may have deserved, it belongs not to Christians to wish their destruction, or in that view to pray for success to the instruments of death and bloodshed now prepared against them; but that the Lord may frustrate their ambitious, unjust, and bloody designs against us, and dispose their hearts to a just and equitable accommodation.

We are also commanded to make *thanksgivings* for all men. This implies that we should deeply interest ourselves in the happiness of mankind, and rejoice with them that do rejoice, as well as weep with them that weep. The world in general are unmindful of their gracious and bountiful benefactor, and instead of rendering him that tribute of praise, and thanks which is due to him for all his benefits, they often convert them into occasions and means of ingratitude and rebellion against him. It lies therefore upon Christians, the royal priesthood, to offer up to God the spiritual sacrifice of praise and thanks continually, not only for his grace and love towards themselves, but for his long-suffering patience towards a guilty world, and especially for the declaration of his grace and mercy in Christ to the chief of sinners; nor ought we to forget the goodness of his providence in superintending the government of the nations, particularly that of the nation wherein we live, under which men enjoy so much peace, and so many distinguished privileges.

2. We are commanded to pray for *kings* and all that are in authority. The Scripture declares that not many mighty, not many noble are called. Kings and those in authority both crucified the Lord of glory, and continued for a long time to persecute his followers. This might lead the first Christians to doubt if it was their duty to pray for such; and this may be one reason why the Apostle mentions them in particular. But whatever may be in this, the important nature of their office, and the influence of their administrations upon the quiet and peace of men's lives, afford sufficient reasons for their being particularly recommended to our prayers. That we may be duly impressed with a

sense of the duty of praying for kings, I shall give a short sketch of the general nature and ends of their office, and the duty we owe them.

With respect to their *office*, they are called the ordinance of God, and his ministers. “For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil,” Rom. xiii. 1—5. Thus he is appointed of God “for the punishment of evil doers, and the praise of them that do well,” 1 Pet. ii. 14.

When magistrates are called *the ordinance of God*, it does not mean that he immediately appoints them as he did Saul, David, &c. whom he singled out to sit on his throne over Israel; or that he hath given any positive directions in his word to the nations of this world about the choice of their rulers, or the particular form of their government; but only that the civil powers are the appointment of his providence who “doth according to his will among the inhabitants of the earth, ruling in the kingdoms of men, and appointing over them whomsoever he will,” Dan. iv. 35. ch. v. 21. Christians, therefore, have nothing to do with the way and manner in which kings have obtained the crown, whether by conquest, usurpation, inheritance, or election: nor have they any thing to do with the distinction of a king *in fact*, and a king *by right*. If they are kings *in fact*, they are the powers that be, to whom we are bound to be subject

as God's ordinance, and we have no other solution in the New Testament upon the point of their *right* or *title*. The Heathen emperors had usurped the dominion by conquest and bloodshed; yet these, and the governors sent by them, are the very powers whom the Apostle acknowledges as the ordinance of God. Though we are to pray for the salvation of kings, and that they may come to the knowledge of the truth; yet whether they know the truth or not, be they Christians, Mahometans, or Heathens, they are the ordinance of God as magistrates; and we are equally bound to be subject to them. The Apostle makes no exception on the score of religion, and it is certain the powers to whom he enjoined subjection at that time were wicked Heathens. Nor have we any reason to concern ourselves about the particular *form of government*; for the New Testament does not settle the polity of the nations, nor prescribe the mode of civil administration; but leaves every kingdom to be governed in its own way, whilst it informs us that "the powers that be are ordained of God," whether they be absolute or limited, monarchical, aristocratical, or democratical. The ruling powers in all these forms are of divine appointment; for "there is no power but of God."

They are "the ministers of God for *good*." Such is the wickedness and corruption of mankind, that no society could subsist without some form of government, whereby its power is united, directed, and exerted for the common good, as well in its *external defence* against attacks from without, as in maintaining its *internal order and peace* against the attempts of lawless and wicked men from within. Magistrates, therefore, are among the gifts of God's providential



goodness to men ; and a nation cannot enjoy a greater earthly blessing than good government, which secures the peaceable enjoyment of all other privileges to the honest, the peaceable, and industrious, by restraining and punishing the violence, rapine, and injustice of evil-doers. Even in executing wrath upon him that doeth evil, they are the ministers of God for good to them that do well, this being absolutely necessary to the quiet and peace of their lives ; so that the good of society is the end of government, and the great design of a merciful God in appointing it. But as it neither can, nor is intended to cure the corruption of human nature, it being only an outward restraint upon the wickedness of men, as it breaks forth into action to the prejudice of their neighbour, we are not to expect that it will produce perfect tranquillity in this sinful world. There will still be room for many injuries which no human law can provide against, and the disciples of Christ will always have occasion to bear the cross in some shape or other under the wisest and best administration. We are not to expect that even the powers themselves will always invariably pursue the good of their subjects, or that they forfeit the character of ministers of God and our subjection when they act otherwise. The worst government is still better than lawless anarchy, and so good upon the whole. The most arbitrary tyrant, however little he may regard the good of his subjects, will find it necessary for maintaining his own authority to punish the seditious and disturbers of the peace, and to protect and encourage his loyal and peaceable subjects as such. The powers that were in the days of the Apostles, however wicked in other respects, were the ministers of God for good to Paul in rescuing him

from lawless mobs and sanguinary assassins until he had fulfilled his ministry. But though the powers should act contrary to the ends of their office, and establish iniquity by a law, yet this will not free us from the obligation of civil subjection, or justify resistance. It is one of the characteristics of Christ's kingdom, whereby he distinguishes it from all others, that his servants did not fight with the sword to protect him from suffering, John, xviii. 36. and all the subjects of his kingdom are commanded to imitate him in this patient suffering and non-resistance, 1 Pet. ii. 19—24. Accordingly the first Christians never thought of resisting the civil magistrate, though their numbers might have made a very formidable opposition.

The good and *evil works* mentioned above, which fall under the cognizance of the magistrate, are purely of a civil nature, and such as relate to, and affect the peace and good order of society. With respect to matters purely religious, the magistrate's power has no place. He is not the minister of God in these. Gallio, the Roman Deputy, seems to have understood his province in this respect, Acts, xviii. 14, 15. Whatever men's religious sentiments may be, if they behave otherwise as good and dutiful subjects, they are none of the evil doers here mentioned who are to be punished by the sword of the magistrate. On the contrary, every act of violence for conscience sake is an evil work, contrary to the natural rights of mankind, and hurtful to the peace of society; it must naturally fall to the magistrate, as the common guardian of his people's rights, to redress such grievances, in maintaining the civil liberties and peace of his good subjects. The power exercised in religious matters by the kings of old Israel was never intended as a pre-

cedent for the rulers of the Gentile nations, for that was a Theocracy, and their religion was laid in the very constitution of their government. The gospel does not invest kings with any powers peculiar to the kingdom of Christ; nor does the nature of his kingdom admit of carnal weapons either for advancing or defending it, because it is spiritual, and not of this world.

We shall now consider,

III. The reasons and motives by which the duty of praying for kings, and for all that are in authority is enforced.

1. "That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty." Government is ordained of God for maintaining order, peace, and quiet in this sinful world; which without it would be filled with disorder, injustice, and violence, and therefore we are to pray for kings, and for all that are in authority, that this merciful end of their appointment may, in some measure, be answered; and that we Christians may be permitted to *lead a quiet and peaceable life* under their administration. This is the main benefit which the Apostle would have us to expect from God's ordinance of magistracy, whether those in power be Heathens or Christians. And though we are not to expect to be entirely freed from the private effects of the world's hatred, yet we ought to pray for rulers, that by their means we may be protected from open and public violence or persecution for conscience sake; and be suffered, in common with their other subjects, to live in peace and quiet, and particularly that we may be enabled to improve this peace and quietness *in the exercise of all godliness*; that is, in the open profession of the Christian faith,

and in the exercise of all that religious fear, worship, and service, which we owe more immediately to God. To this he adds, *and in honesty*; that is, in conscientious sincerity, performing every civil and social duty, which becomes and is suitable to adorn our holy religion. But for a particular view of this honesty, we may consult 1 Pet. ii. 11. to the end, and ch. iii. Thus while the churches throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had rest from persecution, they “were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, were multiplied,” Acts, ix. 31. Besides, these Christian prayers, when accompanied with such a conduct, are suited to convince the powers how patient, dutiful, and benevolent the disciples of Jesus are, and that their principles are in all respects opposite to seditious dispositions and practices; consequently have a natural tendency to procure from them that quiet and peaceable life which they pray for. Farther, the temper and disposition of mind necessary to the sincerity of these prayers which the Apostle enjoins upon Christians, must undoubtedly influence a quiet and peaceable life towards those for whom they pray, but can never lodge in the heart where disaffection to them prevails: therefore those who pretend to pray for kings while they speak evil of them, and endeavour to make the minds of the people evil affected towards them, are guilty of awful and gross hypocrisy.

2. Another argument enforcing the duty of praying for all men, and for kings, is, “For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.” Many are so far from thinking this duty good and acceptable to God, that they look upon it (especially praying for kings) as praying against the liberties and

happiness of the people, and in behalf of tyranny and oppression : but, surely, we ought to give more credit to the inspired Apostle than to men of this stamp ; for he assures us that this duty *is good*. Its object is the good of all men : and as kings are the ministers of God to us for good, so our praying for them is to pray for the good of their subjects. It is also good for Christians, as tending to procure a quiet and peaceable life to them in the exercise of all godliness and honesty. He farther affirms, that it is *acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour*. Whatever is acceptable in his sight must necessarily be good. Thus to pray, and thus to live, must be acceptable in his sight, as it corresponds with his goodness and long-suffering towards a guilty world, and with the declaration of his grace and good-will to men, who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. If, therefore, we wish to approve ourselves unto God, and to do that which is acceptable in his sight through Jesus Christ, we must make conscience of this duty.

To conclude, Let us, my dear brethren, who profess to be followers of the Apostles and first Christians, copy their example in their subjection to the ruling powers. Let us consider how they respected their office, revered their authority, and honoured their persons as the ministers of God ; what conscience they made of obeying them in every thing consistent with the laws of Christ, and of putting up benevolent prayers for them ; and with what patience and meekness they endured their persecutions, without resentment, evil-speaking, or resistance. This is the true spirit of primitive Christianity, and the effect of the supernatural grace of God. Let us beware

lest we abuse our civil and religious liberty, and the happy change of circumstances in this respect, by giving way to an opposite temper and conduct. Can the disaffected murmurers against the British Government say, that it does not permit them to lead a quiet and peaceable life? Or can they point out any part of godliness and honesty required in the Christian law, which they have not liberty to profess and practise, if they are so disposed? If none of these things can be alleged, then it is plain that their disaffection to Government must arise from their minds being too much set upon worldly happiness. Let us beware lest any mistaken notions respecting the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom should lead us to disobey him in the duties he hath enjoined upon us towards the civil powers. And lastly, as we profess to abhor the man of sin, who exalted himself above the civil power, despised government, and trampled upon the rights of princes, let us beware of imbibing any the least degree of his spirit; but, on the contrary, let us fear God and honour the king, while we also honour all men and love the brotherhood, and thus adorn the doctrine of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To whom be praise for ever. AMEN.



## SERMON XIV.

GOD THE PORTION OF HIS PEOPLE.



PSALM, XXXVII. 4.

*Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee  
the desires of thine heart.*

**HAPPINESS** is the leading object of human pursuit; nor is there any principle more deeply engraven in our nature, than a thirst after it. Unhappily, however, mankind universally since the fall are prone to seek it where it is impossible it should ever be found—in some modification of the love of this world; “the lusts of the flesh,” or the love of sensual pleasure; “the lust of the eye,” or the love of riches; and “the pride of life,” or the acquisition of honour and distinctions among their fellow creatures, **I John, ii. 16.** And though disappointment must ever attend the pursuit of it in all these courses, yet the anxious enquiry still continues, “Who will shew us any good?” Such is the natural blindness of the human heart, and such its perverseness, that no experience will correct the mistake, or convince men that the soul is not formed for enjoying complete satisfaction in any earthly good. The voice of God in the Scriptures is continually expostulating with the

children of men; "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not?" Isaiah, lv. 2. We naturally turn a deaf ear to the remonstrance; and though defeated of our object, we return again to the pursuit with redoubled ardour, nor ever quit the chace till our disappointment end in death, or the light from heaven mercifully dart into the mind, and by revealing the blessed God himself as "the portion of our souls," turn us from the error of our way, and cause us to seek our happiness in the enjoyment of his favour.

It is the glory of revelation to exhibit the blessed God as the portion of his people, and to hold forth not only his benefits, but *himself* as the object of their happiness, that their desires and affections might immediately center in him. This, however, is not upon the ground of nature, or of the law; but entirely of sovereign grace, through the Lord Jesus Christ. For though man was originally made for the enjoyment of God, and though nothing less can fully satisfy his desires, or make him completely happy, than the enjoyment of the chief good; yet, as he has forfeited this, he can have no claim to it, but upon the ground of the new covenant in Christ's blood, wherein God promises to forgive our iniquities, to write his law in our hearts, and to cause us to know him as therein revealed, and that he will be our *God* and we his people, Heb. viii. 10—12. This promise of being our God includes every thing. It gives us a property and interest in all that he is, and in all that he has, as the all-sufficient God, and warrants believers to lay claim to him as such. The highest happiness is expressed by this relation: "God himself



shall be with them, and be their God"—and again, "I will be his God and he shall be my son," Rev. xxi. 3, 7. Hos. ii. 23. Zech. xiii. 9. In short, God holds forth himself as the property of his people, under every the nearest and most endearing relation; and as the object of their highest affection and enjoyment. It is upon this gracious constitution of things that the words of my text recommend themselves to our particular regard. They contain an important exhortation to the children of God, and a promise founded upon that exhortation. I shall therefore consider,

I. What is implied in delighting in the Lord.

II. Illustrate briefly the promise made to such—"He shall give thee the desires of thine heart;" and

III. I shall notice some of the reasons and grounds of this exhortation, and of the benefits resulting from a compliance with it.

I. To delight in the Lord, must necessarily imply,

1. The true knowledge of his character. We cannot delight in any thing which we do not know. Men may indeed delight in false apprehensions of God. Self-love may lead them to form ideas of him suited to their corrupt inclinations: this, however, is not to delight in God, but in the creature of their own imagination. The true knowledge of God can only be had from the discovery he hath made of himself by his works and word, particularly in the gospel. To this last and clearest revelation the promise refers; "They shall all know me from the least of them unto the greatest of them," Jer. xxxi. 34. for herein it is that the glory of his true character shines forth in the face of Christ, 2 Cor. iv. 6. as the infinitely just and

holy God, and at the same time the father of mercies and Saviour of the guilty. It is by this revelation that we have that knowledge of the only true God, and of Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, which is life eternal, John, xvii. 3. It is only from this knowledge of him that creatures in our circumstances can truly delight in him. Every view of his power, holiness, and justice, abstract from this, must fill us with tormenting fear, and consequently excite our aversion, but can never make him the object of our delight. Delight in God must therefore imply a true knowledge and belief of the divine character as exhibited in the gospel.

2. It implies a supreme *love to God* as the perfection of all moral excellence, and the source of all happiness. We cannot delight in that which we do not love, or which we love only in a small degree; for delight is the highest exercise of love. To perceive and admire the beauty and glory of his moral character—his wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth; and to esteem his favour better than life, is to love him. This is to have the supreme desire of the soul towards him, and the remembrance of his name; without which we can have no delight in him. This love the Psalmist expresses, by his soul thirsting after God, the living God, Psalm, xlii. 2. and this love may exist where there is not much sensible enjoyment for the present.

3. It implies a knowledge of God's love towards us. Love is a painful affection whilst we remain uncertain that we are beloved by the object of our love. In that situation we may pine and languish, but cannot be said to delight. We cannot, indeed, love God at all without hoping in his mercy. But that degree of love which arises to delight implies the knowledge

of interest in the beloved object, and that we are beloved by him. Love delights in appropriating its object, like the spouse, "My beloved is mine, and I am his," Cant. ii. 16. ch. vi. 3. It cannot be satisfied without a place in his heart; "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm, for love is strong as death," ch. viii. 6. Nothing less than the love of its object can give it delight; "If a man would give all the substance of his house for love it would utterly be contemned," ver. 7. If we look through the Psalms we shall find that delight in God is ever expressed in the language of appropriation "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. The Lord liveth; and blessed be my rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted," Psalm, xviii. 1, 2, 46. The gospel gives the assurance of God's love to all that believe and obey it. The Holy Spirit sheds abroad his love in the hearts of believers, and this makes them delight in God; or, as it is expressed, joy in God through Jesus Christ by whom they have received the atonement, Rom. v. 5, 11. so that they know and believe the love which God hath to them. Again,

4. It implies our resting satisfied in God as our supreme happiness and all-sufficient portion. Thus the Psalmist expresses his delight in God, "The Lord is the portion of my inheritance," Psalm, xvi. 5. "I will go unto God my exceeding joy," Psalm, xliii. 4. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee: my flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever," Psalm, lxxiii. 25, 26.

In the New Testament Christians are exhorted to "rejoice in the Lord always;" and the gospel of salvation lays a solid foundation for this joy, even under all the distresses and afflictions of the present life, however painful and accumulated these may be. Indeed we find the thing exemplified in those that first trusted in Christ. "The disciples," it is said, "were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost," Acts, xiii. 52. Paul could say, even amidst all the persecutions and afflictions that awaited him, "as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing," 2 Cor. vi. 10. And Peter, of those who were in heaviness through manifold temptations, that, "believing, they rejoiced with joy unspeakable, and full of glory," 1 Pet. i. 8. I may further remark, that,

5. Delighting in God implies a delight in doing his will. No person can delight in the true God without hating sin, and following after holiness in heart and life. A studied conformity to the revealed will of God is absolutely essential to our having fellowship with Christ in the enjoyment of the Father's love. "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected," 1 John, ii. 4, 5. Jesus Christ is the great pattern and example to his disciples of this, as, indeed, he is of every Christian virtue. It was his meat and drink to do the will of his heavenly Father; and hence it was written of him, "I *delight* to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart," Psalm, xl. 8. And as this delight in doing his will was well-pleasing in the sight of the Divine Father, so it was always accompanied by a sense of his complacency and love. "The

Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth," John, v. 20. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again," John, x. 17. And as Jesus Christ "pleased not himself," but always did those things that were well pleasing to God, and so had his joy made full and complete in the conscious sense of the divine favour, so must all his people delight in the moral character of God, if they would know him as the portion of their souls: which brings me to notice,

II. The promise made to such—"He shall give thee the desires of thine heart."

I. Some render it, "the petitions of thy heart," as in Psalm, cxlv. 19. "He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him." He will not only grant thee the expressed petitions of thy lips, but the secret desires of thy heart. The heart of man has many uneasy feelings, from which it desires relief; and also eager desires after happiness which cannot well be put into words; nay, whilst it has not a distinct or adequate conception of what it wants; "For we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit; because he maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of God," Rom. viii. 26, 27. But what a comfort is it, that when our desires are such as are too big for expression, we may look up unto God who searcheth the heart as knowing them; for "all our desire is before him, and our groaning is not hid from him," Psalm, xxxviii. 9. And also that he is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think," Eph. iii. 20. There is a beautiful climax in this sen-

tence. He is able to do not only some things we ask, but *all* things we ask—*above all* that we ask—*abundantly* above all that we ask—*exceeding* abundantly above all that we ask—and not only so, but exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or *think*, *i. e.* conceive in our minds. The saints of old when they prayed that the salvation of God might come out of Zion, had not adequate conceptions of what they desired; for “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him,” I Cor. ii. 9. But when God performed the mercy promised to the fathers, and revealed its importance by his Spirit, then it appeared to be exceeding abundant above all that men could ask or think concerning it before; and the full breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the love manifest in it, still passeth knowledge, Eph. iii. 18, 19. But the full fruition of it in the glory to be revealed is still farther beyond our conception. Though the children of God have the earnest of it in their hearts by the Spirit which excites their desire after the full possession, yet they have no distinct view of it; they know not what they should pray for as they ought; but their desires which are excited by the Spirit, vent themselves in groanings which cannot be expressed, but which their God well understands.

2. The desires which are here promised to be granted are such as are connected with, and arise from delight in God. They must, therefore, be desires agreeable to the will of God; desires regulated by his fear and love; for he fulfils the desire of them that fear him, and blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. Such

desires shall be fully granted and completely satisfied. For, in the first place, God hath promised it, and he is faithful to his word, as well as able to perform it. "God is not a man that he should lie; neither the son of man that he should repent; hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" Numb. xxiii. 19. His word standeth for ever, and the thoughts of his heart to all generations. Behold, is any thing too hard for God?

The voice that rolls the stars along  
Speaks all the promises.

But further,

The happiness which is to be enjoyed in God is fully adequate to, nay infinitely exceeding, all the desires that the human heart can form. When our desires have for their object the things of this present world, such as pleasures, riches, or honour, we must be ever unsatisfied and disappointed in our expectations, because they are scanty and unsatisfying in their nature, uncertain in their tenure, and no way answerable to the vast desires of an immortal soul. But God is an all-sufficient and satisfying portion, exceeding the most unbounded desires of the human heart; he is also a sure and everlasting portion, of which we can never be deprived; for though flesh and heart should faint and fail, which deprives us of all earthly enjoyment, yet God continues the strength of our heart and our portion for ever.

Moreover, as the happiness which is in God is every way complete; so it must be enjoyed by those who delight in him. This is the necessary, as well as appointed effect of delighting in God. For, as hath been already remarked, delight in God, as it implies

supreme love to him, is inconsistent with delighting in sin, or what is opposite to him; for we cannot delight in two opposite objects at the same time. In proportion, therefore, as delight in God prevails in the heart, in the same proportion must *sinful* desires be weakened and subdued, and consequently the unhappiness which they occasion must be removed. Sinful desires and dispositions are a fertile source of unhappiness in the human breast. They war against the peace of the soul; for "there is no peace, saith God, to the wicked." But when a man comes to delight in God, that uneasiness which arose from unsatisfied sinful desires is removed, not by their gratification, but by their mortification. The excess of lawful desires is also removed, and every thing brought into a due subordination to the chief object of delight.

