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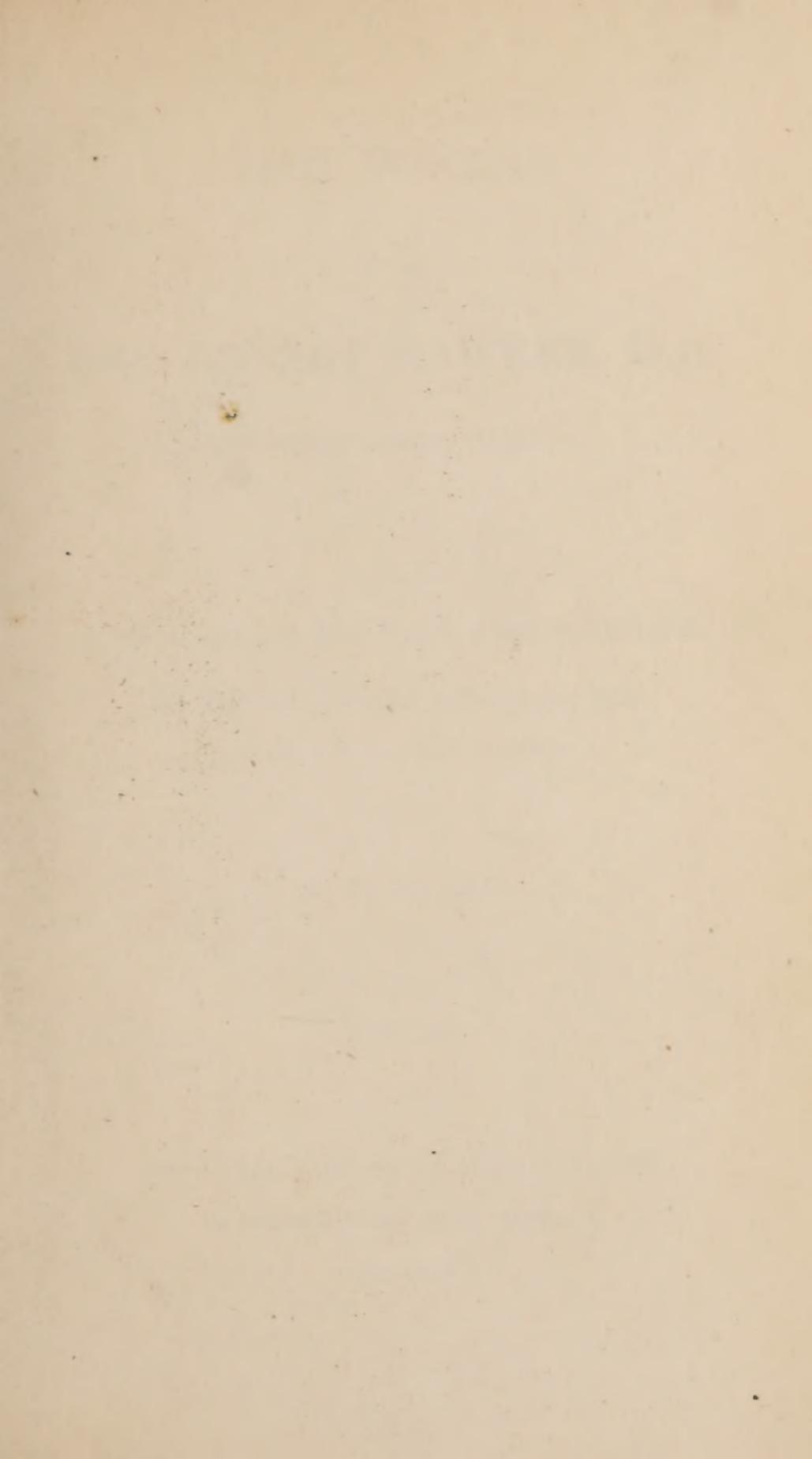
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THE WORKS

OF

REV. ROBERT LAWRENCE, D.D.

AND

OF HIS

EDUCATION

AND

OF HIS

OF HIS

OF HIS

OF HIS

THE WORKS

OF THE

REV. ROBERT HAWKER, D.D.

LATE VICAR OF CHARLES, PLYMOUTH.

WITH

A MEMOIR OF HIS LIFE AND WRITINGS,

BY THE REV. JOHN WILLIAMS, D.D.

MINISTER OF STROUD, GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

IN TEN VOLUMES.

VOL. VII.

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THE
PORTRAIT
OF AN
ENGLISH BISHOP
OF THE
SIXTEENTH CENTURY.



P R E F A C E.

If the title-page to this work be thought singular; and it be demanded—wherefore the Portrait of a Bishop of the *Sixteenth* century, rather than of any other century? The answer is at hand. This was the era, which, in reference to the religion of this country, might well be called, ‘the golden age of the church.’

The nation had lately emerged from popery: there were no schisms, no party spirit, no diversity of forms of worship, throughout the whole realm. It might have been said at this time, as it was in the days of the apostles, “the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul.” The pure fountain of religion, which, by long running over the *strata* of bigotry and superstition, in the cloisters of monkish darkness, had imbibed thereby a foulness and acerbity, was now refined and sweetened; and having risen again to its own original level, flowed with clearness through the land, diffusing its healthful streams in every direction.