Again, when a man delights in God he must necessarily acquiesce in the dispensations of his providence. He will see that all his ways are mercy and truth to them that fear him; that even the most afflictive dispensations, though not for the present joyous, but grievous, are yet the needful discipline and chastisements of a tender father, which under his direction and management will certainly issue in their real good, and work for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Viewing them in this light, they are freed from that impatience, discontent, and repining, which the men of the world manifest under affliction. Nay, they will find a peculiar sweetness in these afflictions, as coming from the hand of him who is the object of their delight, and particularly when they discern his glory promoted by them. With regard to such dark dispensations as they cannot develop or unfold; (for sometimes "God's path is in-



the waters and his footsteps are not known," Psalm, lxxvii. 19.) they rest satisfied in the wisdom, power, faithfulness, and goodness of their God, that he will make all things (even the most seemingly adverse) work together for their good. Thus when they walk in darkness and have no light, they trust in the name of the Lord, and stay themselves on their God. They rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him: so that when they walk in darkness, as to troubles and outward dispensations, the Lord is a light unto them. They are sure that he in whom they delight has the management of all in his hand, and his character cheers the gloom, and gives them light into the final result. Should they be reduced to *poverty* and straits, yet in God they possess all things. The kingdom of God and his righteousness is their chief delight; in this they have their heart's desire. They have his promise for necessary food and raiment, ver. 3. they desire no more, and so are without anxious carefulness, trusting in the Lord, and doing good; and thus the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keeps their hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. They can say, "though the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation," Hab. iii. 17. I may further remark, that,

Delight in God moulds the will into a conformity to the divine will. Such can pray from the heart, "Thy will be done." They are fully persuaded that the will of God is always best in itself, and best for them, as being influenced by infinite goodness, and therefore

they desire to have no other will but his. Our Lord is a perfect pattern of this, even when under such dreadful agonies as were most abhorrent to his innocent nature; "Not my will, but thine be done." He came not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him; and he delighted in doing his Father's will in the very act of laying down his life a ransom for many. This was influenced by his supreme delight in God, who gave him the desire of his heart. In proportion as our will corresponds with the will of God, we also must have the desire of our heart; for as his will must infallibly be done or take effect, so we must obtain our desire in willing the same thing. And when we delight in doing his will, we must have that peace and happiness which is inseparably connected with it; and which arises from the gratification we feel in doing what is well pleasing to the object of our delight in the present sense of his favour, and in the joyful hope of enjoying him. Which leads me,

Lastly, to observe, that God will give to those who delight in him the desire of their heart in the fullest and most complete manner, when he shall bring them to the everlasting and complete enjoyment of himself in glory. Though those who delight in God are at present satisfied in him as their portion, and so are come to rest, with respect to their chief good, like the Psalmist, Psalm, lxxiii. 25. being satisfied with him alone and desiring no other; yet they have not obtained, while in this world, the full fruition of the object of their delight. Their present enjoyment is only an earnest by faith and hope, which all refer them to a future period for the full enjoyment; so that their desires are not fully granted till this arrives; but they are kept looking and longing for it, and

groaning for the day of redemption. Now God will give those who delight in him this ultimate desire of their heart, in which he will far exceed their highest present expectations and conceptions; for he is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.

I come now to notice,

III. Some of the grounds and reasons on which this exhortation is founded, and the benefits that must result from a compliance with it. And on this I remark, that we should make God the object of our delight,

1. Because he alone is *worthy* of our supreme affections, on account of his *matchless excellencies*. He is the sum of all excellence and perfection, as well as the source of every thing that is really excellent or lovely in the creature. If, therefore, we should love what is most excellent and worthy, our supreme affections must be due to God, for his name alone is excellent.

2. Because he is the *author and sustainer of our being*, and the source of all our comforts in life. We owe all that we are and all that we enjoy to him. Surely then we owe him our hearts. Do we feel emotions of gratitude for benefits received from our fellow men? What then should we feel towards Him who is the original author of all benefits, as well as of our being and capacity to enjoy them? Shall we give our hearts to his benefits instead of himself? This would be exceedingly ungrateful and unreasonable. But we should delight in God,

3. Because he is the *author of our salvation*: Salvation from the greatest misery to the enjoyment

of the highest happiness; and that through means the most wonderful and demonstrative of his love, viz. the substitution and death of his beloved Son in the stead of us rebels, who had deserved his wrath. Can we think of this and believe it without actually giving him our hearts, which after all is but a poor return for such amazing love and grace? However that be, we are constrained to own that his claim is just and reasonable; and that we must be exceedingly unjust and ungrateful if we withhold from him our supreme affection, or place it upon any other object. I add, that we ought to do this,

4. Because he is our *Father* in this wonderful economy of grace. He hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will; and under that endearing relation he puts in his claim for our hearts; "My son," says he, "give me thy heart." To whom shall we give our hearts but to our Father; to such a Father, who hath condescended to take us for his children, and makes the demand upon us in so affectionate a manner? Those who have any thing of the spirit of adoption will not only see the reasonableness of this demand, but feel the melting attractives of their Father's love in it, drawing over their hearts to him, and at the same time filling them with regret that other objects should have shared so much of their hearts, and drawn them off from their Father.

5. Consider the *advantage* and *benefit* to ourselves of complying with this endearing demand of our gracious Father. We have seen how he sues for our hearts, nothing less than our whole hearts will satisfy

him. And we must own he is infinitely worthy of them, and that he hath done much to win them. But does he make this demand for his own sake? No, brethren; he has no need of our poor worthless hearts. Our affections cannot add to his essential happiness; nor can our enmity impair it. But he wills our happiness, and to that end demands our hearts. It may possibly be asked, "What connection is there between giving our hearts to God and being happy?" Whatever the connection be, I hope, my brethren, none of you will dispute the fact. Experience must have taught you, that in proportion as your affections are estranged from God, you are uneasy and unsatisfied, and that you are never so happy in this world as when he has your heart. And it must be so, for,

God himself is the *all-sufficient portion* and everlasting happiness of his children. Now, in the very nature of things, we cannot enjoy or be happy in an object which we do not love. To be happy in God, therefore, we must give him our heart. "Delight thyself also in the Lord, and he will give thee the desires of thine heart," Psalm, xxxvii. 4.

God is also a *satisfying portion*, adequate to the vast desires of the heart. To give him our heart, therefore, is to fix our affections on a satisfying good, which must give happiness; whereas all other objects are unsatisfying, temporary, and disappointing. A great part of our misery arises from the disorder of our hearts, in misplaced affections, worldly lusts, and wicked selfish passions. But when God has our hearts, it cures these disorders, and spreads health and happiness through the whole soul. We then not

only hate every thing opposite to God, and are delivered from its power, but are *changed into his image*; for love to God is the substance of holiness, leads to imitate him, and must be attended with happiness. To conclude,

When God has our hearts, we shall have the comfortable assurance of his love to us. What is the reason that we have so little of this, but because God has so little of our hearts. This ever attends faith working by love, and must be productive of happiness, and the lively assured hope of glory. No outward duties can produce this happiness unless God has our hearts. But, on the other hand, when this is the case, obedience becomes delightful, religious ordinances refreshing to the mind, and all the happy fruits of the Spirit are lively and vigorous. Let us then be much employed in realizing the motives of love to God, with which the Scriptures furnish us, guarding against the influence of other objects, and abounding in the exercise of prayer for the continual supply of the Spirit of light, and joy, and consolation; so shall our fruit be unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. AMEN,



## SERMON XV.

THE BELIEVER'S TRIUMPHANT CHALLENGE.



ROMANS, VIII. 31—34.

*What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*

**WHEN** we take a view of the enemies and afflictions we have to struggle with in this world, and on the other hand, reflect upon our own inability to withstand or support ourselves under them, we are ready, like David to say, "I shall one day fall by the hand of Saul;" and to doubt whether we ever shall overcome and inherit the crown. The Apostle, however, presents to us a most encouraging consideration under all our afflictions and trials, ver. 28. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that

love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." This position he founds upon the most solid basis, *viz.* God's eternal and unchangeable love to his elect, predestinating them to be in these very trials conformed to the image of his Son, that they might be conformed to him in his glory when he appears. These trials, then, so far from counteracting the purposes of his love in their everlasting happiness, are subservient to the designs of it; and, under the direction of a powerful, wise, and gracious God, work together to bring it about, however distressing and painful they may be for the time. He shows that nothing can break the connection betwixt God's eternal purpose of grace to his people, and the full and final accomplishment of it in their glorification; "Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified," ver. 30. Having entered into this subject, his heart warms, and he breaks forth in a triumph of faith in God's unchangeable love and power, "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us who can be against us?" ver. 31. And to demonstrate that God *is* for us, and will not only repel all our enemies, but bestow upon us every blessing in time and eternity, he proceeds to the grand expression of his love, which may set our minds at ease as to all the rest; "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things, ver. 32. Having taken his stand upon this ground, he boldly challenges every adverse power whatever, either to condemn God's elect, or separate them from his love—"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who



is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

With a view to a short illustration of the words which I first read, I shall endeavour to shew,

I. That God's Son is his chief gift to a lost and perishing world.

II. That this gift affords the believer the assurance of all other blessings: and,

III. We shall consider a little the challenge which the Apostle grounds upon it, and particularly the foundation on which it rests.

That the Son of God is the Father's chief gift, appears,

1. From the Apostle's manner of reasoning, which supposes that all other gifts are inferior to this, otherwise it would not be conclusive. It would not follow that because God hath given *a less*, therefore he will give *a greater* gift; but it follows clearly, that if he has given the greater he will not withhold the less. The argument is from the greater to the less, and stands upon this principle, that Christ is his greatest gift.

2. It supposes him not only of more value than any one of God's gifts, but than *all* of them put together; for the Apostle puts the question, which implies a strong affirmative—"how shall he not with him also freely give us *all things*?" The *all things* which the Apostle has in his eye, are all spiritual and eternal blessings, which are indeed many and inconceivably precious; but it is no disparagement of these to say, that God's own Son is more valuable than, not

only any *one* of them considered by itself, but than *all* collectively considered ; or that the infinite fountain is greatly superior to the stream.

3. It supposes that he is also of infinitely greater worth and dignity than *all the persons* for whom he was delivered. "He delivered him up," says he, "*for us all.*" For what end? why, that he might redeem us, by laying down his life as an adequate ransom price to justice for us all. Now this he could not effect if he were not of more worth than us all put together. The redemption of the soul, even of one person, is precious and ceaseth for ever, as to any ransom that a man can give for his brother ; nay, the lives of all the men upon earth could not ransom one soul from destruction ; for the temporary sufferings of mere creatures bear no proportion to the demands of infinite justice ; and hence it is that the punishment of the wicked is eternal. Angels are the highest order of created beings that we read of ; but the Scripture does not make the difference betwixt them and us so wide, as that any one of them should be a sufficient ransom for us all. It places man but a little lower than the angels, and makes no wonder that all created spirits should minister to the heirs of salvation. How, then, could any one even of the highest of them be an adequate price for us all ? He, therefore, whose life could purchase us all, and procure for us all spiritual blessings besides, must be of more worth than all the human race collectively, and of higher dignity than angels.

4. The transcendency of the person who suffered for us, is farther set forth by the name given him in the text—God's *own* or *proper* Son. This name shows his *personal dignity* above all created beings.

Angels are indeed the sons of God, as being the creatures of his hand, and bearing an impress of his moral character; but the Apostle shows the distinction between him and them by this very name; "Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?" Heb. i. 4, 5. In the sense wherein this name is applied to him, he has no competitor or equal; for he is God's only begotten Son, his first-born, having the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power and dominion, and hence all the angels of God are commanded to worship him, Heb. i. 6. The Scripture shews that he is possessed of a nature neither angelic nor human; "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham," Heb. ii. 16. and it repeatedly tells us that this nature is divine; he being God manifest in the flesh; so that his dignity and worth must be infinite. Again,

This name points out his *relation* to the Father, and consequently his *dearness* to him, which must greatly enhance the value of the gift. A gift must not be estimated merely by its intrinsic value, but also by the value which the donor sets upon it; for in proportion to this does his bounty and good will appear. Now a tender father prizes his son at such a rate, that he would rather give all he hath, nay, his own life, than deliver him up to death, especially if he be a dutiful, affectionate, and only son. But what is the love of an earthly parent compared to God's love to his Son in whom his soul delighteth? Yet he spared him not, but delivered him up for us all.

II. This gift gives the believer the assurance of all other blessings.

1. Because all other gifts are not equal to the gift we have already received, as has been shown; so that with the Apostle we can argue assuredly from the greater to the less, "how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Till we can think of a gift more valuable than God's own Son, we have no reason to doubt that we shall obtain it. In this gift God hath not only prevented, but infinitely exceeded our highest expectations, and hath done abundantly above what we were able to ask or conceive.

2. Because in this gift we have the highest evidence of God's love to us. The Scripture always sets forth the love of God to men by the greatness of this gift, ransom, or price, as being the only adequate expression of it. There the stress is always laid, and not on the *all things* given with him—"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," John, iii. 16.—"But God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us," Rom. v. 8.—"Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren," 1 John, iii. 16.—"In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him," ch. iv. 9. If such, therefore, was the degree of God's love towards us, that he delivered up his Son for us when enemies, where will it stop short? What will he withhold after this? What good thing in all the immense treasures of heaven can surpass the measure of such love to bestow?

3. Christ was delivered up to death for this very end; that we might have all things in and with him. He died to purchase his people; to make us joint heirs with him; to bring us to enjoy them. And as from this doctrine we may learn the *dignity* and *infinite worth* of the person of Christ, that he should be accepted as an *adequate ransom* for us all; and that the gift of him should infer the bestowal of *every thing* else that can conduce to our happiness; so also we may hence see the unreasonableness of doubting the accomplishment of God's promises with respect to things future; when he hath already delivered up his Son for us. It is far more unaccountable than the unbelief of Israel in the wilderness, who after the Lord had shown on their behalf his mighty signs and wonders, had brought them out of Egypt through the divided deep, and destroyed their enemies, yet doubted his power and will to provide for them in the wilderness, or put them in possession of the promised land. The gift of his Son hath cut off every reasonable ground of doubt. Does our fear arise from the inestimable *greatness* of the promised blessings, as being too high for us to expect? Let us think but a moment upon the gift he hath already bestowed, and then say if any thing can be too great for him to bestow, or us to receive, after this. It is not at all such a wonder that he should give us the heavenly happiness, as that he should deliver his own Son to die for us. Do our doubts arise from the sense of our own *unworthiness*? Let us reflect, that this did not hinder God from conferring on us his greatest and best gift. It was when we were enemies, ungodly, and without strength that Christ died for us. May we not then argue with the Apostle, "If when we were enemies

we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, how much more, being reconciled, shall we not be saved by his life?" Rom. v. 10. for it is not such a miracle of love to raise us up to the enjoyment of eternal life now that we are reconciled, as to reconcile us to himself when enemies by the death of his only Son.

I come now,

III. To consider the nature of the Apostle's challenge, and the grounds upon which it is founded; and we may remark,

First, that the challenge here is *universal*, to every creature. The Apostle enumerates the objects of this challenge in ver. 38, 39. "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." He reckons up death, life, angels, principalities, powers, things present, things to come, height, depth; and lest we should imagine there was any thing excepted, he adds, *nor any other creature*. The challenge, therefore, respects every creature or thing without exception, in heaven, earth, or hell; past, present, or to come. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? &c. Let him stand forth.

Again, the challenge respects *accusation*. The word (*εγκαλεσει*) signifies to implead with effect, or fix a law-charge of guilt upon us at the tribunal of God, so as to convict and condemn us, as it is expressed in the next verse. Here it must not be understood as if there were no ground or cause of condemnation in ourselves. We have sinnèd in Adam, have corrupt na-

tures and sinful practices; and if God should mark iniquity, who could stand? Nor does it mean that none will attempt to accuse or condemn us; for *Satan*, who is the accuser of the brethren, is ever ready to do it. The *world* will speak all manner of evil of us, and perhaps cast and condemn us at their tribunals, as they did our Lord. Perhaps our very *brethren* may lay charges against us, and often justly. Nay, even our own consciences will find many grounds of accusation. But notwithstanding all this, the challenge stands unshaken upon an immoveable foundation; for none of these can *judicially* pass sentence of condemnation, nor have they power to put the sentence in *execution*.

Again; The challenge respects *every charge*. "Who shall lay *any thing*, &c." There is, therefore, now no condemnation of *any kind*, or for *any thing*, to them that are in Christ Jesus, ver. 1.

Lastly; The persons in behalf of whom this challenge is given are *God's elect*. Those whom he hath chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, Eph. i. 4. chosen unto salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, 2 Thess. ii. 13. These shall never come into condemnation, nor shall any pluck them out of Christ's hand, or separate them from his love.

Having premised these things, we come now to consider the grounds of this challenge; and these are,

1. *It is God that justifieth*. The emphasis here lies upon *God*—God, who is the *Creator* and *Proprietor* of all things—God, who is the universal *Sovereign*, and has the sole power of life and death—who is the sole *Lawgiver* and *Judge*, and has the *only*

right to condemn or absolve—God, to whom alone we are accountable—whom we have offended—to whom alone vengeance belongs—'tis this God himself that justifies and acquits us. Who then is he that hath either right or power to condemn? None have a right to do it; because they are not our makers, our lawgivers, or our judges. This is God's glory, which he will not give to another; so that they are at best but assuming and impertinent intermeddlers. None have *power* to do it. Before they can condemn God's elect they must first cope with the Almighty, wrest the government from his hands, and reverse the unalterable sentence of the sovereign Judge, from which there is no appeal. He says, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins," Isa. xliii. 25. and this sentence must stand in eternal force, for this very reason, because it is HIS. This, then, is the first ground of the challenge—*It is God that justifieth.* But,

2. *It is Christ that died.* It may be asked, How can man be just with God? How is it consistent with his holiness, justice, and truth to justify the ungodly? and what evidence have we of his good-will to support such a challenge? The answer is ready—"it is Christ that died." Here the stress again is laid upon *Christ*—Christ, a *divine person* of infinite dignity and merit—Christ the *creator* of the worlds, *God* over all, *God* made manifest in the flesh—Christ, the only begotten and well-beloved *Son of God.* It is this divine person, the anointed of the Father, that hath died—died for our sins, to make an atonement for them, to satisfy divine justice by bearing the punishment due to them in our stead. Herein we have the strongest demonstration of God's love, in that he



spared not his own Son, ver. 32. herein he commends it towards us, ch. v. 8. And since Christ was condemned and died on our account; since he hath answered every demand, and satisfied every claim against us, it is consonant to the strictest justice, holiness, and truth, that we should be acquitted and absolved from every charge. Who, then, can condemn? Who can frustrate the atoning efficacy of the blood of God, or depreciate its value in the estimation of his heavenly Father? Who dare urge a second claim upon us, or charge afresh that debt, which the Son of God hath so amply satisfied with the price of his life, which is of infinite and eternal value? But the Apostle proceeds--

3. *Yea, rather that is risen again.* Here is another ground of the challenge. It may be said, that in the death of Christ we have a display of God's justice and displeasure against sin; but where have we any evidence that he is fully satisfied and well-pleased? Where do we see God justify and acquitting from it? The answer, is, "He was raised again for our justification." The Apostle lays a particular emphasis upon this, (*μαλλον δε*) "*yea, rather that is risen again.*" God declared his good pleasure in him before he suffered as his Son, and as an unspotted and blameless Lamb for taking away the sins of the world. His person, undertaking, character, and qualifications, were such as became our needy circumstances, and such as were worthy of the Father's highest approbation; but when he had actually suffered and made satisfaction, God gives the most signal testimony of his good pleasure by raising him from the dead acquitted and discharged from any further demand. Thus he is brought again from the dead by that blood of the ever-

lasting covenant whereby he obtained the remission of sins; so that God not only declares that he remembers them no more, but hath demonstrated this by raising Jesus, on whom they were laid and punished, to eternal life from the death whereby they were atoned. Upon this foundation stands our acquittal. Who then dare say that Christ is not risen; or be so bold as to deny the declared import of this fact? Infidels, indeed, may do this; but they must also retain the Prince of life in the grave, hold him under the power of death, and frustrate the energy of that mighty power which raised him up, before they can condemn God's elect; for if he lives they must live also. It is added,

4. *Who is even at the right hand of God.* Here is a farther ground of triumphant challenge. Christ not only was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification, but is exalted to the highest glory and honour, and is invested with all power in heaven and on earth, to make all the effects of his obedience take place in spite of all opposition; he lives for evermore, and has the keys of hell and of death. What enemy, then, shall cope with him, or wrest the sceptre from his hand? But this must first be done before any of his sheep can perish, come into condemnation, or be plucked out of his hands. And, to close the whole, it is said,

5. *Who also maketh intercession for us.* He hath entered into the holiest of all as our High Priest and advocate with the Father, to secure our continued access to a throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy for our daily sins, and grace to help under every temptation, strait, or difficulty; and so is able to save to the uttermost, seeing he ever liveth to make interces-

sion for us. Who then shall bar our access to God? Who shall dare to counterplead his advocateship, or be able to bring a plea of greater efficacy? Or who shall be admitted to avow their accusations against us, and repel his intercession?

Such, my brethren, are the grounds of the Apostle's confident appeal; such the foundation of his triumphant challenge, which I have endeavoured briefly to illustrate. A few reflections on what hath been said shall close the present discourse. And I remark,

I. That doubts and fears generally take their rise from the weakness of our faith in this doctrine. The infinitely blessed God, the God of our salvation, hath, in the dispensations of his grace, "abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence." He hath not merely exhibited a firm foundation for our hope in his mercy, presenting us, in the gospel of his Son, with a source of everlasting consolation and good hope through grace; but "willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, he hath confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us," Heb. vi. 17, 18. Does our faith correspond, in any tolerable degree, to the foundation that is laid for it in the divine conduct; the astonishing mercy of God in the gift of his Son, a person of infinite dignity and worth; in the work he has accomplished by his death, and the sufficiency of which is so gloriously attested by his resurrection, ascension, and following glory; and with what he is now doing for us as our Advocate and Intercessor in the heavenly sanctuary? It is a de-

iciency of power or goodness in men that makes them falsify their word, and weakens our confidence in their promises. But these things can have no place in God, who is possessed of infinite power, goodness, and faithfulness; so that there is an absolute impossibility, arising from his nature and perfections, that any thing he hath promised should fail of its accomplishment. Let us then see that our faith corresponds to the grounds that are laid for it in the divine testimony and promise.

2. We ought to hold fast this confidence with an unwavering mind, because the glory of God is intimately connected with our so doing. Has he done so much to gain our confidence, and shall we insult him by doubting how far he is worthy of our reliance? The stability of the heavens and the earth is nothing in the estimation of faith, when compared with the firmness and stability of the divine promises. The heavens may depart and the earth be removed, but the word of Jehovah endureth for ever; even the word which by the gospel is preached unto us. We should account that man delirious who durst not venture his foot upon this earth, lest it should sink under him; yet this is not near so unreasonable as to doubt the stability of God's word; for the earth is but a creature, and is itself upheld by the word of God's power, which he may suspend when he pleaseth, without any impeachment of his character. But to doubt his word of promise or testimony, is to doubt his power or faithfulness; it is to doubt not only the stability of his works, but his own stability, and so to rob him of the whole glory of his nature. But faith gives God the glory that is due to his power, faithfulness, and grace; whilst it credits his *truth* in what he promises,

his *ability* to perform it, and his *grace* as the motive or spring of all.

3. Lastly, I remark that the comfort of the people of God is increasingly enjoyed in proportion as they abound in the work of faith, the labour of love, and the patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him," John, xiv. 21. The adoption of sons is the common privilege of all the children of God who really know and believe the truth, Gal. iii. 6. Rom. viii. 15. But it is in the way of their believing and loving the truth, and so falling under its influence, that they come to have "the Holy Spirit bearing witness with their spirits that they are the children of God," ver. 16. When he makes us to perceive the evidence, import, and excellence of the truth, so that we understand, believe, and love it, he thereby draws forth the testimony of our own spirit, or conscience, that we understand, believe, and love the truth. And this testimony of conscience will be more or less decided in proportion to the evidence and clearness with which the gospel shines into our mind by the Spirit; so that if we have the full assurance of faith in what the gospel testifies concerning Christ, and the love of God, manifested in giving him, shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, we must at the same time have the assured testimony of our own spirit that we know, believe, and love the gospel, and so come to know our personal interest in its blessings: "Wherefore, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure."

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## SERMON XVI.

ON THE ASSURANCE OF HOPE.



2 PETER, I. 10, 11.

*Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure, for if ye do these things ye shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be administered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

**I**T is among the innumerable weaknesses of our nature, and a sad proof of human degeneracy, that we are so apt to run into extremes upon almost every subject, however plain or however important. When the matter respects the affairs of this mortal life only, it is the less to be deplored, because the mistake may be rectified by time and experience; or, if persisted in, the effects are not of vital interest. But when the subject is religion, and stands connected with the first principles of the oracles of God, the error becomes fundamental, and its results of eternal moment.

There are two obvious extremes into which the professors of Christianity are prone to slide in regard to the assurance of hope, or a well-grounded persuasion

of personal interest in Christ. Multitudes of professors, from a mistaken view of the nature of that faith to which the promise of salvation is made, have wrought themselves up into a persuasion that they are the elect and called of God, solely on the ground of a supposed work of grace wrought in them, or their having appropriated Christ to themselves; and so their confidence of interest in him stands entirely independent of the fruits of faith, or any effects of the gospel upon them. This is a most dangerous mistake, because it tends to foster spiritual pride and presumption, fortifies the mind against the scriptural motives to watchfulness and cautious fear, too often lulls men into a state of fatal security, and slackens their diligence in, if it do not entirely supersede, the work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope, by which the first Christians made their calling and election sure to themselves and others.

But there are others who wholly discard the doctrine of the assurance of hope, as unattainable by the children of God, and would even account it self-righteous, or an infringement on the sovereignty of divine grace, in any one to press after the possession of that high privilege. This is the other extreme; and though not attended with equal danger, it is no less repugnant to the word of God, which clearly holds forth the blessing as attainable, describes it as the possession of many of those who first believed in Christ, and states with abundant plainness how it is to be enjoyed and maintained. The words of our text are well suited to correct both these mistaken views of the subject, and as it is a matter of the last importance to the professed disciples of Christ, I shall endeavour,

I. To explain the terms contained in the text and make some general remarks on it.

II. Enquire why so few attain to any certainty in their own minds of their calling and election.

III. I shall show how this assurance may be attained and preserved.

IV. Evince the great benefit of it.

FIRST, then, I am briefly to explain the leading terms contained in the text, and offer a few general remarks upon the words.

The *calling* here spoken of does not signify the *universal call* of the gospel, which is not inseparably connected with election; for Christ says that in this sense "many are called, but few chosen," or elected, Matt. xxii. 14. Nor does it mean such *outward effects* of that call in a profession as may entitle us to the charitable regards of one another; for so was the man called who had not on the wedding garment, Matt. xxii. 12. Neither does it signify merely such *inward effects* of the word as consist in illuminations, believing for a while, and receiving it with joy; for some may attain these who afterwards fall away. "They on the rock are they, which when they hear receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away," Luke, viii. 13.—"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. For the earth



which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God," Heb. vi. 4—7. But it means *effectual calling*, or true conversion, such as is connected with election and final glorification. In this sense the word is used—"Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified," Rom. viii. 30.—"Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?" ch. ix. 24.—"That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory," 1 Thess. ii. 12.—"But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth: whereunto he called you by our Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ," 2 Thess. ii. 13, 14.—"Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling; not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began," 2 Tim. i. 9. Again,

*Election* here does not mean an election to be God's church and people in respect of outward profession and privileges; for those to whom Peter wrote were sure of these already. Nor does it signify a particular election to some special work or office; for few of them had any such election. Neither does it mean God's future choice of them unto salvation in consequence of their diligence or works; for they are exhorted to diligence, not to *procure* their election, but to *make it sure*; and Paul shews that this elec-

tion is purely of *grace*, which he makes to be altogether incompatible with *works*—"Even so then at this present time also, there is a remnant according to the election of grace: and if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace: but if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work," Rom. xi. 5, 6. This election is expressly declared to be God's choice of them in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world—"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love," Eph. i. 4. In this sense the word is used also in Rom. ix. 11. "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth," Rom. ix. 11.—"But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth," 2 Thess. ii. 13. It is much the same with being *predestinated*, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren," Rom. viii. 29. But further,

To make our calling and election *sure* or *firm*, does not mean that we should do something to move God to elect and call us; for the purpose of God according to election was previous to our existence, consequently to our having done either good or evil: "For the children being not yet born, neither having done good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that

calleth," Rom. ix. 11. and he effectually calls us in time, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, 2 Tim. i. 9. But it means that we should make it sure or evident beyond all doubt that we have been already really elected and called: not to God, for he perfectly knows all whom he hath chosen and called—"Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his: and let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity," 2 Tim. ii. 19. nor to our *fellow men*; for the highest evidence we can give to others of this, as they do not know our heart, will not prove that we shall *never fall*, as is here affirmed, ver. 10, 11. It must, therefore, signify that we should make our calling and election sure to *ourselves*, to our own conscience in the sight of God. Again,

*Calling* is here put before *election*, not to point out the order of time in which they take place; for election was before the world began, whereas calling takes place at the time of our conversion. But they are so arranged to point out the order of evidence, or the way in which we come to the certainty of them. We cannot know our election at first hand; we must begin with our calling, and when we have sufficient evidence of that from its genuine concomitants and effects, which are matters of experience, then we may safely infer our election of God. Once more,

When the Apostle speaks of "an *abundant entrance* being administered into the everlasting kingdom of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," and connects it, as he evidently does, with believers giving "diligence to make their calling and election sure,"

there is an allusion in the words to the case of a ship or vessel returning from her voyage, with all her sails set, and majestically riding into port, having the winds full in her favour, so that nothing impedes or obstructs her entrance. Now when we transfer this striking metaphor to the case of believers in Christ, it implies their actual possession of the full assurance of the hope of a blessed immortality, in opposition to the case of some who are said to be saved, "yet so as by fire," or as brands snatched from the burning. And when we think of the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the haven of eternal rest, where all is peace, and harmony, and joy eternal, we may see a great beauty and propriety in the Apostle's allusion.

SECONDLY, Upon the words thus explained I observe,

1. That every believer is not perfectly sure of his own calling and election. This exhortation is not given to unbelievers, but to those who had obtained like precious faith with the apostles, ver. 1. and who were established in the present truth, ver. 13. whom in his first epistle, he calls, "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father," ch. i. 2. and whose faith, joy, hope, and love, he commends so much— "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time; wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations; that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that pe-

risheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ; whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls: of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you," ver. 3—10. He, therefore, supposes them to have the real faith of the gospel, and yet not to be perfectly certain of their own calling and election, otherwise there would be no room for this exhortation. True, indeed, whenever they believed the gospel they must have had personal joy and hope from the very nature of its testimony; and they must also have a present consciousness in their own minds that they do believe it, and so must have all that evidence of their calling and election which that inward consciousness can produce, unless they are mistaken as to the nature of faith, or inattentive to the connection stated between faith and salvation in the gospel promise. But this inward consciousness does not finish the proof of their calling and election, even though it should be attended with joy in the truth; for it remains yet to be proved that their faith and joy are not those of the stony ground hearers, but of a predominant, abiding, and fruitful nature. Hence we may see what room there is for this exhortation, and with what propriety it is addressed to those who are supposed to be real believers. Hence also we may learn that every degree of self-jealousy, cautious fear, and doubt of our own state, is not what the scripture calls unbelief, but may consist with the firmest persuasion of the gospel ground of hope, and of every thing that God hath revealed. John's first epistle clearly supposes all this.

2. The exhortation supposes that a believer *may attain* the assured knowledge of his own particular calling and election; for we can never imagine that the inspired Apostle would exhort them to give diligence to attain what is absolutely unattainable. Paul exhorts the Hebrews to the same thing—"And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end," ch. vi. 11. and many of the first Christians actually attained it, and frequently declare it—"For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord," Rom. viii. 38, 39.—"I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me," Gal. ii. 20.—"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing," 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.—"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed," 1 Pet. v. 1.

3. It also imports that diligence is necessary in order to attain this assurance. We must not, indeed, limit the sovereign Lord as to the manner, time, or degree in which he bestows this attainment on different persons, or upon the same person at different times.

But it is only in the way of giving diligence that he hath given us ground to expect it, or that he ordinarily communicates it. We are however certain that it is not bestowed upon the presumptuous solifidian who boasts of his faith without works. Nor can it be enjoyed by the slothful lukewarm professor. Nor does it attend the self-righteous diligence of the Pharisee, establishing his own righteousness. But it is to be attained by diligence in the work of faith and labour of love, and patience of hope in the Lord Jesus Christ; for by these the Apostle knew the election of the believing saints of Thessalonica—"Remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father; knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God," 1 Thess. i. 3, 4. and to this diligence he exhorts the Hebrews, that they might attain the full assurance of hope—"And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end," ch. vi. 11. But I come now to enquire, Why so few professors have the assurance of their calling and election? And here we may notice,

I. As a common cause, their ignorance of, or inattention to, some very important truths; such as

That the salvation of guilty man is owing solely to the *sovereign mercy* and grace of God, and not to any thing naturally in themselves. While men are seeking to find a reason or cause in themselves why God should elect or call them more than those who perish, they cannot have worthy and exalted views of the sovereignty and freedom of divine grace, which is the fountain and first-spring of all our salvation; and in this situation they can never be certain of their call-

ing and election, because they can never find a just reason or ground for it in themselves.

Another thing they overlook, is, that this sovereign free grace of God has an *honourable vent* to the guilty through the finished work and mediation of the Son of God. If men imagine that they have any part of that work to do which was proper to Christ in order to make their peace with God, or procure his favour and acceptance, it is impossible that by all their diligence upon this plan they should make their calling and election sure; for all that diligence which carries in it any evidence of their calling and election must proceed from this principle, that the work which justifies the ungodly is already completely finished by Christ in his death and resurrection. It must be the work of the faith of this truth and the labour of love to it.

They forget that men are *interested* in Christ, and justified not working, but simply believing what the gospel testifies concerning him. If men are thinking to obtain some qualifications in order to prepare them for Christ, or if they are engaged in some laborious exercise, under the notion of faith, in order to be justified, or obtain an interest in him, such labour, call it by what name they will, can never produce any scriptural evidence of their calling and election.

I add, That after having believed in Christ they must *continue to live by the faith* of him, and not by their own righteousness or strength. Many admit the necessity of Christ and his finished work as the ground of their peace, and acceptance with God at first, but they think they must do the rest themselves. Hence they lose the comfort they had at first in him, by turning aside to a scheme of self-righteousness and self-



dependance, as did the Galatians, and so leave their first love like the Ephesians, even while outwardly engaged in Christian duties. But all their diligence in this way, however strict, zealous, and active they may be, will never make their calling and election sure; because the life, spirit, and principle of Christian obedience is gone. Paul lived by the faith of Christ, by Christ's living in him, and so could say he loved him, and gave himself for him, Gal. ii. 20. Jesus tells us, we must abide in him if we would bring forth fruit, for separate from him we can do nothing, John, xv. 4, 5. But I proceed to notice as another reason why so few professors have this assurance,

2. Their indulging something wherein their heart condemns them, as not sincere and honest towards God. This mars their confidence towards him—"For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things," 1 John, iii. 20. and it prevents the testimony of their conscience—"For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward," 2 Cor. i. 12. There is a great difference between this and the sense of indwelling sin, which is the believer's burden—"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Rom. vii. 24. and which well consists with the assurance of our calling and election.

3. Their sloth and carelessness in the way of attaining this assurance. The text itself shews that we must give diligence to make our calling and election sure; and in order to this, we must not only believe the gospel, and hold fast the beginning of our confi-

dence stedfast unto the end of our Christian course ; but we must add to our faith, *virtue*—that is, courage, or fortitude, in the open profession of it, (as the original term here imports) and that in opposition to our being ashamed of Christ, his name, institutions, or laws ; but going forth to him without the camp, bearing his reproach, confessing his name before a scoffing world : and to boldness in our good profession must be added, an increase of *knowledge*, as in ver. 2. of this chapter—“ the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord ”—a growing up to all riches of the full assurance of understanding to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, Col. ii. 2, 3. To these things must also be added, *temperance*, or the discreet regulation of our bodily appetites and passions, “ keeping under the body and bringing it into subjection,” I Cor. ix. 27. mortifying all its irregular propensities, Col. iii. 5. Eph. iii. 5. To temperance must be added *patience*, a “ patient continuance in well doing,” Rom. ii. 7. in opposition to fainting or growing weary in our minds, Gal. vi. 9. and after the example of the Captain of our salvation, “ running with patience the race that is set before us,” Heb. xii. 1—3. And to this patient state of mind we must join the continual exercise of *godliness*, adoring, loving, and confiding in the Most High, delighting in his worship, and imitating all his imitable perfections, 1 Tim. vi. 11. Titus, ii. 12.—“ and to godliness *brotherly kindness and charity*,” things on which an important stress is always laid in the New Testament. For not only has Christ given his new commandment of brotherly love to be obeyed by all his disciples, and laid it down as the rule or standard whereby they are to

be distinguished as belonging to him ; but the Apostle John expressly says, “ We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren,” 1 John, iii. 14. thus fixing our attention on it as one of the leading proofs or evidences of the truth of our faith. These then are the things about which our diligence must be continually exercised, and without which we never can attain to the scriptural assurance of hope. It is a blessing that is not dropped into the mouth of the yawning sluggard, but is only to be attained by those who are zealous in their Christian profession, and who are giving diligence to obtain it. But I remark further, that another reason why so few possess this privilege, is,

4. Their judging of themselves by uncertain evidences of their calling and election. Things which hypocrites may attain, and which the children of God may often want in a great measure, and which, therefore, do not determine their state with any certainty, however desirable in themselves ; such as lively, joyful, and warm frames and feelings, and meltings of soul in devotional exercises. These things are often very fluctuating, frequently arise from constitutional and mechanical causes, and are only to be judged of by their objects and effects : and we may add in connection with this, that another reason is,

5. Their looking for some immediate and direct revelation of their calling and election by the Spirit, distinct from his witnessing with their spirits to the characters of the children of God openly and plainly laid down in the word, and by which we may know that we have passed from death unto life. Hence many pretend to be sure of their calling and election by some immediate voice, whisper, or suggestion, or

by some passage of Scripture impressed upon their mind which tells them so. And hence others who look for such immediate intimations, and have not got them, remain in great uncertainty as to their calling and election. I now proceed to show,

THIRDLY; How this assurance of our calling and election may be attained and preserved according to the Scripture.

Upon this head I lay down the following general position; *viz.* That our calling and election are only to be made sure by their genuine and inseparable effects on our hearts and lives. These effects are the scriptural evidences or proofs by which the Spirit witnesseth with our consciences that we are the chosen and called children of God. The Spirit of God by means of the word is the productive cause of these effects, and in his regenerating work whereby he begets us to the faith we may be said to be passive; but his consequent influences upon believers do not supersede the exercise of their own faculties, nor their activity and diligence in these effects, but are of such a nature as to excite these. Hence we find so many exhortations in Scripture to do these things which the Lord himself promiseth to do. Upon these principles Paul exhorts Christians, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," using this encouraging argument, "for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure," Phil. ii, 12, 13. where we see that the working of the Spirit of God in believers so far from setting aside their activity, is of such a nature as to produce in them both willing and doing. In like manner though the proof of our calling and election are the fruits of the Spirit, yet we are exhorted to give diligence to make our

calling and election sure by bringing forth these fruits, or by *doing these things*. But to be more explicit:—

1. In order to make sure our calling and election, we must *hold fast the faith* of the Son of God and his finished work as the ground of our acceptance with God, of our standing in his favour, and of our everlasting enjoyment of him. Faith itself is the first and *radical evidence* of our calling and election, for we are chosen unto salvation *through the belief of the truth*, 2 Thess. ii. 13. It has also the *promise* of salvation—“He that believeth shall be saved,” Mark, xvi. 16. Further, it is the *root* and *principle* of all other evidences of our calling and election, which can be proofs only as they are the fruits of faith. He, therefore, who can say in sincerity and with an honest heart that he believes in his heart the testimony of God concerning his Son, and the way of salvation by him; that he counts it a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation; and that all his hope for life and salvation hinges upon it; such a person has the witness in himself of his calling and election, and he is warranted to take the comfort of it; “for the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall never be ashamed,” Rom. x. 11. But it should be observed, that as there are degrees of faith, so this evidence will be weaker or stronger according to these degrees of belief; and therefore Christians should give all diligence in the use of every appointed means for strengthening and increasing their faith—“Let that, therefore, abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life,” 1 John, ii. 24, 25.

2. *Love to Christ* is another solid evidence of our calling and election. He keepeth mercy for thousands of them that love him—"If any man love God the same is known of him," 1 Cor. viii. 4. "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose," Rom. viii. 28. where we see, them that love God are *called*, and that *according to his purpose* wherein he foreknew, elected, and predestinated them. This love is a principal part of sanctification, and they are "from the beginning chosen to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit," 2 Thess. ii. 13. It is an immediate fruit of faith and proves it genuine; for faith worketh by love, Gal. v. 6. Faith apprehends the motives of love, and so excites it. This love manifests itself in the first instance in the way of a *supreme esteem* of the divine character as displayed in the work of salvation, and in *earnest desire* after the divine favour as their chief happiness; but when they attain the assurance of interest in God's love, then it partakes of the nature of lively *gratitude* and *delight*. Now he who can honestly say that he esteems the character of God and his salvation above every thing; that he desires the enjoyment of his favour and conformity to his image as his chief happiness, and so counts all things but loss and dung for the excellent knowledge of Christ, that he may win him, and be found in him; then he may conclude according to the Scripture that he is called according to God's purpose. But still he should give diligence to attain higher discoveries of the love of God, that his love may be increased, and this proof strengthened. So of every other fruit of the Spirit.

3. *Obedience* to his commands, as the fruit of faith

and love, is another solid evidence of our calling and election—"Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city," Rev. xxii. 14. Faith without works is dead, James, ii. for by works is faith made perfect. Love is also manifested in this way—"He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me," John, xiv. 21. "This is the love of God that we keep his commandments," 1 John, v. 3. "But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know we that we are in him. If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him," 1 John, ii. 5, 29. "We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him: and hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us," ch. iii. 14, 18, 19, 24. "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us: God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him," ch. iv. 13, 16. "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father," 1 Thess. i. 3. And in this way the Apostle directs to make our calling and election sure—"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that

by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity," 1 Pet. i. 4—7. Every act of obedience arising from faith and love carries its own evidence along with it of our calling and election, our conscience bears witness to it, and is corroborated by the witness of the Spirit.

I shall merely remark further on this head, that the assurance of hope can only be retained in the way of our *continuing* in the faith, love, and obedience of the gospel. The same divine truth which first relieved us, when sitting in darkness and the shadow of death—which gave hope to the dying thief and the murderers of the Lord of glory, must be held fast by us unto the end, if we would enjoy the comfortable assurance of hope, Heb. iii. 14. for no sooner do we quit our hold of that which first gave us confidence, and became the spring of good hope, namely, the truth testified concerning Christ as delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification, than our minds become darkened and we lose the comfortable sense of the divine favour. And as we must live daily by the faith of the Son of God, so he must have the first place in our affections; love to Him must be the sweet and constraining motive to our obedience, for in no other way can we enjoy the manifestations of his love. "If ye love me keep my commandments, and I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even



the Spirit of truth. He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him," **John, xiv. 15—21.** Thus we may see how this assurance of hope is founded on the enjoyment of the love of God, and not only keeps pace with that obedience which is the effect of that love, but is strengthened, encouraged, and promoted by our adding to our faith every Christian virtue. I remark,

**FOURTHLY;** That this assurance is a high state of privilege and benefit on several accounts.

**1.** With respect to our liveliness in the Christian life. If our conscience be properly awake to the state in which we stand as transgressors of the divine law—the consequences of sin—the terrors of the Lord—and the misery which awaits the wicked in a future state, it cannot be a matter of small concern or indifference to us, to know whether we are of the number of Christ's sheep to whom he has promised to give eternal life or not. A mere peradventure will not satisfy us in this case. Nothing less than "a good hope through grace" will set our hearts at rest, and make us happy, zealous, and persevering in the path of obedience. "I will run in the ways of thy commandments" says the Psalmist, "when thou shalt enlarge my heart," **Psalm, cxix. 32.**

**2.** This assurance of an interest in the divine favour is of great importance as a motive of gratitude and thankfulness to God, and of our joy and happiness in him. Christians are commanded to rejoice evermore, and in every thing to give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning them, **1 Thess. v. 18.** And this was a remarkable feature in the

primitive disciples; but then they could say, "we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect," 1 John, iv. 16, 17." "*We know* that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," 2 Cor. v. 1. "When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory," Col. iii. 4.

3. It is of much importance in regard to our support under afflictions and the troubles of life. These things, indeed, are the common lot of man; but then how widely different are they as dispensed out to the righteous and the wicked. To the former they are effects of the divine displeasure on account of their sins—to the latter they are tokens of their heavenly Father's paternal regard—appointed by him—under his special direction and management, and among the "all things that work together for their good," Rom. viii. 28. It is hence the first christians were led to say, "we rejoice in hope of the glory of God; and not only so but we glory in tribulation also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience (or proof of the sincerity of our faith) and experience hope: and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us—And not only so, but we also *joy in God* through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the atonement," Rom. v. 2—5. 11. Such is the privilege of the people of God; but while it remains a matter of doubt and uncertainty to any, whether they themselves are of that number, how is it possible they should take the consolation that belongs to it? I add lastly, that

4. The comfortable assurance of hope is absolutely necessary to our loving Christ's second appearance. For while we are at an uncertainty whether we are his or not, it is impossible we should be "looking for" that solemn and interesting event, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints and admired in all them that believe. We shall rather deprecate the approach of that day, and be disposed to adopt the language of one of old—"Oh, spare me, that I may recover strength before I go hence and be no more!" Psalm, xxxix. 13. The believers to whom Peter wrote are described by him as "rejoicing with joy unspeakable and *full of glory*," 1 Pet. i. 8. And under all their sufferings they were called upon to exult that "when Christ should be revealed in his glory they also should be glad with exceeding joy," ch. iv. 13. And ye, beloved, "building up yourselves in your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life," Jude, ver. 20, 21. To conclude; And now, little children, abide in him; that when he shall appear we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. AMEN.



ON DISCONFORMITY TO THE WORLD.

*Being the substance of several Sermons,*

ON

ROMANS, XII. 2.



*Be not conformed to this world ; but be ye transformed,  
by the renewing of you mind ; that ye may prove  
what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will  
of God.*

THE apostle, having finished the doctrinal part of this epistle, begins the exhortatory part of it in the foregoing verse with these words ; “ I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.” This exhortation is introduced with a most engaging address. He does not imperiously command them, with the authority of a father or master, but *beseeches* them as his *brethren* in Christ. He enforces the exhortation, not by motives drawn from the wrath of an offended judge, but by *the mercies of God*, which he had so fully set before them in the preceding part of the epistle, and to which he evidently refers by the word *therefore*. He draws them by the cords of love, and the bands of a man, even the tender mercies of their God and Fa-

ther, who had loved them so ardently as to give his Son to die for them while enemies, that he might deliver them from the guilt and power of sin, and reconcile them to himself, as his purchased, peculiar people. The *mercies of God* include every endearment, obligation and encouragement, that can most forcibly touch the freest and most generous movements of the soul, so as sweetly to constrain to the obedience of love. The exhortation itself is, that they should *present*, not their beasts, as in the legal sacrifices, but *their bodies, i. e.* their whole persons, consisting of soul and body, as is evident from what follows: not slain, like the sacrifices which were offered for sin, as if God was not already well-pleased in the one offering of his Son; but a *living sacrifice*, by “yielding themselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and their members as instruments of righteousness unto God;” chap. vi. 13. and so “to glorify him with their bodies and spirits, which are his.” 1 Cor. vi. 20. And as the legal sacrifices were dedicated to the Lord, and to be without spot and blemish, Num. xix. 2. so their bodies must be presented *holy*, cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, 2 Cor. vii. 1. and wholly devoted to the service of the Lord; in which case they would be a sacrifice *acceptable unto God*, by Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 5. This entire devoting of themselves and services unto God, he calls *their reasonable service*, as being most fit and proper in itself, founded upon every obligation of duty, gratitude and interest; and also because it is the service of men’s rational faculties, in opposition to the sacrifice of dead, irrational, animals, which was but a bodily exercise, not fully understood, and which profited little. 1 Tim. iv. 8.

In the words of our text he continues the same ex-

hortation, though he varies the expressions: “ And be ye not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed, by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.” As if he should say; In order to your presenting your bodies a living, holy, and acceptable sacrifice unto God, ye must renounce this present evil world, keep yourselves unspotted from it, and beware of conforming to it, in any respect wherein it is opposed to the love of the Fãther, and conformity to Christ. On the contrary, ye must be transformed by the renewing of your minds, having your understanding and judgment of things, and consequently your will and affections, totally changed; that thus you may *discern, approve,* and so comply with the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.

It is evident from the whole of this context, that conformity to this world is stated in opposition to the renewing of the spirit of our mind—our discerning and approving—and to our being moved by his mercies in Christ Jesus to dedicate ourselves entirely to his service. I shall therefore endeavour to shew

FIRST, What the Apostle means by the world; and, SECONDLY, Instance some particulars wherein we must not be conformed to it.

By the *world*, we are to understand, primarily, The *men* of the world, who lie in the wicked one, 1 John, v. 19. who are of him, like Cain, chap. iii. 12. and so are called the seed of the serpent, Gen. iii. 15. who is that spirit that works in them, Eph. ii. 2. and rules over them, as their god or prince, John, xii. 31. 2 Cor. iv. 4. These are called the world, not only as composing the greater part of the inhabitants of this world, but chiefly as minding or af-

fecting earthly things, and pursuing them as their portion and happiness: accordingly David describes the *men of the world* as having their *portion in this life*, Psalm, xvii. 14.

But the world also signifies the corrupt *sentiments, dispositions* and *practices* of the men of the world. The Apostle, speaking of false teachers, says, “ They are of the world; therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them;” 1 John, iv. 6. In this passage the term *world* is used in two different senses, *viz.* the *men* of the world, as before described, of whom were the false teachers and those who heard them; and there is also the world which these false teachers speak of, which must signify the corrupt maxims, inclinations, and practices of the world, which these pretended guides had adopted, and reduced into a system of doctrine to suit the gust and inclinations of their carnal hearers. This is what the Apostle calls the *course of this world*, wherein men in a state of nature walk, when fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind, Eph. ii. 2, 3. or when gratifying the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, 1 John, ii. 16. The world, in short, includes every thing that is opposite to God, and conformity to his good, and acceptable, and perfect will. From this world the children of God are distinguished, as not being of it, but chosen out of it, redeemed from it, and hated by it; John, xv. 19. Gal. i. 4. To it they are crucified, Gal. vi. 14. This world Christ hath overcome, John, xvi. 33. and his people overcome it by faith in him, 1 John, v. 4.

By conformity to the world is meant—our imbibing its sentiments and maxims, that wisdom of the world

which is foolishness with God, 1 Cor. i. 20. and which is earthly, sensual and devilish, James, iii. 15. together with our agreement with it in our dispositions and inclinations by coveting the things of the world, as our chief good and happiness, in opposition to the living God, and our giving way to all those worldly lusts and corrupt passions, which are opposite to the love of the Father, and that spring from the carnal mind, which is enmity against him.—It also implies our walking in the course of the world, and following its example in pursuing after its pleasures, riches and honours; and in making provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

The next thing proposed was, to adduce some particulars wherein we must not be conformed to the world. But before I enter upon these, I shall, to prevent mistakes on the one hand, or cavils on the other, mention some things wherein this disconformity does not consist.

By disconformity to the world, we are not to understand an affectation of singularity, or a frivolous nicety in things that are indifferent. It does not consist in a demure and sullen countenance, disfiguring our faces like the Pharisees; nor in a stiff, formal and forbidding carriage and deportment: nor does it lie in sequestering ourselves from the society and converse of the world, shutting ourselves up from human society, like monks or hermits, and so rendering ourselves useless in it. Our Lord and his apostles kept up a free and open converse with the world; and the Apostle says, we must needs go out of the world, if we do not upon proper occasions keep company even with the fornicators and idolaters of this world. We are members of civil society, and ought to be exem-



plary and useful in our different stations and relations therein, shining as lights in the world. Nor does it consist in a stoical apathy, as if we were to divest ourselves of human passions and affections, which are essential ingredients in our nature, implanted in us by the Creator for good and wise purposes, and therefore must not be extinguished, but moderated, directed and regulated by the law of God: neither does it consist in denying ourselves the lawful and moderate use of the good things of this life, which God of his goodness bestows upon us, and hath created to be received with thanksgiving. We are made up of earthly bodies, as well as immortal souls, and these depend for their subsistence upon the good things of this life, and are endued with feelings and appetites, which powerfully stimulate us to take care of, and provide for them, in common with the rest of the world. False religions have dictated a neglecting of the body; but christianity allows us to use this world, only that we should take care not to abuse it, or consume it upon our lusts. Nor does this disconformity consist in our being slothful and careless in our worldly callings, under pretext of heavenly mindedness and trusting in providence, as if we were to be fed and clothed like Israel in the wilderness: on the contrary, we are exhorted to be diligent in business, and to work with our hands, that we may have to give to him that needeth; and the Apostle says, he that worketh not, neither should he eat; nay that the man that provideth not for his own, especially they of his own house, hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel. Many things are our duty in common with the world; and the adorning of our profession, in a great measure, consists in our

abounding in those good works and relative duties which are approved of and esteemed in the world. It is an unsafe rule to run counter to the world in every thing. We must not suppose that the world have lost all sense of right and wrong. The Apostle shews, that there is a natural law written in the heart of every man, even those who have not the benefit of revelation, which is the foundation of guilt as well as conviction of sin; and this must be much enlarged in those places where the scriptures have got access. Truth, justice, sobriety, kindness, mercy, and benevolence, however little practised, are yet highly approved of among all mankind. They have excellent laws for the regulation of human society, and magistracy, for the punishment of evil doers, and a praise of them that do well; and we ought to be subject to them in every thing that does not interfere with the law of Christ, and that not only for wrath, but for conscience sake. We are not in all respects to disregard their judgment and report of our characters; we find the Apostle more than once laying stress upon the report of those that are without; 1 Tim. iii. 7. 3 John, ver. 12. I shall conclude these observations with the Apostle's exhortation, Phil. iv. 8. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true,—honest (*i. e.* decent, seemly, or venerable)—just,—pure (or chaste)—lovely (or friendly)—of good report (*viz.* in the world)—if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

As this disconformity does not consist in affected oddities, in opposition to the profane world; so neither does it lie in undue freedoms, and unwarrantable liberties, in opposition to the religious pharisaical world. Some, to avoid the austere and so-

lemn grimace of the Pharisee, have in a great measure thrown off the gravity of the Christian; and, to shun conformity to the religious, have bordered on the appearance of the profane world. But if wolves appear in sheeps' clothing, is that a reason for us to appear as wolves? If Pharisees appear grave and dejected, shall we appear as harlequins and buffoons? If they fast, and afflict their bodies, shall we pamper and indulge ours in intemperance, feeding ourselves without fear? If they keep aloof from the profane revels and amusements of life, shall we indulge ourselves, like Solomon, in all the luxuries and pleasures of it; such as gambling, plays, balls, assemblies, and other hurtful dissipations? If they are long and frequent in prayers, shall we be short and seldom in that duty? If they are very solicitous to work out a righteousness of their own, whereby they may please God and obtain acceptance, shall we, who are freely justified, be no way solicitous how we should walk and please God, by working out our own salvation with fear and trembling?

I come now directly to shew wherein we are not to be conformed to the world. And,

I. We are not to be conformed to this world in our governing *principles* and *sentiments*. This is clearly held forth in the text, where, in opposition to our being conformed to this world, it is added, "but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." The word *mind* properly signifies the *understanding*, or *judgment*, as is clear from Luke, xxiv. 45. "Then opened he their understanding." Rom. xiv. 5. "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind," or judgment. 1 Cor. xiv 15—19. "I will pray with the Spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also." "I

had rather speak five words with my understanding," &c. Rev. xiii. 18. "Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast." In Col. iii. 10. the Apostle describes the new man by the renovation of the understanding—"and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him." Though the new man includes a renovation of all the powers of the soul, and also of the conduct, in consequence thereof; yet this renovation, in the order of nature, must begin first of all in the understanding or judgment, which is that faculty whereby we discern the truth, and are capable of conviction, before it can have any rational access to, or influence upon the will and affections; for we cannot choose or love that which we do not perceive and approve. Indeed, it is by means of the renewal of our understanding, that our dispositions and conduct are renewed or changed. The Apostle says, that it is by the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ, that men are changed into the same image; 2 Cor. iii. 18. ch. iv. 6.—that it is their *knowing* the grace of God in truth that influences their fruitfulness, Col. i. 6. or, as our Lord expresses it, their hearing the word and *understanding* it: Matt. xiii. 33. The person who is thus renewed in his mind, has such a perception by the Spirit of the gospel revelation, such conviction of its truth and reality, such discernment of the importance, interesting nature, and excellency of its doctrine, as effectually determines the choice, and engages the supreme affections of his soul. This we find was the case with Paul when he came to be renewed in his mind. He suffered cheerfully the loss of all things in this world which he formerly valued himself upon, or counted gain, and es-

teemed them now but as loss and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, Phil. iii. 7—9. This knowledge effectually took his heart off this world, so that he no more minded or affected earthly things, like the Judaizers, ver. 19.

Our disconformity to this world must therefore begin with the renovation of our mind, without which all disconformity in other respects will be only an affectation of singularity, without any radical or essential difference. Our sentiments, principles, and views must be essentially different from those which govern the men of the world, both with respect to God and ourselves, our duty and our happiness. The world are represented as ignorant of God, John, xvii. 25. having the understanding darkened, and alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart, Eph. iv. 18. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned," 1 Cor. ii. 14. The God of this world is represented as having blinded the minds of them that believe not, 2 Cor. iv. 4. and he rules the darkness of this world, Eph. vi. 12. It is in the darkness of men's minds that he hath his empire and dominion over them; and so to deliver men from the power of darkness, or to turn them from darkness to light, is to turn them from the power of Satan unto God, Col. i. 13. Acts, xxvi. 18. As the world are ignorant of God, so they are ignorant of themselves, their state and condition, the end of their being, their true interest and happiness, or the path that leads to it; for the way of peace they have not known, Rom. iii. 17.

This ignorance is not owing to any defect in their natural faculties or mental powers: on the contrary, they are generally persons of greater natural parts, sagacity, and penetration, than many of the children of God. Our Lord calls them the *wise* and *prudent*, in comparison of the *babes* to whom the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven were revealed, Matt. xi. 25.—and says, that “the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light,” Luke, xvi. 8. Paul also calls them the *wise* and *prudent*, 1 Cor. i. 19, 20. But then their wisdom is only the *wisdom of this world*, which cometh to nought, chap. ii. 6. It is only calculated for, and employed about the things of this present life, whilst it leads them to look upon every thing beyond this either as uncertainties upon which nothing can be risked, or the idle dreams of weak visionaries. They are called wise men *after the flesh*; their whole principles are carnal, and are suggested and regulated by corrupt nature and sense; hence it is also called *the wisdom of the flesh*, which is death, and enmity against God, in opposition to the wisdom of the Spirit, which is life and peace, Rom. viii. 6, 7. James describes the wisdom of the world in three words, ch. iii. 5. “This wisdom descendeth not from above; but is *earthly*, *sensual*, and *devilish*: *earthly*, as being entirely circumscribed to the things of this present world; *sensual*, or *natural*, as being employed about the gratification of fleshly lusts and sensual delights; *devilish*, as regulated by pride, ambition, malice, and envy. This wisdom esteems the gospel foolishness, 1 Cor. ii. 14. because it is every way contrary to it; so that it must be unlearned, and men must become fools, in respect to it, before they can discern or relish the gospel, or become

wise unto salvation, 1 Cor. xiii. 18. for God hath made foolish this wisdom of the world, ch. i. 20. This wisdom may even employ itself about fine schemes of morality; but then it is all founded on schemes of present ease and conveniency, or pride.

The world, then, do not act without principles and motives; but then they are principles of darkness and death. The very light that is in them is darkness, Matt. vi. 23. And the more their judgment and reason are exercised upon these principles, the more do they run counter to God, and the farther are they from true wisdom.

II. We must not be conformed to the world in the *dispositions* and *temper* of our mind. This is also included in the exhortation, “be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.” The word *mind* frequently takes in the will and affections. The Apostle, speaking of the law of his mind, describes it to be that whereby he not only discerned and approved the law of God, as holy, just, and good, but that also whereby he *consented* to it, *willed* to do it, and *hated* the opposite, Rom. vii. 15—22. He calls it his *inward man*, which *delighted* in the law of God, ver. 22. The renewing of the mind, therefore, must signify a renovation of the whole inward man, consisting of judgment, will, and affections, and is the same with that change which the Scripture calls the *new creature*, or *new man*. This is farther evident from Eph. iv. 22—24. where the Apostle, exhorting the Ephesians to “put off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,” in opposition to this old man, he directs them, almost in the words of our text, “to be renewed in the spirit of their mind;” which he further explains by their “putting on the new man, which after God is

created in righteousness and holiness of the truth." In short, to be renewed in our mind, or in the spirit of our mind, is to have such a perception, by the Spirit, of the gospel revelation, such conviction of its truth and reality, such discernment of the importance, interesting nature, and excellency of its subject, as effectually determines the choice, and engages the supreme affections of the soul.

I shall not here enumerate all the dispositions and affections of the mind, wherein we must be disconformed to the world. These are various, and differently modified according to the different objects and motives which excite them; and they are in general good or bad, not so much absolutely considered in themselves, as in relation to the nature and quality of these objects, and their suitableness and proportion to them.

Thus *love* and *hatred* are proper and lawful affections of the soul, when suitably placed: but if we love what is bad, and hate what is good, then they are both sinful dispositions; or, if the degree of our love and hatred bears no proportion even to their lawful objects; if we love or hate them less or more than a just estimate of their nature and qualities would dictate, then are these affections criminal, just in proportion to their defect or excess. The same observation will apply to almost every other disposition of the mind: but I do not choose to treat this subject in an abstract manner, but shall speak of the affections and dispositions in connexion with their effects upon the life and conduct. What I would observe upon this branch of the subject is, that there is some fundamental, some radical and predominant disposition or affection, in the heart of man, by which all the rest are influenced and governed, and to which they are



subservient. It is this governing principle that forms the character of man, whether good or bad; and it is good or bad according to the nature or quality of the object upon which this predominant affection is placed.

Now there are but two objects upon which men place their supreme affection—*God* and this *world*. The Scripture represents these as opposite the one to the other, and makes the supreme love of the one absolutely inconsistent with that of the other. “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God,” James, iv. 4. “If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him,” 1 John, ii. 15.

The greater part of mankind place their supreme affections on this world, and pursue after the things of it as their chief happiness. They love its pleasures, riches, and honours, more than God; and hence they are denominated *worldly* and *ungodly*, or *enemies to God*. From this predominant love of the world, we might trace all the various corruptions of the human heart, which spring from it as from their common root.

The principle which stands in opposition to this, is the supreme and prevailing love of God. This is the principle, as well as sum of the whole law, and called the first and great commandment—“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength,” Deut. vi. 5. Matt. xxii. 37. The Apostle says, “that in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth any thing, but a new creature,” Gal. vi. 15.—and in chap. v. 6. he explains this new creature to be *faith working by love*.

This is that which the Lord promises as the truth of circumcision in the flesh—"I will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul," Deut. xxx. 6. In opposition to his writing the law upon tables of stone he promises—Jer. xxxi. 33. "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it on their hearts." This must signify his implanting in the heart the proper principle of obedience; and what is that but love? Love is the end of the commandment, 1 Tim. i. 5. and the fulfilling of the law, Gal. iv. 14. Every disconformity to God's law arises from an imperfection in love. I distinguish betwixt *perfect* love and *predominant* love. Our love to God is not absolutely perfect in this world; yet it may predominate above all our affections to any other object. In as far, therefore, as it prevails, the love of the present world must subside, and every rival to God in our hearts must be dethroned. True love to God includes in it the following things—

A superlative esteem of his *favour*, as better than life. Even the love of the creature cannot be satisfied without the favour of the beloved object. How much more must this be the case in divine love, where the favour of the object beloved is of the highest importance! David esteemed God's loving-kindness better than life, Psalm, lxxiii. 3.

The soul's acquiescence in God as the source of all its comfort and happiness. Whilst others place their happiness in earthly enjoyments, and are saying, "Who will shew us any good?" their souls center in God as their supreme good, and their language is, "Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us," Ps. iv. 6. The most agreeable things in life can give them no happiness without this, and they find this

suffice for their happiness though every earthly comfort should fail, Hab. iii. 17.

When the soul is satisfied in God as its portion, its chief aim will be to honour and glorify him, and every other aim will be subordinate to this. The obligations to love and obey him, arising from the excellencies of his nature, our creation, preservation, and redemption by him, turns the aim of the soul towards him as its chief end, for whose glory it was created. We seek not our own honour, but his; and are happy in being debased in this world, if he is thereby glorified. Then only do we begin to live, not to ourselves, but to him.

True love to God is influenced, as well by what he is *in himself*, as by what he is *to us*. We shall love him, not only on account of what he hath done for us, and the good we expect from him; but also on account of his own glorious perfections. Indeed, the love of creatures, in our guilty circumstances, must begin with the former; but if it is true and genuine, it will also take in the latter; for to love God, is not only to love happiness, but to love that Being who is the source of it—to love his holiness, purity, justice, and truth—and, consequently, to hate the opposite. In short, it is to love the whole of that glorious character whereby he has made himself known unto us. The happiness which a believer enjoys and expects, is not a happiness simply *from* God, but a happiness *in* him; it is the enjoyment of God himself. They desire nothing more for their happiness and supreme delight, than to know more of him, to behold his glory, to contemplate his matchless excellencies, and to admire his beauty, which could not be the case unless they loved him for what he is in himself. Believers highly

prize, as they greatly need, the blessings they receive from God; they love the inexhaustible Fountain better than all the streams: they are double blessings to them, as coming from such a hand, and as being tokens of his love who is the supreme object of their delight.

This superlative love to God is a principal part of that transformation, by the *renewing of our mind*, which the Apostle speaks of in the text, and opposes to conformity to this world. All our knowledge and faith are subservient to it as their end, and they are vain without it. It is easy to see how this supreme love to God must operate upon the whole heart, regulate and govern all its affections and desires, and bring all the powers of the inward man into subserviency to it. I shall instance in a few particulars.

First, then, It will effectually destroy our love to, and delight in sin. As sin is opposite to the nature of God, it is impossible to love him in any degree, without hating sin in proportion; for we cannot serve two masters that are opposite in their natures and interests, nor delight at the same time in contrary objects. As nothing is more opposite to God than sin, that will be the object of our greatest aversion. We shall hate it in all its shapes, and desire nothing more than a complete deliverance from it. Wicked men cannot hate sin, as such, for this very reason, because they do not love God. They may hate the *punishment* of sin and the inconveniences that often attend it; but this creates no aversion to sin, as such, but to God himself. Thus the devils believe, fear, and hate God—but not sin.

Secondly; It will mortify and subdue our affections to the things of this world. These things are of two kinds, *lawful and unlawful*. With regard

to *lawful* things, it will regulate and moderate our desires after them. It will make us receive them all, as from the hand of God, with gratitude and thankfulness; use them with moderation, and for his own glory, as his stewards; and be happy and contented with whatever he allots us, and acquiesce in his will in whatever he denies us; because our happiness lies in himself. With regard to *unlawful* things, it will make us keep at the utmost distance from them, as dishonouring to the object of our love, debasing in their nature, and destructive of our own peace and intercourse with God. Our pleasure and delight in God takes off our mind from *sensual pleasures*, which war against the soul. We cannot *covet the riches* of the world, when we enjoy the true happiness placed in God, and the never-fading inheritance in prospect. The love of honour, grandeur, and pre-eminence in this world, can have no place where the mind is supremely set upon that honour which cometh from God only, and where the supreme aim of the soul is the honour and glory of God. This will make us think very little of the flattering breath and esteem of ignorant, erring mortals, or of all the phantastical, vanishing splendour of this world, in comparison of the glory that is to be revealed. It will make envy, hatred, emulation, pride, and ambition, to subside; because it takes off the heart from the objects which excite these. Self-righteousness is cured also by the love of God; because the more they love him, the more will they see of their obligations to obey him, and consequently think less of all their services, which fall so infinitely short of their obligations.

Supreme love to God is not only opposite to the

love of sin, but it is the principle of universal holiness in heart and life. Indeed, it is itself the very sum of all holiness, as it respects the inward man; for all holy dispositions are but so many modifications of love to God. To love God, is to love his *character*. It is to love holiness, justice, goodness, and truth. Love naturally leads us to *imitate* the beloved object. It makes us obsequious to the will of those we love—and particularly to imitate him in his love to his children.

III. We must not be conformed to this world in our lives and practice. There are three principal things which influence the conduct of the world: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, 1 John, ii. 16. *i. e.* the love of sensual pleasures, riches, and honours; I shall therefore speak of the disconformity of our practice in relation to these three, in doing which there will be occasion to notice also the corresponding dispositions, and some other particulars that do not so obviously fall under these three heads, but have some affinity to one or all of them.

I. We are not to conform to the world in pursuing the lusts of *the flesh*. By these we are to understand all inordinate and irregular sensual appetites, together with the objects that are suited to gratify them. God hath given us, in common with inferior animals, certain natural propensities towards such objects as are necessary for the preservation, support, and nourishment of our bodies, and other purposes; these we call *appetites*.—When these appetites are kept in subordination, and regulated by the law of God, they are not only innocent, but useful and necessary in our present state, being subservient to many wise and good ends. But when they come to be immoderate, gain an

ascendancy over the intellectual faculties and govern the man, then are they criminal and hurtful, and are called lusts; and because they take their rise from, and have their seat in, the animal part of our constitution, which we have in common with the brutes, are therefore called the *lusts of the flesh*. Christians themselves are not altogether free from the lusts of the flesh, but are in danger of being entangled and overcome by them, and hence so many cautions against them in the Scriptures; I shall therefore specify some of these fleshly lusts—shew how they may be distinguished from lawful appetites—and point out a few considerations to induce us to mortify and subdue them.

1. Our Lord mentions two of them in a caution to his disciples, Luke, xxi. 34. “Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness.” Here gluttony and drunkenness are forbidden, not simply in habit, but every single act of it, *at any time*. So that there is no particular time or occasion that can excuse us in exceeding the bounds of moderation and temperance in eating or drinking. Some are represented as “feeding themselves without fear,” Jude, 12th verse, and so unworthy of the society of Christians. We should have the fear of the Lord before us in eating and drinking; and whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, do all to the glory of God, I Cor. x. 31. Another lust of the flesh is that of *unchastity or uncleanness*, and this the Apostle connects with intemperance in eating and drinking, which minister fuel to it, Rom. xiii. 13. “Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness,” &c. and to the Ephesians he says, chap.

v. 8. "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints." They were to keep at the utmost distance from this unclean lust, and not so much as name it, unless it were to shew their abhorrence of it. Our Lord says, that the lustful look and lascivious desire, are the commission of it in the sight of God, Matt. v. 28. Peter gives a catalogue of these fleshly lusts, wherein Christians formerly followed the course of the world, 1 Pet. iv. 3, 4. "For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries; wherein they think it strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you." These lusts of the flesh are called *youthful lusts*, because men are more liable to them in their youth, when their appetites are stronger, and their judgment and experience less perfect; and therefore Timothy, who was a young man, is exhorted to *flee youthful lusts*, 2 Tim. ii. 22. There is something in this expression very noticeable. Every one cannot confront and combat them. It would be foolhardiness to brave their power, whilst we dally with their objects and incentives. They are not to be overcome upon their own ground. We ought, therefore, to *flee* them, *i. e.* avoid every temptation and incentive to them. That is a glorious act of cowardice whereby we avoid sin. The Scriptures mention several of these incentives which ought to be avoided: such as evil communications, which corrupt good manners, 1 Cor. xv. 23. 2 Pet. ii. 18.—Chambering, revelling, and banquetings, which are incentives to gluttony and drunkenness, and these again to uncleanness. Among these revellings may be reckoned plays.



balls, and other fashionable entertainments, which are so many ways of making provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof.—All unchaste words and hints ought also to be avoided. The Apostle, prohibiting fornication, adds, “Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient,” Eph. v. 4. In short, we ought to flee and keep at the utmost distance from every incentive to these lusts.

2. Lusts are distinguished from lawful appetites. By their *objects*, when they are such as are unlawful, or prohibited by the law of God. Thus Israel lusted after evil things in the wilderness, 1 Cor. x. 6. Thus the Heathen gave themselves up to unnatural lusts, Rom. i. 24.—By their *degree*, when they exceed the bounds of moderation and temperance, even towards lawful objects. Men may abuse even lawful enjoyments, by an unlawful use of them; by studiously exciting their appetites beyond the proper calls of nature, till they strengthen and inflame them into inveterate habits.—When they place their chief delight and happiness in the gratification of them, and are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, and make their belly their god, Phil. iii. 19.—When they gain the dominion over the whole man, so that the nobler powers of the mind come to be entirely subservient to them. Then the man is entirely sunk into the brute, and he is made to serve his divers lusts and pleasures. Tit. iii. 3.

3. Let us therefore remember, That our serving these lusts is contrary to the end of our redemption. Christ gave himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity, Tit. ii. 14.—Contrary to the influence of the grace of the gospel, which teaches to deny worldly lusts, ver. 12.—Unsuitable to our new state in Christ

Jesus, Eph. iv. 21, 22. 1 Cor. vi. 15.—To our relation to God as his sons and daughters, 2 Cor. vii. 1.—To our state here as pilgrims and strangers, 1 Pet. ii. 11—To the hope of appearing with Christ in glory, Col. iii. 4—6.—That they entirely carnalize and debase the mind, unfit us for spiritual enjoyments, and destroy our peace; and that the certain end of them is death, Rom. vi. 21. In sowing to the flesh we shall reap corruption, and shall have no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God, Eph. v. 5.

II. We must not be conformed to the world in pursuing the *lust of the eyes*. By the lust of the eyes we are to understand *avarice* or *covetousness*, with its object, worldly *riches* or *wealth*. That this is the meaning of that expression is clear from many passages of Scripture. The preacher, describing an avaricious miser, says, “There is one alone, and there is not a second; yea, he hath neither child nor brother; yet there is no end of his labour, neither is his *eye* satisfied with riches,” Eccles. iv. 8. “He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver, nor he that loveth abundance with increase; and what good is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding them with their eyes?” ch. v. 10, 11. *i. e.* the gratifying the *lust of their eyes*, or *avarice*. Hence those who are covetous and churlish are said to have an *evil eye*, Deut. xv. 9. “Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought.” So chap. xxviii. 54, 56. when a person’s bowels of compassion are shut up against the needy, so that he will not give them any supply when perishing with want, his eye is said to be evil towards them. Solomon

says, "Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye, neither desire thou his dainty meat; for as he thinketh in his heart, so is he; Eat and drink, saith he, but his heart is not with thee," Prov. xxiii. 6, 7. Here it evidently signifies a narrow, churlish disposition, that gives only with a grudge. In chap. xxviii. 22. it is said, "He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye;" where it plainly means that he is covetous or avaricious. Our Lord opposes the evil eye to laying up treasures in heaven, and connects it with serving Mammon, Matt. vi. 23. In the parable of the labourers in the vineyard, one of them is represented as murmuring that another had gotten as much wages as himself who had borne the burden and heat of the day; to which the master replied, "Is thine evil because I am good?" Matt. xx. 15. *i. e.* Art thou covetous and envious because I am bountiful? Our Lord also enumerates the evil eye among the corruptions which proceed out of the heart of man, Mark, vii. 22. The evil eye is opposed to the good or bountiful eye, Prov. xxii. 9. "He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor." It is also opposed to the *single* or *simple* eye, Matt. vi. 22. which is necessary to giving or distributing, Rom. xii. 8. "He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity," *i. e.* with liberality. In Prov. xi. 25. the Seventy have 'the simple or *single soul*,' where we render it the *liberal soul*. Paul commends the Macedonians for the riches of their liberality; the original word is *simplicity*, 2 Cor. viii. 2. The same original word is translated *bountifulness*, and *liberal*, chap. ix. 11, 13. and James uses it, chap. i. 5. where he saith, God giveth to all men, *singly* or *simply*, *i. e.* *liberally*, as we have it. It is plain, therefore, that the *lust of*

*the eyes* is the love of riches, and that the *evil eye* is the opposite of bountifulness or liberality.

Paul, writing to Timothy, says, "The love of money is the root of all evil," 1 Tim. vi. 10. This maxim will hold good, whether we consider it in relation to God, to ourselves, or to others.

1. In relation to God, we are told the love of riches, or covetousness, is no less than *idolatry*, Eph. v. 5. because it occupies that place in the heart and affections which belongs only to God, the supreme good. John says, that the lust of the eyes is one of those things which are inconsistent with the love of the Father, 1 John, ii. 15, 16. and our Lord declares, that no man can love and serve both God and Mammon, Matt. vi. 24. He that loves riches must also trust in them when he hath attained them. Solomon says, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and is safe." But in opposition to this he observes, that "The rich man's wealth is his strong city, and as a high wall in his own conceit," Prov. xviii. 11. The Apostle also opposes trusting in riches to trusting in the living God, 1 Tim. vi. 17. That which is the ground of a man's confidence, which sets his heart at ease against the fear of future want, and to which he has recourse for relief in all his difficulties, that must be his trust, that must be his god. But the covetous man makes this use of riches, and therefore covetousness must be idolatry.

2. It is the root of all evil in relation to ourselves. The love of riches robs a man of his true happiness, because it draws his mind away from God, in whom alone real happiness is to be found, and leads him to seek for it in that which cannot yield it, nor is any way suited to satisfy his desires; for "he that loveth silver

shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase," Eccles. v. 10. So that he must always be *discontented* with his present situation. Further, the possession of riches is an occasion of *pride* and high-mindedness which few can resist. The Apostle exhorts Timothy to "charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded," 1 Tim. vi. 17. There are even few professors who do not value themselves upon their possessions, and who do not think themselves entitled to honour and esteem on their account.—In short, the desire of riches is a source of many complicated evils to a man in this life; the Apostle says, "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition"—and while some have coveted after money, "they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows," 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10. And with respect to the life to come, the covetous man is declared not to have "any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God," Eph. v. 5.

3. Lastly, It is the root of all evil with respect to our neighbour. The love of money supplants natural affection to our nearest relations, when they interfere with our obtaining it.—It makes men envy those who are wealthy, Psalm, lxxiii. 3.—shuts up all bowels of compassion towards the poor and needy—makes them keep back even the just hire of the labourer, or give it grudgingly, James, v. 4.—is the source of much rigour and oppression with respect to dependants, and of injustice, fraud, falsehood, and deceit in their dealings; and it often impels to the more atrocious acts of theft, robbery, and murder, Prov. i. 11.—20. These are effects of covetousness which all the world have

agreed to condemn, as the evils resulting from them are sufficiently felt in society.

But there is another effect of this sordid disposition, which, though equally contrary to the law of Christ with the former, is, nevertheless, esteemed wise, prudent, and creditable in the world: and that is, laying up treasures on earth, or accumulating riches. This is often connected with the strictest profession of religion, is adopted even as a religious maxim by many, and is generally a concomitant of self-righteousness. The Pharisees were the most creditable and strictly religious sect among the Jews; yet when our Lord was shewing his disciples the inconsistency of serving God and Mammon, it is said, "The Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things; and they derided him," Luke, xvi. 14. They thought Christ's doctrine upon this head so ridiculous, and contrary to all common sense, that it was not worthy of a sober reply, and therefore they derided him. But this is not peculiar to the ancient Pharisees. Our Lord's doctrine upon this subject is held in as high contempt by the bulk of the strict professors of this day as ever it was by the ancient Pharisees. They, indeed, do not avowedly contradict Christ; but they show how ridiculous it would be to understand him as he speaks, and so explain his words in such a sense as comports best with their own covetousness, and effectually removes the ground of the Pharisees' derision. As we ourselves, brethren, have the seeds of covetousness in our hearts no less than other men—as we are in danger of being carried down the stream of this world's course—as some of us may not have duly attended to our Lord's doctrine upon laying up treasures—and as others of us, who know our Lord's will in this respect, may still

need to be put in mind of it, that we may be stimulated to our duty;—I shall advert to some of the principal passages in which our Lord handles this subject.

The first passage I shall mention, is Luke, xii. 15—21. where our Lord introduces the subject with a solemn caution; “Take heed and beware of covetousness.” This caution was occasioned by one of the company saying to him, “Master, speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me.” Though this request may be improperly addressed to Jesus, who was not a secular judge; yet it seems to be reasonable and just in itself; but our Lord’s caution imports, That covetousness may be discovered in a man’s solicitude and eagerness even to obtain his just right. Such a state of mind as would lead us to contend for and pursue our right to the utmost rigour, is contrary to the spirit of that exhortation, “If a man sue thee at law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also,” Matt. v. 40. and to what the Apostle says, 1 Cor. vi. 7. “Now, therefore, there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another; why do ye not rather suffer wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?” The caution imports, further, that covetousness is very deceitful, and steals in upon us under the fairest pretences, such as justice, prudence, frugality, providing against foreseen want, &c. wherefore he says, “Take heed and beware of it.” These words also imply that we are surrounded on every side with temptations to it; such as the maxims and practice of the world, particularly the professing world—the connexion and commerce we have with them—and, above all, our natural attachment to this present life.

The argument our Lord uses against it is, “For a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.” By *life* here our Lord intends the *happiness* or *satisfaction* of a man’s life. This, he says, consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth, *i. e.* his real happiness is not enlarged in proportion to his wealth; and, indeed, experience will sufficiently evince the truth of this to all who are capable of solid reflection: but though the covetous man may perceive this in theory, and acknowledge it in words, yet he is governed by the opposite sentiment. Every wicked inclination is supported by some false principle with respect to life and happiness. The sensualist, in pursuing the lust of the flesh, is influenced by the notion that a man’s life lies in pleasure, and in gratifying his sensual appetites; and the man of honour and gaiety, pursuing the pride of life, imagines that a man’s life consists in these airy vanities; and both of them value their possessions only in so far as they are subservient to the gratification of their respective predominant lusts. Even so the covetous man in pursuing the lust of the eyes, is influenced by this delusive error, that a man’s life consists in the abundance of the things which he possesseth; and though he may also love honour, and sensual pleasures, yet he will forego both, in a great measure, that he may gratify his predominant lust, that of the eyes, in which he places his life and happiness. But here our Lord shews, that a man’s true life or happiness consists not in the possession of earthly wealth. The natural wants of the body are but few, and easily supplied; and he that is not contented with moderate food and raiment is under the dominion of a lust, which the greatest affluence will



not satisfy, and is seeking happiness in that wherein it is not to be found. How few are really convinced of this truth, notwithstanding their experience of repeated disappointments! But our Lord's words intimate also that a man's true life and happiness consists in something which this life cannot afford him. The life which Christ came to give his people was indeed typified by that life which Israel enjoyed in possessing the good things of the earthly inheritance as from the hand of God, and as tokens of his favour; but the antitype of this is spiritual blessings in heavenly places, Eph. i. 3. The Psalmist says *that* life lies in the favour of God, and in the light of his countenance, and not in the abundance of corn and wine, Psalm, xxx. 5. and lxiii. 3. and iv. 6, 7. Our Lord speaks of the *true riches* as opposed to the unrighteous Mammon, Luke, xvi. 11. and of the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof, in opposition to the things of this world, Matt. vi. 33. and makes our true life and happiness to lie in the enjoyment of these.

To illustrate his purpose in the foregoing exhortation against covetousness, our Lord delivers a parable concerning a man whose ground brought forth plentifully, see Luke, xii. 16—22. upon which we may observe,

That this man used no unlawful means to attain his wealth. He did not gain it by fraud, oppression, extortion or injustice. It came to him from the ground, by the blessing of God upon his honest labour and industry.—There is no calling whatever so innocent, and at the same time so useful, as that of the husbandman. Many other employments take their rise from, and are supported by the vices of man; but this has its foundation in his necessities, and is of universal

utility. "The profit of the earth," says the preacher, "is for all; the King himself is served by the field." Eccles. v. 9.—Moreover, he seems to be pretty well contented and satisfied with his acquisition, and is not represented as insatiably grasping after more, like the person described, Eccles. v. 10. Nor does he appear to be a miser, as to enjoying the good of his labour. Solomon says, "There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men; a man to whom God hath given riches, wealth and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it." Eccles. vi. 1, 2. But this was far from being the case with the person in the parable; for he is represented as saying to his soul, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry;" ver. 19.—If then he obtained his wealth by lawful means; if he was contented with, and had a heart to enjoy it, wherein did his guilt consist? For understanding this, we must notice, that providence laid more to his hand than he could lawfully appropriate to his own use. His ground brought forth more plentifully than was necessary for his present maintenance in a moderate way, and for sowing his fields the ensuing season. His crime, therefore, lay in the use which he resolved to make of the overplus; for, instead of considering himself as a steward entrusted by God with that wealth, for the benefit of the needy, he looks upon himself as sole lord and proprietor of it, and so resolves to lay it up in store for his own use; "I will," says he, "pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods;" ver. 18. Thus, instead of bestowing the surplus upon

the poor, and so making rich towards God, he resolves to lay it up in store for himself, that he may be rich in this world.

Again; his design in laying up riches was to give his soul ease from the perplexing fears of future want; for he does it with a view to say to his soul, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease;" ver. 19. Instead of trusting in the living God, who gave him all things richly to enjoy, 1 Tim. vi. 17. he wanted a security in his own hand that may make his soul easy, and raise him above an immediate dependance on Providence.—Another end he had in accumulating was, that he might consume it upon his lusts, and indulge himself in the pleasures of sensual gratifications; for he pleases himself in the prospect of saying to his soul, "eat, drink and be merry,"—He also promises himself many happy days in the enjoyment of his wealth, ease and luxury; for he says to his soul, "Thou hast much goods laid up for many years." Our Lord directs his disciples to pray to their heavenly Father for daily bread, and to trust to him for it, without taking thought for to-morrow, Matt. vi. 11, 34. But this man knew nothing of trusting in God; he forms a scheme of happiness independent of this, provides for many years to come, and solaces himself with the fancied duration as well as degree of his enjoyment. In this computation, however, he only reckons upon the magnitude of his stores, but entirely forgets the uncertain tenure he had of his life, for which his riches could give no security, even for one hour, and without the continuance of which, he could not enjoy them. Accordingly, we are told that God said unto him, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall these things be which

thou hast provided?" ver. 20.—Now though the generality of the world may reckon this man's conduct wise and prudent, yet God pronounces him a *fool*; and surely this judgment is according to truth; for what can be more foolish than for a man thus to lay up riches and trust in them, when he has no security for his life to enjoy them one day—when he may lose them, even before he dies, by a thousand accidents—and when he might have given them to the poor, and so laid them up in heaven, where they would be secure, and turn to his account in a future life?—Lastly, our Lord gives the general application of this parable in these words; “So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.” ver. 21. To *lay up treasures for himself*, is to accumulate earthly riches merely for his own use in this world; this is what our Lord condemns, and opposes to a man's being *rich towards God*. viz. by giving alms, and so providing for himself a treasure in the heavens, which faileth not, ver. 33. for no man can be disposed to accumulate riches in this world, and, at the same time, be rich in good works.

But that we may have a fuller view of our Lord's doctrine upon this subject, we may turn to Matthew, vi. 19—21. “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” Upon which I observe,

I. That the *laying up* here mentioned signifies to treasure or store up riches or wealth, and answers to

the man's building larger barns to bestow his increasing goods, Luke, xii. 18. and which our Lord there calls laying up treasure for himself, ver. 21.

2. The *treasure* here spoken of is not the heart or affections, as some affirm, and accordingly explain it by Col. iii. 2. but there is no place in scripture that calls a man's heart his treasure. The treasure here meant is something else, something that may be stolen by the thief, and corrupted by the moth and rust. Besides, our Lord here plainly distinguishes betwixt the heart and the treasure when he says, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also?" Which could have no meaning at all if the heart and treasure were the same; for how would it sound to say, "Where your heart is, there will your heart be also?" But it is evident that our Lord speaks of the treasure as one thing, and of the heart which loves it as another thing. This treasure, therefore, can be nothing else than worldly riches, which he afterwards calls mammon, ver. 24. such as that for which the man resolved to build barns; or money and clothing, which are subject to be corrupted by the rust and the moth. See James, v. 2, 3.

3. Our Lord does not forbid us to lay up this treasure, but only directs us where to lay it up, in order to secure it for our real benefit; and that is in heaven. He absolutely prohibits our treasuring it up on earth, and enforces the prohibition by a motive which every money-loving man will be influenced by in other cases, *viz.* that the thief, the moth, and the rust, might prey upon these. And he exhorts them to lay it up in heaven, where it would be perfectly secure, and beyond the reach of all these things. See also Luke, xii. 33, 34.

4. The manner in which we are to lay up our treasure in heaven, is by giving alms; so he explains it himself, Luke, xii. 33. "Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide for yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens, which faileth not; where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth." So he says to the young rich man, "Sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven," Matthew, xix. 21. From both which passages it is plain, that the way to lay up our treasures in heaven is to distribute to the needy. It is in being rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, that we lay up for ourselves a good foundation against the time to come, and lay hold on eternal life, 1 Tim. vi. 18, 19. People are afraid of impoverishing themselves, but the Scripture speaks of making rich by giving—"He that soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully," 2 Cor. ix. 6.—"He that hath pity on the poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again," Prov. xix. 17. He will repay them with large interest, when he calls them to inherit the kingdom, Matt. xxv. 34—41. So that this liberality is the way to make rich towards God, Luke, xii. 21.

5. Our Lord here shews, that all attempts to lay up treasures both on earth and in heaven, are vain, impossible, and delusive; and that the one is absolutely incompatible with the other. He does not admit that a man may be rich towards God, and yet lay up treasures on earth; or that he may lay up for himself treasures on earth, and yet be rich towards God; but he states these two ways of treasuring up as opposite, and inconsistent with each other. Many think they may have a treasure on earth, and yet their hearts be set

on things above; but this our Lord absolutely denies, and affirms, that their heart and treasure will always go together, "For," says he, "where your treasure is, there will your heart be also," ver. 21. Luke, xii. 35. They imagine they can store up wealth, and not make a treasure of it; but this is a distinction without a difference; for our Lord calls that which men lay up a treasure, and if they claim a property in it, it must be *their treasure*; but if they value it so little as they pretend, why are they so careful to accumulate and retain it? why do they not lay it up in heaven, by disposing of it as Christ directs? The greater part of religious people would have the exhortation understood not in an absolute, but comparative sense; as if our Lord meant to say, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth only, but lay them up *also*, and *chiefly* in heaven." But, as our Lord declares that our heart will certainly be where our treasure is, this gloss would make it lawful for us to divide our hearts betwixt earth and heaven; whereas his argument is founded upon the evil of having our hearts set upon earth at all. He also shews, that if our hearts are thus divided betwixt earth and heaven, they will certainly cleave at last to this earth. This he intimates, ver. 22, 23. for if our heart be divided, our *eye* will not be *single*. Whatever respect we may pretend to God and to heavenly treasure, we shall have an *eye* to this earth, and what we have laid up on it. This will effectually *darken* our mind as to the heavenly treasure to which this *eye is evil*, as being opposite to that bounty in almsgiving whereby we lay it up in heaven, and it will make us give grudgingly and sow sparingly. And it will at last cut out the love of the Father; for, "He that loveth the world, or the things of

the world, the love of the Father is not in him," 1 John, ii. 15. But this appears still clearer from what Christ says in ver. 24. "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." So far is he from saying, we should not *only* serve Mammon, by making rich in this world, but *also* and *principally* serve God, that he sets God and Mammon in direct opposition to one another, as two masters that cannot be served together; so that if we will indeed serve one of them, we must of necessity despise and hate the other. It is, therefore, one of the greatest deceits of the human heart, to think that we can lay up treasure on earth and in heaven at the same time; or that we can have a treasure on earth, whilst our hearts are in heaven, or a *supreme* affection to God, and a *subordinate* one in accumulating earthly riches.

In Luke xvi. our Lord directs us how we are to act with respect unto the unrighteous Mammon, by the example of an unjust steward, who was turned out of his stewardship for wasting his master's goods. This steward had not been used to labour, and he was ashamed to beg for his subsistence. In this dilemma he sent for his lord's debtors, and deducted from every one of their accounts a greater or less proportion of their just debts, that so he might make them his friends, and be received into their houses when his master should put him out of his place. This was no doubt an act of gross fraud and injustice; but it is not the *fraud*, it is the *wisdom* of the steward's conduct which we are called to imitate; so it is said, "The Lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely." Though his dishonesty ought



to be detested, yet his wise foresight, care, and contrivance about the concerns of *this life*, deserve our imitation with respect to those of *another*, and may justly reach conviction to Christians; “for,” it is added, “the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light,” ver. 8. Not to mention nominal professors, even true believers themselves do not in general discover so much prudence, sagacity, and assiduity in making rich towards God, as worldly-wise men do in accumulating earthly riches.

Our Lord delivers the application of this parable in language borrowed from the parable itself—“And I say unto you, make to yourselves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations,” ver. 9. Riches are here called the Mammon of unrighteousness, not only because they are the motive and means of much injustice and iniquity among men; but also by way of contrast to the *true* riches, ver. 11. they being empty, unsatisfying, and precarious, deceiving the expectation of such as place their happiness in them. Yet we may turn them to our real advantage, for our Lord directs us to make ourselves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness. And how are we to do that? Why, by giving them to the poor, as the whole scope of this passage shews. However foolish this use of riches may be esteemed among men, yet it is the most beneficial to ourselves of all others, and that wherein we are called to imitate the wisdom of the unjust steward in providing for futurity; for it is added, “that when ye fail,” *i. e.* when ye die, or appear in judgment, “they may receive you into everlasting habitations;” in other words, God may receive you into the everlasting mansions, John, xiv. 2, 3. Matt. xxv.

34, 41.—the holy angels may conduct you thither Luke, xvi. 22. and the poor saints may receive you in the other world, whom you have often relieved in this. To enforce this use of the unrighteous Mammon, he adds, “He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much. If, therefore, ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous Mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? and if you have not been faithful in that which is another man’s, who shall give you that which is your own?” ver. 10—12. Our Lord here represents us as stewards for God of what we possess. Our riches are only given us in trust, and are called, not our own, but *another’s*. To use them, therefore, as our own, by laying them up for ourselves on earth, or consuming them on our lusts, and so withholding them from the needy, is to be unfaithful in that which is another man’s, and, like the unjust steward, to betray our trust, and waste our master’s goods. Our Lord asks such unfaithful stewards, who will commit to your trust the true riches? “Who shall give you that which is your own?” The true riches is the better and enduring substance in heaven, Heb. x. 34. and it is called *our own*, because not given in trust, but for our own enjoyment; nor for a season, but for ever, it being that good part which shall never be taken from us.

Those who are rich in this world have great need to attend to our Lord’s doctrine respecting covetousness. Much is intrusted to them, and of them much will be required. Yet it frequently happens, that avarice increases with the means of gratifying it. People in this situation often plume themselves upon their knowledge of the world, and their liberality of sentiment; but too few of them are acquainted with the wants of the

needy, or manifest much liberality in relieving them. It ought to alarm such persons, and make them tremble, to consider what aspect the New Testament bears to men in their circumstances. When the young rich man in the gospel gave up with eternal life rather than part with his large possessions, our Lord said to his disciples, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God," Mark, x. 23—26. Christ is not speaking here of such only as *treasure up* riches, but also of those *that have* riches, a *rich man*, whether these riches were his own acquisition, or got by inheritance from his ancestors. In whatever way a man is possessed of riches, they are surely *a treasure*; and if we consider what our Lord says on the *treasure* and *heart* being together, Matt. vi. 21. and how, in this place, he connects the *having riches* with *trusting in* them, we must admit that it is as criminal to *retain* as to *treasure up* riches for ourselves. Some think that the command, "Sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor," ver. 21. was peculiarly directed to this young rich man, in order to discover his real character, and that therefore Christians in ordinary cases have nothing to do with it. But what then will they make of the command, Luke, xii. 33. "Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide for yourselves bags that wax not old, a treasure in the heavens, that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth; for where <sup>is</sup> your treasure is, there will your

heart be also." Here is a general command given to all Christ's little flock, to "sell that they have, and give alms," and it is enforced by the same argument with the prohibition to lay up treasure on earth. So that it is evident, a man can no more retain riches already laid up to his hand, without his heart being on them than he can lay them up for himself on earth without this; for our Lord makes the former as great an evidence of covetousness as the latter. From this we may see how difficult it is for them who have riches to enter the kingdom of God; it is even as hard and rare a thing as for a man to *possess* treasures without *trusting* in them. This doctrine astonished Christ's disciples out of measure, Mark, x. 26. and it is as astonishing even to strict professors at this day as ever it was.

If it be asked, Can a man be a Christian who lays up riches for himself in this world? I answer, according to our Lord's doctrine, HE CANNOT; for he inseparably connects this with serving Mammon, and placing the heart and confidence in riches.—Must he then give away all that he hath, and become poor? In some extraordinary cases this may be necessary; and so we find those who had possessions and goods in the church at Jerusalem, sold them, and parted them to all men, as every man had need, Acts, ii. 45. chap. iv. 34, 35. This was literally complying with what our Lord enjoins upon the young rich man; but in ordinary cases a man is not called to give away all that he hath. There is surely a medium betwixt this and laying up riches for ourselves on earth; and this medium is pointed out under the idea of our acting as stewards of the good things we possess; for we are commanded, "As every man hath received the gift,

even so to minister the same, one to another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God," 1 Pet. iv. 10. A faithful steward will not look upon the things committed to his trust as his own, but his master's; and therefore will neither lay them up nor retain them for himself, but apply them to the purposes for which they were committed to him. But then, in doing so, he must conduct his affairs with discretion, and act with economy and propriety in managing his Lord's goods, that so they may the more effectually answer the end, and turn out to the best advantage. To give away all that he is entrusted with at once (unless in the case already mentioned) is, in effect, to give up his trust, to divest himself of his stewardship, and to deprive himself of the means of being useful in that capacity for the future; whereas the scripture saith of him that disperseth abroad, and giveth to the poor, that "his righteousness (*i. e.* his liberality) remaineth for ever," 2 Cor. ix. 9. because God multiplies his seed sown, and increaseth the fruits of his righteousness, ver. 10. But should he give away his implements of husbandry, and the seed for sowing his ground, his liberality would soon come to an end. The same may be observed of a merchant giving away the stock necessary for carrying on his trade, and the proprietor of lands his possessions. These are talents given them by the Lord, to occupy for him to the best advantage till he comes to call them to account. How few look upon their riches in this light, and make the most of them for Christ and his members! yet just so few real christians are there among rich men. The Apostle supposes there would be rich men in the churches; but then he also supposes that such are in a very dangerous situation, as being under great temptations to high-minded-

ness, to trust in their riches instead of the living God, and so to come short of eternal life; and hence he exhorts Timothy to “charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.” And the only evidence they can give that they trust not in riches, but in God, is, “That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;” and thus, as our Lord directs, “laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.” 1 Tim. vi. 17—20.

It concerns also the poor and labouring class of people to take heed and beware of covetousness. Such may perhaps relish this doctrine, whilst they consider it only as directed to the rich and wealthy; and they may be apt to think themselves exempt from this vice, because they have it not in their power to lay up. For the same reason they may be led to think themselves exempted from the duty of almsgiving and liberality, as having nothing superfluous to give. And thus they may ward off from themselves all that has been said on this subject. But these are great deceptions; for, a poor man may relish our Lord's doctrine against the covetousness of the rich, from the very principle of covetousness in himself, or with a view that he himself may share of their wealth, should this doctrine have its proper effect. Besides the poor are under peculiar temptations to envy those who are in better circumstances. The Psalmist was sensible of this in himself, Psalm, lxxiii. ver. 3. Now what is envy, but sorrow arising from the supposed happiness of others in their enjoying a good

which we desire, and think we deserve as well as they do? Covetousness, therefore, is the spring of envy. It is but too common among the poor to speak evil of the rich, with whose bounty they are seldom satisfied; and they are too apt to be gratified at any misfortune that has a tendency to mortify or reduce those who are above them, and to speak of it with a kind of insulting satisfaction. These are undoubtedly effects both of covetousness and envy, and ought never to appear among christians.

Covetousness is in general as conspicuous among the poorer class of people as it is among the rich: and by reason of their circumstances, it is of a more mean and sordid kind. Agar prays that God would give him neither poverty nor riches. He considers riches as having a tendency to make him deny God, and, like Pharaoh, to say, Who is the Lord? But he looks upon poverty as having a more direct influence upon covetousness, "Lest I be poor," says he, "and steal," Prov. xxx. 8, 9.

Though the circumstances of the poor may hinder them from laying up treasures upon the earth, yet this does not hinder the desire after them, which will manifest itself on every opportunity when they have the least prospect of success. There are many, whose little sordid souls are so bent upon scraping together one mite after another, that they waste their bodies with excessive labour, and at the same time grudge them the necessary sustenance. They may perhaps not be able to accumulate much, after all this sore labour; but their heart is as much set upon it as if they had thousands. They are real servants of Mammon, and idolaters, though poor; for men may make idols of wood or stone, as well as of gold and silver; and

it is of little consequence how small the value of the idol be, if it really be one.

The covetousness of the poor appears also in their discontentedness with their situation. The Apostle intimates this where he says, Heb. xiii. 5. "Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have." The connexion between discontent and covetousness is evident; for if a man have such things as necessary food and raiment, which the Apostle supposed, 1 Tim. vi. 8. and is not content therewith, he must necessarily desire more, or wills to be rich, 1 Tim. vi. 9. and what is this but covetousness? Now the poor are very apt to be discontented, and to murmur and repine at their condition; and whilst this is the case with any, their conversation cannot be without covetousness.

Their anxiety and carefulness about to-morrow, as to what they shall eat or drink, or wherewithal they shall be clothed, evidently shews, that they want something else to trust unto than the living God; something more than his word of promise for these things; some sensible pledge and security in hand for the enjoyment of them, that may set their minds at rest from such anxieties. And is not this the very same disposition which made the man build barns to lay up store for many years to come, that his soul might be at ease from fear of future want? If any doubt this, they may consult Luke, xii. 22—25. where our Lord, in opposition to that man's conduct, dissuades his disciples from seeking what they shall eat, or what they shall drink, or from being of a doubtful mind. In Matt. vi. we find that our Lord's discourse upon laying up treasures—the evil eye—serving Mammon—taking thought for to-morrow



about food and raiment, &c.—is all levelled against covetousness; and as it is addressed to his poor disciples, and not to the rich only, it may teach us, that the poor are as much subject to this vice, in all its various shapes, as the rich are; and that they have greater temptations from their circumstances to some particular expressions of it than the other class have. Let none of us, therefore, be our circumstances what they may, ward off the conviction that arises from this doctrine.

The poverty of Christ's disciples will not exempt them from exerting themselves to the utmost in almsgiving. For, the directions given by our Lord and his apostles to this duty are addressed to Christians, and those were generally of the poorer class of people. Our Lord most highly commends the widow's liberality in giving a mite, which was all her living, Luke, xxi. 3, 4. The Macedonians are praised for abounding in rich liberality in the time of affliction and deep poverty, and for being willing beyond their power; 2 Cor. viii. 2, 3. The Corinthians are directed to collect for the saints, as the Lord had prospered every man; which implies, that each ought to give according to what he had earned by his honest industry through the week, 1 Cor. xvi. 2. And the Apostle exhorts the Ephesians to work with their hands, not only that they may have lack of nothing themselves, but also that they may have to give to him that needeth, Eph. iv. 28. So that it is the indispensable duty of the labouring poor, as well as of the rich, to minister to the necessity of the saints; if they should be able only to give a mite, or a cup of cold water, it will not fail of its reward. I may add that,

It belongs to the poor to give evidence of their re-

penitance, as well as the rich. But these works of mercy are held forth in scripture as the proper evidence of their repentance from dead works. Thus Daniel calls on Nebuchadnezzar to evince his repentance by shewing mercy to the poor, Dan. iv. 27. To deal out our bread to the hungry, to bring the poor that are cast out to our houses, and to cover the naked, are fruits of repentance, without which all humiliation and fasting is but a vain pretence, Isa. lviii. 5, 6, 7. And this is that which John the Baptist calls *fruit worthy of repentance*, Luke, iii. 8—12.—and it is what was resolved upon by Zaccheus as soon as he believed the gospel, chap. xix. 8. In short, the poor as well as the rich, ought to abound in good works; but almsgiving and works of mercy are what the New Testament ordinarily intends by *good works*. So we read that Dorcas was full of good works and almsdeeds, Acts, xi. 36.—The ministering widow must be one who has diligently followed every good work, in lodging strangers, washing the saints' feet, and relieving the afflicted, 1 Tim. v. 10.—We are to be careful to maintain good works, which are profitable unto men, Tit. iii. 8. and for necessary uses, that we be not unfruitful, ver. 14—We are redeemed that we might be zealous of them, Tit. ii. 14.—to provoke one another to them, Heb. x. 24. and abound in them ourselves, 2 Cor, xiv. 8. This is that work without which James says that faith is dead, Jam. ii. 4—21, and without which John tells us, we have neither the love of God nor of our brother dwelling in us, 1 John, iii. 16—20. And this is that which is called the work of faith and labour of love, with which the full assurance of hope is connected, Heb. vi. 10, 11. 1 John, iii. 21.—Though the Apostle says, a man may give all his goods

to feed the poor and not be profited, 1 Cor. xiii. he does not mean that it is a low mark of a Christian, but that it sometimes springs from ostentation or pride, which is opposite to the charity he is speaking of; but still he gives it the preference to tongues, knowledge, and miraculous faith, and makes it to be the proper exercise of that charity which he calls greater than either faith or hope, ver. 13. And in Heb. vi. he makes it a more unquestionable evidence of our salvation than our being enlightened, tasting of the heavenly gift, and of the good word of God, and our being made partakers of the Holy Ghost and the powers of the world to come. For it demonstrates our crucifixion to this present world, and conformity to Christ in his death, Phil. iii. 10, 11, 15.—shows that our hearts and treasures are in heaven, Matt. vi. 21.—manifests our knowledge and imitation of the grace of Christ, 2 Cor. viii. 9.—proves that we place our life in God's favour, and not in the things we possess, Luke, xii. 15.—evinces our contentment with such things as we have, and our trusting in the living God, Heb. xiii. 5. 1 Tim. vi. 8.—our unfeigned love to Christ and his members, Heb. vi. 8.—and our lively hope of the heavenly inheritance, Luke, xii. 23.

III. Another particular wherein christians must not be conformed to this world, is what the scripture calls *the pride of life*, 1 John, ii. 16.

The word translated *life* frequently signifies a man's goods, that which supports his life, or upon which he lives; such as money, food, raiment, possessions, &c.—and so it is often translated *living*. Thus the woman spent all her *living* upon physicians, Luke, viii. 43. The father divides his *living* among his sons, chap. xv. 12.—the prodigal son devoured his *living*

with harlots, ver. 30.—the poor widow cast in all the *living* that she had, chap. xxi. 4. The translators have given us another English word for it, of the same import, in 1 John, ii. 17. “Whoso hath this world’s good.” In all these places it evidently signifies the good things of this life. The word here rendered *pride*, is in James iv. 16. translated *boasting*, which, when it respects ourselves, or our earthly enjoyments, is nothing but the confident expressions of pride. It is derived from a word which signifies *to take or assume*, and may properly be rendered *arrogance*; that kind of pride which leads men to claim and assume such honours, distinctions, and pre-eminence, as do not belong to them; for that honour and esteem which men claim on account of their outward circumstances, and which has nothing else of real dignity, worth or utility, to support it, belongs of right to none. It is the claim of vanity and arrogance, on the one hand; and, on the other, the prostituted tribute of weakness, meanness, and ignorance. There can be no pride in the moderate and *proper enjoyment* of the good things of this life. The pride of life, therefore, must signify the abuse of them, to serve the purposes of ambition; and may be defined—the love of worldly honours, preferments, titles, dignities, and pre-eminence, with all their supports and appendages; such as riches, power, pomp, and splendour, in houses, furniture, table, equipage, and dress. As many place their life and happiness in these and similar empty vanities; and esteem them of such mighty importance that they do not think life worth enjoying without them; and as they are all calculated to feed the pride and gratify the ambition of man’s heart, they may well be called *the pride of life*.

Pride assumes various forms, according to its different objects, in some of which it is not so easily discerned as in others; nay, it sometimes puts on the appearance of humility and self-denial. But in the present case it appears in its native form, and cannot deceive any whose judgments are not greatly blinded by education, custom or example, and who do not form their opinion upon the course of this world rather than the law of Christ.

There are, indeed, various degrees of the pride of life, according to men's inclinations, circumstances, and opportunity for displaying it; and many consider themselves as entirely free from it, if they do not exceed the generality of people in their line: but this supposes that the world is a proper standard of moderation, than which nothing can be more false; for the Apostle tells us that the pride of life is one of the three leading vices of the world. Others imagine, that if they keep a little behind the course of the world in this matter, they sufficiently avoid it. But this is a very unsafe and uncertain rule:—*uncertain*, because the degree of the pride of life varies in the world according to the wealth, improvements, and refinements of society: *unsafe*, because it still refers to the course of this world, and not to the law of Christ, as the standard to regulate the judgment—it supposes that course to point out the lowest degree of the pride of life—and that every thing which comes not fully up to this standard, is christian sobriety and moderation: whereas there are many degrees of the pride of life below the medium course of this world. The lowest degree of it is criminal—is in its very nature opposite to the love of God—and is not of the Father, but of the world.

In the farther prosecution of this subject, I shall specify some particulars wherein the pride of life is manifested in the world—then shew the opposition of each of these to the doctrine of the kingdom of heaven, which is not of this world, or to the temper and conduct recommended to its subjects—and, lastly, make some use of what may have been said.

To prevent mistakes, it may be proper to observe, in the outset, that I do not speak to mankind in general, or imagine, that the world as such, will pay any regard to the peculiar commandments of the kingdom of heaven, which are all founded upon supernatural principles, and suited only to such as are born from above. Neither do I intend to enter into the question, Whether the pride of life, and other vices, may not, in a civil and political light, be often subservient to the temporal prosperity of the nations of this world? for though the affirmative of this question were admitted, it could never legitimate these vices in the kingdom of Christ, (which reprobates the maxim of doing the least evil that good may come) but would only serve to state the opposition betwixt his kingdom and the kingdoms of this world, in the strongest point of view. In the present state of things, to suppose a nation of this world disconformed to the world, would be a perfect solecism. Leaving the world, therefore, to go on in its old course, I intend all that may be said on this subject for the children of God, whose glory and happiness it is to be conformed to Christ; who profess to be redeemed from, and crucified to the world; and to look for their glory, honour, and preferment, at the coming of Christ. Let us consider,

I. The great animating principle of this branch of our subject; and that is *pride* and ambition; whence

it is denominated the *pride* of life. Now pride is the offspring of self-love, and consists in an inordinate esteem of ourselves, our rank or merit, whereby we are led to exalt ourselves above others, claim undue honour and respect, and are gratified with obsequiousness, adulation and flattery. This is a disposition every way unsuitable to the highest creatures, whose very beings are derived and dependent: how much more must it be unbecoming in man, who is a mean, weak, ignorant, sinful worm of the dust! When we take a view of the character of God, and then consider our own nothingness and vileness in his presence, we can scarcely believe such a thing as pride should ever enter into the heart of man; but woeful experience and daily observation sufficiently evince the fact, however absurd and monstrous it may appear. Indeed, to a seriously reflecting mind, nothing can be a clearer evidence of the ignorance, folly and corruption of the human heart, than pride. The scripture informs us, that it is of Satanic original, and that the devil first instilled it into the human breast, by exciting a desire to rival God—"Ye shall," says he, "be as God," Gen. iii. 5. Thus pride began; and thus it has ever since continued. We may be ready to shudder at the blasphemous thought of our first parents, in coveting equality with their Maker; but it can easily be shewn that this is not peculiar to them; for the very nature of pride and ambition leads to this. In as far as it prevails, it makes men renounce their dependence on God, puffs them up with a conceit of their own importance and self-sufficiency; it cannot bear a rival, far less a superior, among fellow men, and should circumstances concur to raise it to the highest station of worldly power and honour, it will

then arrogate the honour due only to God. This is no fanciful deduction from the nature of pride, but is supported by plain instances, both in sacred and profane history.—See how Nebuchadnezzar boasts of the might of his power, as if he had been the maker of the world—“Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?” Dan. iv. 30. where he ascribes the might, the honour, and glory to himself instead of God. Pharaoh, in the impious pride of his heart, asks, with contempt, “Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go?” Exod. v. 2. and though the Lord made his power known, and enforced his demand with one judgment after another, yet this haughty worm’s heart was so steeled with pride, that he scorned to yield even to the Almighty.—Sennacherib not only defies the God of Israel, but considers himself as his superior. “Who are they among all the gods of the countries that have delivered their country out of mine hand, that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem out of mine hand?” 2 Kings, xviii. 35.—Alexander the Great, elated with his victories, forgot that he was a man, and laid claim to divine honours.—Herod also received from blasphemous flatterers the glory that was due only to God, and was immediately made a monument of the divine displeasure, Acts, xii. 22, 23.—And the man of sin, the son of perdition, even under the profession of the Christian name, is said to “exalt himself above all that is called god, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God,” 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4.—The conjunction of spiritual pride and worldly power and grandeur, carries the arrogance of the human heart to its highest



pitch ; it dethrones God, and robs him at once both of the glory of his grace and dominion. These instances of pride are, indeed, very glaring ; but the nature of pride is the same in its lowest degree, though it may not have the same incitements and opportunities for displaying itself. It is, in all its various measures, a stepping out of the line of the creature, and affecting to rival, or be as God, in some shape or other, though it is the genuine image of Satan, from whom it originally sprang. No wonder, then, that the divine displeasure is particularly pointed against this sin.

2. I come now to specify some particulars wherein the pride of life is manifested, and shew the opposition of these particulars to the laws of the kingdom of heaven.

Men manifest the pride of life in their various pursuits after undue worldly honour. I call it *undue* honour, to distinguish it from that honour which belongs to men from one another in this world, even by the divine law ; and *worldly*, to distinguish it from that true honour which cometh from God only, and to which we are raised by virtue of our connexion with Christ, however despicable we may be in the world's estimation.

The desire of true honour is surely laudable, and essential to our nature, considered as innocent ; for the Scripture sets honour before us as a motive to duty. The Lord says, " them that honour me, I will honour," 1 Sam. ii. 30.—and Jesus says, " If any man serve me, him will my Father honour," John, xii. 26. It is our indispensable duty, " by patient continuance in well-doing, to seek for glory, honour, and immortality ;" Rom. ii. 7.—and happy were it for us, if we had a greater ambition after this honour !

The Scripture enjoins the disciples of Christ to give honour to whom honour is due; Rom. xiii. 7. There is, therefore, honour due from some men to others in this world: and it will be necessary to shew what kind of honour it is, and to whom due, before we speak of that honour which is the object of vain ambition, and that falls under the denomination of the pride of life.

The honour and respect which is due from one man to another, is of a very different nature from that reverence, glory, worship, and adoration, which are due to God, and which he will not give to another. Idolatry, that most heinous of all sins, is nothing else but our giving to the creature the honour which is due only to the Creator. But I lay it down as a certain principle, and as the foundation of all I intend to offer on this subject, *viz.* that no honour is due to any creatures whatever, unless it be on account of some resemblance they bear to God. If this single proposition be once admitted, and properly understood, it will adjust all our ideas as to the foundation of honour, and enable us to judge of the justice of men's various claims of, and pretensions to it. Let us see, then, whether we can trace this principle in all the Scripture injunctions to honour men.

We are commanded to honour kings, governors, or magistrates, Rom. xiii. 1—8. 1 Pet. ii. 13—18. The reason for this is, they are the ordinance of God, and vested with power and authority, as his ministers, for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well. However wicked they may be in their private characters, yet with regard to office they are representatives of God, and exhibit a faint image of his power, dominion, and rule, and therefore they must be submitted to and honoured, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

Servants are enjoined to “count their own masters worthy of all honour;” 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2. This also stands upon the same general ground with the former. Masters have some faint resemblance of God in their power and authority over their servants, as the very title of *master* or *lord* implies, for it is one of the titles which God takes to himself, Mal. i. 6. “If I be a master, where is my fear?” This title is more frequently applied to Jesus Christ; and the honour and obedience given to masters according to the flesh ought to have a reference to him; for servants are directed to “be obedient to them, with fear and trembling, in singleness of their heart, as unto the Lord,” Eph. vi. 5.—“Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God; and whatever they do, to do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord they shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for they serve the Lord Christ,” Col. iii. 22—25.

Parents have also a claim upon their children for honour and obedience—“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right: honour thy father and thy mother,” &c. Eph. vi. 1, 2. God is our parent, or father, in the most strict and proper sense; for he is the author of our being, and we are all his offspring, Acts, xvii. 28. He is most tender in his love and pity to his children; their preserver, and the rich supplier of all their wants; and so he claims the honour due to his paternal relation—“If I be a father, where is mine honour?” Mal. i. 6. Every one must perceive that earthly parents are a lively image of God in his character of father, and therefore must be honoured, loved, and obeyed, by their children; which honour and obedience ought to have a reference to the Lord.

whose representatives they are in that character; for they are commanded to obey their parents *in the Lord*.

Wives are to be subject to, and reverence their own husbands, Eph. v. 22, 23. The reason given is, because in the character of husbands they are, in relation to their wives, a representation of Christ as head of his Church, see ver. 23, 24. They are, therefore, to submit themselves unto their own husbands, as unto the Lord.

Pastors of churches are commanded to be obeyed and submitted to, Heb. xiii. 17.—to be held in reputation, or in honour, Phil. ii. 9.—and to be esteemed very highly in love for their works' sake, 1 Thess. v. 12, 13. The ground of this is, the resemblance they bear in their work and office to Jesus Christ, who is the chief Shepherd and Bishop of souls, Heb. xiii. 20. 1 Pet. ii. 25. chap. v. 4.

Men who are eminently useful by their good works of beneficence and mercy, are worthy of honour and esteem; and so we find this honour promised them, Psalm, cxii. 9. Prov. xxi. 21. because in these they imitate the goodness and mercy of God, who is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works, Psalm, cxlv. 9.

Christians are exhorted “with brotherly love and honour to prefer one another,” Rom. xii. 10. This exhortation has no regard to the honour of stations amongst them. It is as much the duty of the rich to prefer the brethren of low degree to themselves in honour, as it is the duty of the poor to do the same to them. It is of the same import with that exhortation, “In lowliness of mind, let each esteem other better than themselves,” Phil. ii. 3. This preference must

arise from the humble opinion we have of ourselves; and the ground of our honouring the brethren must be their relation to God, and conformity to Jesus Christ.

We are commanded to "honour all men," 1 Pet. ii. 17. If this general exhortation means any thing more than what has been already mentioned, *viz.* the honour due to men according to their different offices and relations, it must have a respect to human nature, wherein all men are upon a level; and the foundation of honour in this view must be, that a man is made after the similitude of God, which brings it to the principle we at first laid down. This is confirmed by what James says of men's abusing and dishonouring one another with their tongues. Of this unruly member he says, "Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, who are made after the similitude of God," James, iii. 2. He does not speak of our first parents, who were made after the image of God; but of men our cotemporaries, men with whom we are supposed to be conversant and offended. Some understand this to be a reproof to the Jews, who cursed the Christians in their synagogues, at the same time that they blessed God the Father; and that the *similitude of God* may signify knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, Eph. iv. 24. But I rather think that James is addressing Christians, who are commanded to bless, and curse not, Rom. xii. 14.—that the term *men* here signifies all mankind—and that the *similitude of God*, after which they are made, is something common to human nature, even in its fallen state, consisting in the natural *powers of his mind*, particularly his reason and conscience, and also in his dominion over the inferior creation. This sense is farther confirmed by 1 Cor. xi. 7. where the Apostle

calls man *the image and glory of God*, in respect of his natural power and dominion. The honour, therefore, due to all men, must be founded on the similitude which they bear to God. This calls for a benevolent, humble, and respectful carriage towards mankind in general: especially when we consider that they are possessed of natures capable of immortal honour, and that God hath regarded men to such a degree as to give his Son to die for the lowest and most vile among them.

Thus it appears from Scripture, that there is a particular honour due to certain offices and relations among them, and, in some sense, to all men; and also that the foundation of this honour is some similitude or resemblance which they bear to God, who is the perfect standard and sum of all excellence, and to whom every just honour given to the creature must be ultimately referred.

Yet men frequently make these offices and relations to which honour is due, subservient to the pride of life—when they are ambitious of such offices, merely for the honour and influence which attend them—when they forget that they hold their power of God, and are accountable to him for their use of it—when they take all the honour and glory to themselves, instead of ascribing it to God—when they forget the ends of their office, which is the good of others, and abuse their power by acts of insolence and tyranny. But, though men may take occasion, from these offices and relations to which the Lord hath annexed honour, to gratify their own pride and ambition; yet this will not free Christians from their obligations to give them all due honour, while they continue in such offices.

Now if rulers, relations, and benefactors, include

all the classes of men to whom peculiar honour is due by the law of Christ, and if the only true foundation of all honour is the resemblance or similitude which men bear to God, in some respect or other; then it follows, that every pretension to distinguished honour from men, which rests upon any other foundation, can be nothing but the claim of vanity and ambition. The man who discharges his duty to God and his neighbour, and acts with propriety the part assigned him, is truly honourable, whether he be high or low: but the false honour we are now speaking of, and which is the great object of the pride of life, has no foundation either in law, conscience, or interest; nor can it be reduced to any other standard than its own principle, *viz.* pride. In order to illustrate the subject a little further, we shall examine some of the grounds on which it is claimed, and the means by which it is supported.

I. Some claim honour and respect on account of what they call *high birth*, or *nobility of blood*. It is astonishing to think how much some men value themselves upon this, and with what sovereign contempt they look down upon those whom they esteem low-born, or of a mean descent, though in every other respect, they should be their superiors. And from what source does this noble quality of their blood spring? Why, from the will of the king; who for certain reasons, no matter what, has created some of their ancestors dukes, lords, earls, or knights: thus by a kind of royal charm, the blood is supposed to be ennobled, and purged of all its base and vulgar qualities; and if they can find the least drop of such noble blood flowing in their veins, they think themselves sufficiently entitled to honour and esteem on

that account. One may justly wonder that such a conceit as this should ever enter into a rational mind; but it is hard to say how much pride and vanity will blind and pervert the human faculties. It becomes the Christian, however, to remember, that no man has cause to glory in his high birth, seeing he is sprung of the dust, and born as the wild ass's colt, Job, xi. 12. nor in the nobility of his blood; for God hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth, Acts, xvii. 26.—and it is an awful consideration, that not many noble, or of high birth, are called to partake of the privileges and honours of Christ's kingdom, 1 Cor. i. 26. The Jews at Berea are called more noble, or higher-born, than those at Thessalonica, on account of their reception of the gospel.

2. Others claim honour on account of their *wealth*. They pride themselves in their riches, and think they have a just title to respect merely because they possess them. Like Nebuchadnezzar, they set up their golden image, and expect that others should fall down and worship it; and they can find many sordid and base enough to do so; for the rich man hath many friends and flatterers, who, though they despise the man, love his money, and will honour him for its sake. But the Scripture never calls us to honour any man on account of his riches, which are always accumulated by covetousness, Matt. vi. and often by fraud and injustice, see James, v. 1—7. The dust of this earth can be no ground of honour and respect among Christians. Our Lord did not come in a state of wealth and opulence, nor did he pay his court to such. The whole New Testament throws contempt upon riches, shews their bad influence, and how hard it is



for those who enjoy them to enter into the kingdom, Mark, x. 25. whilst, on the other hand, God hath chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, James, ii. 5. Riches are the means of honour to a man only according to the use he makes of them. They are really dishonourable, should he accumulate them from avarice, consume them upon his lusts, and withhold them from the needy, which is to be unfaithful in that which is another's. But they procure him just honour when he is endued with a heart to apply them to their proper use, by enjoying them with temperance, moderation, and an humble mind, and by distributing them liberally to those who need. They put it in a man's power to shine more in humility, condescension and good works. But then the foundation of honour here is not the *possession* of riches, simply considered, but the *character* of the person who possesses them.

3. *High titles* are another foundation of false honour, very gratifying to the vanity of the human heart, and a considerable ingredient in the pride of life.

There are, indeed, persons in certain offices and relations, who require to be distinguished by answerable titles; and the wives, or even the children of such, derive a kind of honour from their connexion with them, and some of them have particular titles of respect given them on that account. This the New Testament seems to admit of. Not only does Paul give to Festus, and Luke to Theophilus, the title of *most noble* or *most excellent*, on account of office, Acts, xxvi. 25. Luke, i. 3. but John also addresses her to whom he directs his second epistle by the title of the elect lady, 2 John, ver. 1, 5. Indeed, the title *most excellent* is not given to Theophilus afterwards, Acts, i. 1.

and no good reason can be given for this but his being then out of office; for we cannot suppose that Luke would withhold the honour due to him. With respect to the *elect lady*, some very judicious persons are of opinion, that it is not a title of honour, but a proper name, and therefore should not have been translated at all, any more than the other proper names in Scripture, which are not arbitrary, like English names, but have a particular signification; and so it would have read, "The elder unto *Electa Cyria* and her children." Other very sensible commentators affirm, that by the elect lady and her children we are not to understand any particular woman and her family, but a Christian church and its members—that the address is to the church at Jerusalem—that John was at Ephesus when he wrote this epistle—and that he sends the salutations of that church in these words: "The children of thy elect sister greet thee," ver. 13. and this is my opinion of the matter. But, whatever be in this, such titles of distinction and respect as do not indicate pride, or encroach upon the titles due only to God, but are founded on office or relation, are, no doubt, part of the honour which by the law of Christ is due to such persons: and also, all such civil terms of respect and courtesy as are consistent with sincerity and truth, and have nothing of flattery or fuel for pride in them, may be included in that courteousness to which we are exhorted, **1 Pet. iii. 8.**

But it is every way contrary to the spirit of the New Testament, for Christians to affect titles of honour and distinction, to assume them as their right, or to pride themselves on them, even when they are due; because this indicates a vain, proud, and ambitious disposition of mind, and is a branch of that strife

for preeminence which our Lord so often checks in his disciples, Matt. xviii. 1. Mark, ix. 34. Luke, xxii. 24.—and it is every way contrary to that exhortation of the Apostle, Phil. ii. 3. “ Let nothing be done through strife and vain-glory ; but, in lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than themselves ;”—and particularly to that in Gal. v. 26. “ Let us not be desirous of vain-glory, provoking one another, envying one another.” The desire of preeminence, or of being greatest, whether it be in titles, places, or fame, is to be desirous of vain-glory ; and wherever this appears, the natural effect of it is, to provoke one another, not to love and good works, but to emulation, strife, and envy ; and, in short, to every thing opposite to humility and love, as we see was the case with Christ’s disciples. As the appearance of love excites to love, so does the appearance of pride provoke pride and contempt. In that case every one feels himself degraded in proportion as his brother exalts himself above him ; this stimulates his pride and envy, and disposes him to a kind of competition, either by sinking his brother or raising himself. What a baneful influence, then, must this pride of distinction have among the disciples of Christ ! It overturns the whole spirit of Christianity, which leads us, in lowliness of mind, to esteem others better than ourselves, and with brotherly love and honour to prefer one another. It also defeats its own end ; for it is an established maxim in the kingdom of Christ, that “ Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” But in order to understand this maxim, and its connexion with the point in hand, it will be proper to take a view of the different passages where it occurs.

We find the words in Matt. xxiii. 12. where they are levelled primarily against the hypocrisy and religious ostentation of the Scribes and Pharisees, who courted the honour and applause of men, by their affected sanctity and devotion. So our Lord says, "All their works they do to be seen of men; they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments;" ver. 5. And not only did they seek honour from men on account of their religious character, but advanced their claim upon God himself on that account, and exalted themselves in his presence, as appears from the prayer of the Pharisee in the temple, upon which our Lord repeats this very maxim, verbatim, Luke, xviii. 14. so that it is levelled against religious pride, or self-righteousness, which strikes directly against the faith and grace of the gospel; for our Lord says, "How can ye believe, who receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour which cometh from God only?" John, v. 44.

But this maxim is also levelled against the desire of being honoured with the chief places, as a token of distinction. So our Lord says, ver. 6. "They love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues." See also Mark, xii. 39. Luke, xx. 46. However trifling this circumstance may be thought in the world, yet our Lord lays great stress upon it, as indicative of a disposition most hateful to him; therefore he cautions his disciples against this desire of preeminence, not only with respect to a seat in the church, but also in civil meetings in the world; and exhorts them always to occupy the lowest place, from whence they cannot be degraded, but may possibly be exalted; and this he also enforces by the maxim we are speaking of. See Luke, xiv. 7—12. And James,

on the other hand, blames christians for encouraging this desire of preference, even when it relates to a seat, as a criminal respect of persons, Jam. ii. 1—10. But to come more directly to the point in hand: this maxim is particularly pointed against the love of pompous titles of honour and distinction among Christ's disciples. Our Lord observes of the Scribes and Pharisees, that they loved "greeting in the markets, and to be called of men Rabbi, Rabbi;" ver. 7. See also Mark, xii. 38. Luke, xi. 43.—*i. e.* they loved salutations in the public places of resort, and in these salutations to be accosted with their title of honour and distinction in the hearing of all men; and lest they should not be sufficiently noticed or distinguished, they wore a remarkable dress, that might strike the eye, and commanded reverence with scraps of the law written upon parchment on their foreheads and arms; ver. 5. Mark, xii. 38. In opposition to this love of honorary titles, our Lord says to his disciples, "But be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth; for one is your Father, who is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters; for one is your Master, even Christ." Then it follows, "And whosoever shall exalt himself, shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself, shall be exalted;" ver. 8—13.

Upon the whole passage and parallel places I observe, That our Lord does not here forbid the title of *master, father*, and the like, when such titles are founded in natural or lawful offices and relations; for his apostles, who spake by his Spirit, give these titles to men, and enjoin us to yield them particular honour, as has been shewn; and Sarah's example in calling

her husband *Lord* is recommended to Christian women for their imitation, 1 Pet. iii. 6. Nor does he mean that we should call no man *father* in a religious sense; for Paul takes that title to himself, in relation to such as he had been instrumental in converting to the faith, 1 Cor. iv. 14—18.—and John terms those to whom he writes, his *children*, 3 John, ver. 4. Elders of churches are called *leaders*, or *guides*, Heb. xiii. 17. which is also the meaning of the word here rendered *masters*. Our Lord must therefore mean to reprehend that pride and vanity of mind which leads men to affect and claim such titles of honour and distinction; for this was the case with the Scribes and Pharisees. “They loved greeting in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.” Their pride was gratified with their usurped and high-sounding titles; they set themselves up above others, and valued themselves upon them. Another thing our Lord reprehends under these titles, is, their claiming and using them in such a sense as to entrench upon the authority due only to God, and in the way of competition with him. This is clear from the reason of the prohibition, “Call no man your father upon the earth;” Why? “for,” says he, “one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters;” the reason given is, “for one is your Master, even Christ.” It is plain, therefore, that the Scribes and Pharisees claimed these titles in such a sense as to put themselves in the place of God, by dictating to men’s consciences, making the law void by their traditions, and claiming an unlimited and implicit subjection to them upon their authority. The Apostles never received these titles in this sense. They were indeed *fathers* and *guides*, but in such a sense as to direct

men's faith and obedience only to God as their father, and to Christ as their master. They declined all *dominion over men's faith*, and considered themselves only as *helpers of their joy*, 2 Cor. i. 24. They preached not *themselves*, but Christ Jesus *the Lord*, and themselves the *servants* of the churches for Jesus' sake, chap. iv. 4. They forbade all *lordship over the heritage*, and in opposition thereto enjoin elders to be *examples to the flock*, in humility, patience, and self-denial, 1 Pet. i. 3. Answerable to which, James says, chap. iii. 1. "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that ye shall receive the greater condemnation." In short, the whole drift of the passage is levelled against that pride whereby a man inclines to *exalt himself*, as our Lord expresses it, whether it be by preeminence of place, or dignified titles.

Nor is this self-exaltation condemned merely in a religious, but also in a civil respect. Our Lord speaks of the Pharisees affecting the uppermost rooms at feasts, ver. 6. and forbids his disciples when bidden to a feast to follow their example, but to take the lowest place, that they might leave room to the master of the feast to pay them the civil respect of exalting them, Luke, xiv. 8, 11. When the two sons of Zebedee were emulous for the chief place in Christ's kingdom, which they imagined to be a kingdom of this world, and at another time when the disciples were disputing among themselves which of them should be accounted the greatest, Jesus tells them, "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of Man came not to be minist-

tered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many," Matt. xx. 26—29. see also Mark, x. 40. Luke, xxii. 25—28. Our Lord here does not condemn the office of civil magistracy in the nations of this world, for this would contradict Rom. xiii. 1—7. 1 Pet. ii. 13—16. But he condemns that lust of power and pride of dominion which seldom, if ever, fails to attend it; and he is absolutely prohibiting any such thing among his disciples, as well in a *civil* as religious respect: "It shall not," says he, "be so among you." Could it, therefore, be shewn, that pride and ambition are kingly virtues, and that it is inconsistent with princely dignity to imitate Christ in humility, and in being the servant of all, it would only prove, that no disciple of Christ could lawfully be a king. Many confine this prohibition entirely to lordly dominion in the church, whilst they think it may be very properly exercised in civil offices. But this supposes, either that a man's pride cannot be so much gratified with secular as with religious dominion; or that a man may lawfully do that as a *magistrate* which would be sinful to him as a *Christian*; both which principles are absolutely false: for however different civil and religious offices are in themselves, yet the believer is indispensably bound to act the Christian in every sphere and situation he is called to occupy, whether civil or sacred. So that he that is proud and ambitious in the character of a *king*, cannot be humble in that of a Christian; because his person is but one in both, and Christ's law of humility is equally to the Christian king and beggar. What hath been observed of kings will apply to all subordinate stations.

Further; our Lord here intimates, that we ought to



give up even those claims of honour and respect which may be considered as our due; for he says, "He that humbleth himself." Now there can be no degree of humility in insisting upon our full right. To abase or humble one's self, is voluntarily to forego some degree of that honour or reputation which belongs to us. This is what we are taught by the example of Christ. When he was addressed by the rich man in the gospel under the title of *Good Master*, we find he modestly declines that title, though it belonged to him of right, Mark, x. 18. And though he was in reality the Son of God, yet he seldom speaks of himself under that title, but for the most part takes to himself the humble appellation of *Son of Man*. How unlike is this to many of his professed disciples now-a-days, who, though they have no just claim to any title but their proper name, would reckon themselves disparaged if they got not the honourable title of *Master* prefixed to it, which is now prostituted even to porters and scavengers! The whole condition of Christ in this world was a state of voluntary self-abasement, a relinquishment of his just honour. For though he was in the form of God, he coveted not to be equal with God; but emptied, or made himself of no reputation, and humbled himself even to the shameful and accursed death of the cross, Phil. ii. 6—9.

Lastly; We learn, also, from the passage, that we shall lose no true honour by this self-abasement; but, on the contrary, shall gain by it; for our Lord says, "He that humbleth himself, *shall be exalted.*" This often holds good even in this present world, where the proud and assuming, by awakening envy or contempt, meet with frequent repulses and mortifications from their fellow men; whilst the humble and modest

will be held in esteem by every person of true judgment who knows them. This our Lord intimates, when he directs his disciples to sit down in the lowest room when they are bidden to a feast, that when he that bade them cometh, he may tell them to go up higher, and then shall they have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with them, Luke, xiv. 10. This is so well understood among men, that they have universally adopted it, as an essential rule of politeness and good manners, to assume the appearance of modesty, and prefer one another in the various formalities of respect: and though this be only an artificial mimicry of what our Lord recommends, yet it has no small influence in procuring a suitable return. It often happens, however, in this world, that modest merit is overlooked, whilst the confident and aspiring push themselves into notice and respect. The disciples of Christ have little ground to expect to be exalted in this world, however much they may humble themselves; because their profession and practice will ever condemn the world, and testify that the works thereof are evil, which must necessarily draw forth its resentment. Christ did not procure the esteem of the world by humbling himself; on the contrary, this was one of the causes of their rejecting him. But yet it will still hold true, that he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted. They shall be exalted when Christ comes again, and when he shall bestow upon them the heavenly kingdom and the immortal crown of glory. Then he shall raise up the poor out of the dust, and lift the needy out of the dunghill; that he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people, Psalm, cxiii. 7, 8. This is that exaltation which Peter has in his eye when he says, "Humble

yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God; that he may exalt you in due time," 1 Pet. v. 6. Thus it was that Christ was most highly exalted after his voluntary humiliation; and thus shall all his redeemed ones be exalted, who now imitate his humility.

4. Another appendage of false honour or pride is the pomp and splendour of equipage, retinue, and dress. The term by which the Scripture expresses these things is very well suited to their nature. It is said, that "when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp," Acts, xxv. 23. The word rendered *pomp* signifies any thing that exists merely in imagination or shew—a phantasy. And what is all worldly splendour or pomp, but a vain, empty shew? Yet it is an important ingredient in the pride of life. It is the painted sign of a man's rank and condition, whereby he dazzles the eyes of the multitude, and ascertains the claims of his pride in the most legible characters. It, indeed, owes its influence to that weakness of the human mind which is struck with glare and shew, and which all of us may feel in ourselves, notwithstanding our reasonings against it. The splendid pomp and pageantry of courts, with all the ensigns of royalty, are partly intended, in a political view, to suit this childish weakness, and so become subservient to the ends of government, by striking the subjects with awe, commanding respect and subjection, and making them keep their proper distance. Herod's royal apparel, with which he was arrayed when he made the oration, and which, Josephus tells us, shone with dazzling splendour by the light of the sun, made the people imagine he was a kind of divinity, Acts, xii. 21, 22. But this method of soliciting honour and commanding respect is not confined to courts and

kings. There is more or less of it in every degree of what is denominated *station*. Even those who have little else to command respect but the glare of dress, are very much offended when in any instance it does not produce that return. In short, all who affect pomp, costly dress, or gaudy apparel, must necessarily value themselves upon it, and expect the attentions and honour which they think belong to such an appearance; so that it is evidently one of the means of self-exaltation, and supports of the pride of life. The Lord ascribes the gaudy ornaments of the daughters of Jerusalem to their pride and haughtiness, *Isaiah*, iii. 16—24. and Jesus attributes the long-fringed garments whereby the Scribes and Pharisees distinguished themselves, to their pride as well as hypocrisy, *Matt.* xxiii. 5. The Apostles look upon outward finery to be always the effect of inward vanity, and therefore forbid Christian women, of whatever station, to imitate the world in gaudy ornaments and expensive dress, as entirely unsuitable to women professing godliness with good works. They absolutely prohibit the brodering or plaiting of the hair, and the wearing of gold, or pearls, or costly array, see *1 Tim.* ii. 9. *1 Pet.* iii. 3. under which particulars every thing of the like kind is included. Instead of such gaudy and costly array, they recommend modest apparel; and in opposition to that pride, vanity, and levity of mind which lead women to affect such things, they recommend to them a meek and quiet spirit, shamefacedness and sobriety. But I shall not insist any farther at present; except to observe, that under this head we may include all extravagant cost and grandeur in retinue, equipage, house, furniture, &c. in all which the Christian must not be conformed to the vain, proud, and

giddy part of the world, but must be sober-minded, and let his moderation be so remarkable as to be known unto all men, under the constant conviction that the fashion of this world passeth away, and that the Lord is at hand, Phil. iv. 5.

5. The pride of life is much gratified and encouraged in many, by the fawning flattery and cringing mean servility of others. Christians, therefore, ought to beware of contributing to it in this respect, and so of becoming partakers of other men's sins. Our Lord not only forbids his disciples to be called Rabbi, or master, themselves, but he also forbids them to give those titles to others, Matt. xxiii. 9.—plainly intimating that as we ought not to receive undue honour, so neither ought we to bestow it. Human merit bears no proportion to human pride. Men not only think themselves better than they are, but are willing that others should think them better than they think themselves. Hence just encomiums seldom please, or are received as tokens of respect, but are looked upon either as below their desert, or at least as the cold tribute of rigid justice. Vanity always demands some degree of flattery and servility; and upon this principle the greater part of the rules and formalities of good manners are established in the world. The attentions of politeness or good breeding, however, are generally understood to have little meaning, and pass as things of course; but pointed flattery, or misapplied praise, is not only unworthy of an honest man, it is productive of the most pernicious effects. Yet the most worthless and hateful characters, if possessed of power and riches, and surrounded with pomp and splendour, will never want sycophants, who, from fear, interest, or vanity, will sound their praises, and even varnish

over and extol their very vices. It is justly observed by a sensible writer of our own times, "That as there is no character so deformed as to fright away from it the prostitutes of praise, there is no degree of encomiastic veneration which pride has refused. The emperors of Rome suffered themselves to be worshipped in their lives with altars and sacrifices; and, in an age more enlightened, the terms peculiar to the praise and worship of the Supreme Being have been applied to wretches, whom it was the reproach of humanity to number among men. Every man of high rank is surrounded with numbers who have no other rule of thought or action than his maxims and his conduct, whom the honour of being numbered among his acquaintance reconciles to all his vices and all his absurdities, and who easily persuade themselves to esteem him by whose regard they consider themselves as distinguished and exalted. It is dangerous for mean minds to venture themselves within the sphere of greatness. Stupidity is soon blinded by the splendour of wealth, and cowardice is easily shackled in the fetters of dependence. To solicit patronage is, at least, in the event, to set virtue to sale; none can be pleased without praise, and few can be praised without falsehood; few can be assiduous without servility, and none can be servile without corruption."\*

A petulant and disrespectful carriage towards any is, indeed, every way opposite to that courteousness and humility which the gospel enjoins. But we ought always to distinguish between humility and meanness. True humility always associates with magnanimity, and is never to be found but in minds ennobled by the

\* Dr. Johnson's Rambler, No. 104.

Gospel, which gives us the true knowledge of God and of ourselves, and at the same time extends our prospects beyond, and elevates our affections above, the low and transitory things of time and sense. But meanness is a timid, grovelling, sordid disposition. Its views are confined to the things of this world, which appear exceedingly big and important in its eye; and it will stoop to the most abject submissions, the most servile compliances, the most fulsome adulations, and all the low and debasing arts of humouring the corruptions of men from whom it has any thing to hope or fear. Persons of this cast are destitute of that firmness, fortitude, and resolution, which the faith of the Gospel inspires, and which is absolutely necessary to withstand the influence of the world, and so they become an easy prey to every temptation. It may be thought that such a disposition is every way inconsistent with pride; but meanness and pride often go together. Men often court honour by giving it; and it will frequently be found, that those who carry themselves in the most mean and abject manner towards their superiors, are at the same time the most haughty and supercilious towards those whom they think below them.

Nothing is more unworthy of the majesty of the Christian profession, or of the dignity of the children of God, than to flatter the vanity and feed the pride of men. Elihu says, Job, xxxii. 21, 22. "Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person; neither let me give flattering titles unto men: for I know not to give flattering titles; in so doing my Maker would soon take me away." How few Christians have such a deep sense of the guilt and danger of accepting men's persons and giving them flattering titles as Elihu had!

If we look into the character of Jesus, whose example we are called to imitate, we shall find the most perfect humility, meekness, and condescension, and yet at the same time the most free and open plain-dealing, without the least respect of persons, or so much as one flattering idle compliment, through the whole of his converse with men. His apostles, who were endued with the same Spirit, trode in the same steps. Paul, writing to the Christians of Thessalonica, says, **1 Thess. ii. 4—7.** “But as we are allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God, who trieth our hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness. Nor of men sought we glory.” The Apostle here denies that they sought to please men by accommodating the Gospel to their corruptions; and in **Gal. i. 10.** he says, “For if I yet pleased men I should not be the servant of Christ.” He denies also that they at any time used flattering words to humour men’s pride, or for the sinister ends of covetousness. Neither did they court fame or praise; “Nor of men,” says he, “sought we glory.” We must not confine this merely to the exercise of their office in preaching the gospel: it applies to the whole of their conversation, wherein every private Christian is called to imitate them, as he has them for an example. In all this he glances at the false teachers, who soothed men’s corruptions, and held the persons of the rich in admiration, because of the worldly advantage they expected to reap from them, **Jude, 16.**—John says, “They are of the world, therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them,” **1 John, iv. 5.** in other words, they are worldly, carnal men, and they



suit their doctrine to the humour and taste of the world, and therefore men of the same worldly temper with themselves hearken to them, and greedily imbibe their corrupt doctrines.

This abject deference to persons on account of their outward circumstances and appearance, is also condemned by James in the most pointed and unequivocal terms, ch. ii. 1—11. “My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come into your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly (splendid) apparel, and there come in also a poor man, in vile raiment; and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place, and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool; are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? Hearken, my beloved brethren; hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, which he hath promised to them that love him? But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before their judgment-seats? Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called? If ye fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well (that is, becomingly); but if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all,” &c.

Some, to elude the doctrine contained in this passage, confine it to judicial proceedings in administering justice, and so they make the *assembly*, here spoken of, a court of justice, and the *respect of persons* forbidden

to be a partial and unjust decision in favour of the rich, which we find was also forbidden in the law, Lev. xix. 15. But when we take the whole passage in its connexion, we must admit that it has a more extensive meaning. For it is addressed, not to men set apart to judge in civil matters, but to the Christian *brethren* in general to whom he writes. Nor does it respect civil courts of justice; for we have no account of any such courts held among Christians at that time: besides, the Apostle distinguishes this *synagogue* or assembly of Christians from these *judgment-seats*, to which their rich oppressors drew them, ver. 6. Moreover, the rich and poor man here are not represented as *impleading* one another, or demanding judgment upon any cause between them; but simply as *coming in* to the Christian assembly, without the least hint of their having any cause to determine, or any concern with one another. Nor is there the least hint of any *judicial sentence* or determination of a court, either with respect to the rich or poor man; but only a piece of respect paid to the rich, in preferring him to the best seat; and a despising of the poor man, by bidding him stand, or sit in a mean place. This is the only instance wherein their partiality is specified: but there is none of their giving partial judgment betwixt them in a judicial capacity.

Lastly; The rich man is not supposed to be a Christian brother; for the Apostle ranks him with those who oppressed the Christians, drew them before their judgment-seats, and blasphemed that worthy name by the which they were called, ver. 6, 7. And if he is not supposed to be a Christian brother, neither can he be supposed to appeal to the judgment of Christians, or stand to their decisions, who had then no

civil authority. From all which it appears, that James is not here speaking of partiality in judicial decisions. But from this passage we may learn,

1. That to make a difference among men, merely on account of the outward circumstances of wealth and splendour, so as to esteem and honour those who are possessed of them, and despise others merely because they want them, is a most criminal respect of persons, and inconsistent with the religion of Christ. "My brethren," says he, "have (or hold) not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory, with respect of persons." Every other religion in the world admits this respect of persons; and even national Christianity adopts it, as a sacred article of her creed: but the religion or faith of Jesus, which is not of this world, cannot be held consistently with it. In as far as men thus respect persons, in so far they depart from the faith of the Lord of Glory, support the pride of life, and criminally conform to this world.

2. He shews that this respect to the rich and despising the poor was diametrically opposite to God's thoughts and ways in the dispensations of his grace toward men. "Hearken, my beloved brethren; hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, which God hath promised to them that love him? But ye have despised the poor," ver. 5, 6. *i. e.* they despised those whom God chose and honoured; and they honoured and esteemed those whom God, for the most part, rejected, as oppressors of the saints, and blasphemers of the name of Christ, ver. 6, 7. "For not many mighty, not many noble are called," 1 Cor. i. 26. So that instead of being followers of God as dear children, they were in this running directly counter to him.

3. He shews that this unjust and carnal acceptance of persons was a flagrant violation of the royal law which enjoins the love of our neighbour. “If ye fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well. But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors;” ver. 8, 9. The law which enjoins the love of our neighbour has no respect to men’s outward circumstances; we are to love them whether they be rich or poor, high or low: but when we respect some on account of their riches, and despise others on account of their poverty, we have not the true principle of love in our hearts to either; and so offending in this radical point, we are guilty of all; ver. 10.—because in this case, we obey no part of that law from a proper principle of love to our neighbour, or regard to the divine authority; but entirely from worldly maxims.

4. He affirms that this manner of making a difference among themselves was the effect of their evil thoughts or reasonings. “Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?” ver. 4. Or, as it may be rendered, do ye not put a difference among yourselves, and are become judges of evil reasonings, *i. e.* judges who are influenced by your own evil reasonings, and vain imaginations, as thinking it right, proper, and becoming, that the rich should be honoured and respected on account of their wealth and gay clothing, and that the poor should be despised for their outward meanness. Yet these evil reasonings are every where to be found in the mouths of the strictest professors of christianity at this day. They will not, indeed, say, that the poor ought to be despised; but they will argue, that a very great diffe-

rence should be made betwixt them and the rich, as to our carriage and degree of respect towards them. And they are so settled in this judgment of the matter, from their own evil reasonings and worldly maxims, that they will not allow the Scripture to mean what it says.

5. The instance he condescends upon to enforce the charge of respect of persons, and to illustrate his meaning, is the preference they gave to the rich above the poor in their assemblies with respect to a seat. "If there come into your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel; and there come in also a poor man, in vile raiment; and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor man, Stand thou there, or sit thou here under my footstool;" ver. 2, 3. Many, who condemn respect of persons in a general way, will not admit that this is a proper instance of it. They think it not only necessary, in point of decorum in the world, but even in point of conscience and duty, to make such a difference according to men's outward appearances. They think they may have as great an inward respect for the poor man as the rich, though they do not shew him the same degree of courteousness and outward respect, or accommodate him with an equally good place. They figure to themselves how ridiculous impartiality carried this length would appear in the world, and immediately reject it as absurd and whimsical. These men can easily admit general doctrines, in the gross, which they will deny in detail, when they come to be urged in this or that particular in the practice; and this is one of the great deceits of the human heart.

6. The Apostle does not mean to confine all res-

pect of persons to the particular instance here ad-  
 duced. It is only a single specimen, to illustrate the  
 general point in hand, which he states in ver. 1. even  
 as our Lord's example of washing his disciples' feet,  
 though literally to be followed when needful, has yet  
 a more general signification, and was intended to  
 teach his disciples humility and condescension to one  
 another in the meanest offices of brotherly love. So  
 in this instance of respect of persons every other ex-  
 pression of it is included. It seems to be one of the  
 lowest and least exceptionable instances in the esti-  
 mation of men; and therefore, in this case, must  
 necessarily take in the highest, as well as every inter-  
 mediate degree of it. The prohibition, therefore, is  
 not to be restricted to a seat in christian assemblies,  
 but must be extended to every part of our conduct in  
 life. Respect of persons is stated as inconsistent  
 with holding the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ; and  
 as there is no instance, time, or place, wherein we  
 are at liberty to act contrary to the faith, neither is  
 there any wherein we may shew respect of persons.

7. He is not blaming them for the civil courtesy  
 and respect which they shewed to the rich man, *absolutely*  
 considered; but for the *comparative* preference  
 which they gave him to the poor man; whereby it  
 plainly appeared, that they respected the one on ac-  
 count of his outward appearance, and for the same  
 reason despised the other. It was right that they  
 should behave with civility, courtesy, and kindness,  
 towards the rich man, and accommodate him with a  
 good place; but so ought they also to have done to  
 the poor man, and not to have despised him, by bid-  
 ding him stand there, or sit here under their footstool.  
 It is their *partiality*, their discriminating, or making

a difference betwixt them, so as to respect the one, and despise the other, that is blamed. This is that *acceptation of persons*, wherein the preference is given, not to the merits of the case, but to the quality and circumstances of the person.

Were it not that I have been so long upon this subject, I might now shew, that the pride of life is not peculiar to those who are called people of rank and station, who, in the estimation of the world, are considered as having a kind of privilege or dispensation for it, and on whom, it must be confessed, it sits more gracefully; but it is also to be found among the lower class of people, many of whom affect to look big, and mimic the air, manner, habit, and appearance of the rich. These would-be-gentry are perhaps the most pitiable beings in the universe. They studiously copy the pride, superciliousness, and even vices of the opulent, while they are destitute of their culture, and incapable of their magnanimity, generosity, and usefulness; and exhibit such a medly and compound of ignorance, vanity, and meanness, as may serve for a perfect burlesque on the pride of life.

But, not to dwell upon such characters, I would only observe, that even many Christians, in the ordinary and lower spheres of life, are not altogether free from this kind of conduct, though nothing is more unbecoming their profession. The poor have the seeds of pride in them as well as the rich, though they have not equal means and opportunities to display and gratify it. Our Lord's disciples were very poor men, yet we find he had frequent occasion to check and admonish them upon their strife and contention as to which of them should be accounted the greatest.

Pride and ambition led each of them to love preeminence above the rest, and to imagine he had the best claim to it. The pride of life operates among the middling and lower class of people—in their valuing themselves upon their connexion with the great—their stretching themselves beyond their circumstances to imitate them—and in their envious disposition towards them;—also in their discontent with their own condition—their unthankfulness for a moderate competency of the things of life, such as food and raiment, not being content with mean things, as enjoined, Rom. xii. 16.—their ambitious schemes and restless projects after high things—their despising their equals, and desire of superiority and preference, &c.

Lastly. The last thing I shall mention wherein we must not be conformed to the world, is that of resentment and *revenge* for injuries received. Resentment is the quick sense of an injury, disposing us to repel it. Revenge is the putting our resentment into execution, or returning the injury upon the offender. This takes its rise both from pride and hatred. It is pride that gives men such a quick sense of injuries, and which aggravates them much beyond their real magnitude; nay, it often apprehends offences and affronts when none was either given or intended. And what but hatred can dispose us to retaliate or seek the hurt of another in any respect? Equity, indeed, will warrant our demanding an adequate redress, and self-preservation will lead us to avoid and secure ourselves against injuries; but malevolence alone can prompt us to retaliation or revenge; yet nothing is more common in the world, and even among those who bear the name of Christians. How often do the



slightest wrongs and affronts, either real or imaginary, rankle in the breast, and in a moment put an end to the friendship and affection of many years!—and though it should not break forth in open acts of revenge, yet it frequently settles in a rooted disaffection, or at least in distance, coldness, and neglect. But let us consider the law of Christ upon this head.

1. With regard to our Christian brethren, should any of them trespass against us, we are not allowed to retaliate, or harbour the least resentful thought against them; but, on the contrary, are directed how to deal with them in love, in order to their conviction and recovery, and that every thing may be removed which affects our view of, or complacency in them as brethren; see Matt. xviii. 15—18. and if they repent, we are immediately and heartily to forgive them. But though all our endeavours should prove ineffectual to gain them, so that we cannot forgive them as penitent, or confirm our love to them as brethren, yet still we must bear good-will to them as men, and earnestly desire both their temporal and eternal happiness.—On the other hand, if we have injured our brother, or remember that he hath aught against us, we must without delay acknowledge our faults, and seek to be reconciled to him, and that before we approach unto God in his worship, and as we expect to be heard or accepted of him. This our Lord teaches us, Matt. v. 23, 24. “If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.” Thus the matter is guarded on all sides. We have no ground to expect forgiveness of

God, if we forgive not our repenting brother; for our Lord says, "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses," Matt. vi. 15. and so he hath directed us to pray for forgiveness *as we forgive.* ver. 12. So, in like manner, if we have offended against our brother, and need his forgiveness, our access to God is suspended till we have made the acknowledgments necessary to obtain a reconciliation.

2. We are not to bear resentment, or render evil for evil, even to our enemies; nor so much as to be pleased at their misfortunes. Job imprecates upon himself the worst of evils: "If," says he, "I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me; or lift up myself when evil found him," ch. xxxi. 29. Solomon says, "Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth, lest the Lord see it, and it displease him, and he turn away his wrath from him," Prov. xxiv. 17, 18. Our Lord says to his disciples, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil (or retaliate injuries); but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." To the same purpose Paul speaks, Rom. xii. 17. "Recompense to no man evil for evil;" and ver. 19. "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." And he exhorts the Thessalonians, "See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves and to all men," 1 Thess. v. 15. Peter also urges the same thing: "Not rendering evil for

evil, or railing for railing; but, contrariwise, blessing: knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing," 1 Pet. iii. 9. And he adduces Christ's example for this, chap. ii. 23. But this is not all; for,

3. We are commanded to render love for hatred, and good for evil, to our enemies. This our Lord most clearly teacheth, Matt. v. 43, to the end: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy." The law, indeed, commands us to love our neighbour as ourselves; but neither in the law, nor any other place in the Old Testament, are we commanded to hate our enemies; he must therefore refer to some strained inference or false gloss of the Jewish doctors, in this last clause; in opposition to which he says, "But I say unto you, Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans so? Be ye, therefore, perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect." See also Luke, vi. 32—37. Paul also teaches the same doctrine, Rom. xii. 20, 21. "Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." This he quotes from Prov. xxv. 21. where it is added, "and the Lord shall reward thee;" ver. 22.

It is evident that we cannot love our enemies with a love of *complacency* and delight; but we ought to love them with a love of *benevolence*, or good-will, to be manifested in doing them good as we have opportunity. This is the plain meaning of the passages just cited. We ought to have such a hearty concern for their salvation, as will lead us to wish them a *blessing*, even when they are cursing us; and unfeignedly to *pray* to God for them, even while they despitefully use and persecute us. This praying for the most malignant enemies, was exemplified by Christ upon the cross, when they were embroiling their cruel hands in his innocent blood: Luke, xxiii. 24. "Father, forgive them," says he, "for they know not what they do." And Stephen utters this prayer, when his enemies were stoning him to death: "Lord lay not this sin to their charge;" Acts, vii. 60. But our love to our enemies must not rest in good wishes or prayers: our Lord commands us to *do good* to them that hate us; and Paul specifies some of the good offices we are to perform to them: "If thine enemy hunger *feed him*; if he thirst, give him drink." These acts of unmerited goodness are enforced by the example of our heavenly Father, who maketh his sun to rise, and sendeth rain on the evil and unjust, Matt. v. 45.—or as Luke hath it, "who is kind to the unthankful and the evil;" chap. vi. 35.

How opposite is this command of loving our enemies to the course of the world called christian, and to the natural disposition of our own hearts! Though our Lord makes it an essential characteristic of the children of God, yet few attend to the extent of the precept, or admit it in its genuine sense; and fewer still

practice it, with any degree of heartiness or sincerity. —Not to resist evil, or retaliate injuries, is generally looked upon as flowing from meanness, cowardice, and pusillanimity ; or, in the modern phrase, from want of spirit. It is considered as the greatest folly, contrary to the natural principle of self-preservation, and the way to encourage further wrongs, like laying down our necks and inviting men to tread on them. But all this is only the language of pride, the spurnings of the carnal mind, that savours not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men. Nothing discovers true greatness, generosity and fortitude of mind so much as forgiveness of injuries, and returning good for evil. Herein we resemble God, who is the pattern of every thing that is morally great or excellent. Hereby we evince ourselves to be the children of the Highest, born from above, and partakers of the divine nature. As to courage or fortitude, there is surely more true courage and valour in overcoming evil, than in being overcome by it. Now the Apostle tells us, that to avenge ourselves is to be overcome of evil ; but to forgive our enemy, and to return him good offices for his evil, is to overcome evil with good. This is a truly glorious conquest, a more noble and honourable victory than all the conquests of Alexander or Cæsar. Amidst all their tyranny over others, they were overcome of evil themselves, which is the most ignoble defeat of any ; but they knew nothing of overcoming evil with good. This is a conquest peculiar to the true Christian, and is entirely supernatural.

I come now, in the last place, to make a few general observations upon the whole of this doctrine.

1. From what has been said upon this subject, we may learn, that Christ's kingdom is not of this world. We have seen how his doctrine and laws strike directly against the maxims, lusts and course of this world, even the things that are most highly esteemed among men—that they are not calculated for men in a natural state, or to be adopted as the political or religious institutes of any nation on earth—that they belong only to such as are redeemed from the world, born from above, and have their minds principled with the faith and hope of the gospel—that they have all a reference to the heavenly state, calling us to be denied to the pleasures, the riches and the honours of this world, by the prospect of obtaining infinitely higher pleasures, riches, and honours, when Christ shall come again.

2. Hence also we may learn what it is to be a subject of Christ's kingdom. He is one who is disconformed to this world in his sentiments, disposition and practice; who has overcome the world by faith; who has, not only in profession, but in practice, renounced the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; who has denied himself, taken up his cross, and follows Christ; and who looks for his happiness, glory and honour, when Christ shall appear.

3. From this we may also see how much the religion of Jesus has been corrupted, by the various arts whereby men have endeavoured to accommodate it to the course of this world. Jesus has stated an irreconcilable opposition betwixt his religion and conformity to the world. He has told us, that the world will not receive it, but hate and oppose both it and its professors, even as it hated himself; John, xv. 19—that the friend-

ship of the world is enmity with God; James, iv. 4. But these sentiments have now in a great measure become antiquated. Men imagine they have now become wiser than in the infancy of Christianity, when, they think, the opposition was stated too strongly by an injudicious zeal, and when men's minds were heated by contention and opposition; but now, by a little more liberality of sentiment, moderation, and trimming a little on both sides, they think matters betwixt Christ and the world may be brought to a pretty amicable bearing. Our Lord's doctrine upon the various branches of disconformity to the world ought to be a little softened; for surely he did not intend that his words should be taken in their strictest sense. He cannot mean, in forbidding the *lust of the flesh*, that we should not gratify our natural appetites, or pursue pleasures; but only that we should not waste our substance beyond our ability, or impair our health by them, or hurt our character in the world. He does not mean, by the *lust of the eyes*, or the service of Mammon, that we should not use every honest means to get rich; but only that we should not set our hearts upon riches. And as to the *pride of life*, he can never mean to degrade the rich into a level with the poor; or to deny them that pomp and splendour, that honour and respect, which riches will always procure; but only that they should not exceed others in their own station, and be rather more moderate, remembering that these things do not constitute the happiness of men!

By such deceitful reasonings and shallow pretexts as these, men impose upon themselves, stifle the convictions of conscience, and evade the full force of the plainest declarations of the word of God. The offence

of the cross is in a great measure thus got rid of; and the profession of the religion of the Son of God is moulded into a consistency with the course of this present evil world: an awful delusion, as those who are engaged in it will sooner or later prove it to be. Let us, my brethren, be continually upon our guard, lest our minds be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ Jesus. Let us watch, and keep our garments unspotted from the world, harkening to the voice of him that hath said, "Behold, I come quickly:" AMEN; EVEN SO, COME, LORD JESUS.

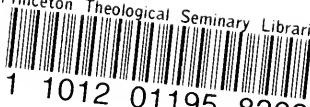
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Erratum—p. 52, line 5, for *world* read *word*.





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