From the commencement of the reign of Edward the Sixth may be dated the origin of the reformed church.* In this period, we behold a king, encircled with his court; the

* Though the reformed church, strictly speaking, may be said to have had its rise during the reign of Henry the Eighth; yet, it is notorious to every one acquainted with the history of those times, that Henry himself, notwithstanding his quarrel with the pope, lived and died a papist.

whole body of his clergy; the two universities; and the great mass of the people, all actuated with one and the same spirit, and all with one voice concurring in the profession of "the faith once delivered to the saints." And young as Edward then was, and short as the duration of his life proved, yet, while he lived, he shone like a planet of the first order, with his satellites around him. And although this brilliant age of the church suffered an awful eclipse during the succeeding reign of Mary, yet, when through the providence of God this period was passed, the brightness brake out afresh, and continued with undiminished lustre through the whole of the monarchies which followed, of Elizabeth and James, and in a splendour never before known, and never since equalled in this kingdom.

Such a period in the English history forms an epoch the most favourable and proper for drawing the portrait of her bishops. And without all controversy, it must be allowed, that when we behold in the prelates of that age a beautiful correspondence to the apostolic pattern, we behold in them no less the genuine features of christianity exemplified, and brought forth into life. The primitive days of the church of Christ were again realized: and her bishops beheld, reflecting back a greater dignity upon their order, than that order conferred upon themselves.

It may be said indeed, and said with truth, that the portrait of a bishop of the sixteenth century, is, or ought to be, the portrait of every bishop, in every century of the church, from that period to the present; since no alteration whatever hath taken place in her doctrines or discipline, for they are, *totidem verbis*, the same in every point now as they were then.

All this may and indeed must be allowed, and yet the peculiar propriety of the sixteenth century still contended for,

as the period of all other most suited for sketching the character of an English bishop. By looking back to a time so remote we avoid every thing personal. Here, nothing can be said that can justly be deemed invidious; nothing which can reasonably give offence. Living characters can have no right to feel hurt in the commendation of dead saints: they are known to the present generation only by name: and in respect to themselves, they have been too long “gathered to their fathers and seen corruption,” to be affected either with the good or ill opinion of men: applause or censure, as it concerns them, are words without meaning.

One word more, by way of preface. Though the portrait proposed to be here drawn, is that of a bishop of the sixteenth century, yet let it be understood, that the character is not meant to be limited to any individual of the order in particular. The artist recollects, and with much pleasure in the history of those times, the great names of Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, Parker, Ponet, Whitgift, and a long *et cæteri* of illustrious men, who were the highest ornaments of the age in which they lived. But neither of them, exclusively, is intended in the portrait here drawn. It is not the features of any one in particular which is designed, but of the whole taken together. The object is meant to concentrate, and bring into a focus, the prominent parts of character, such as may justly be supposed to form the *tout ensemble*.

And should the colouring, like the motto in the title-page, of a bishop of more modern times be thought too vivid, yet still, as a picture, it ought not to offend. For in sketching public characters of any description, the artist is supposed rather to draw the portrait of the *order* than the *person*; rather to shew what the man should be, than what he really is. It was a very elegant and highly finished eulogy of this kind, which Morus, in his oration at Geneva, gave of arch-

bishop Usher, when he stiled him, '*Magnum Usserium! Excellentissimum Dei servum! Reverendissimum virum Dei! seculi nostri Athanasium. Maximum Britannia decus!* Usher the great! The most excellent servant of God! The most revered man of God! The Athanasius of our age! Britain's greatest glory!'





THE PORTRAIT
OF
AN ENGLISH BISHOP.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

IN drawing the portrait of any character, in order to sketch the features faithfully, the canvas, on which the picture is to be drawn, must be so formed, that the background of the piece, and every thing connected with the subject, may have a proper correspondence with each other. To speak without a figure:—there must be an unity of design through the whole, in filling in the features of any character; and in order to form a right estimate of the man, we must take into account the manners of the age in which he lived.

Every one who knows any thing of the history of the reformed church, cannot but know also, that the glorious era of its commencement, was in the early part of the sixteenth century. Perhaps the first deadly blow given to popery, was the one struck by the nervous arm of Luther, the great reformer in Germany, in the opposition he made to the pope's bull, in the year 1517. But the emancipation of this country from the papists, was not until many years after.*

* History cannot furnish an instance of a more intrepid and undaunted mind than Luther manifested upon this occasion. Leo the Xth, at that time the

It is, no doubt, to be dated as early as in the last years of Henry the Eighth, or in the opening of the reign of Edward the Sixth, the day-dawn of this great blessing; but the establishment of the reformed church in this land, somewhat later. However, from the accession of Edward to the throne, unto the close of the reign of James the First, the great truths of God were known, professed, and for the most part, lived up to, by all ranks and orders of the clergy in the kingdom, in a way and manner as had never been equalled since the days of the apostles.

It will be understood, however, that I except in this statement, the *five years* of the reign of Mary, who succeeded Edward on the throne. These form a parenthesis in the history. (And an awful parenthesis

Roman pontiff, with an intention to raise money, granted exemptions from the pains of purgatory. For this purpose, he issued his bull. And to such an extent were those indulgences intended to operate, that they were exposed for sale, at all public places, even in shops and taverns. Martin Luther, at this period, was a monk of the dominican order. He immediately opposed the pope's authority, by publicly preaching against it. He boldly asserted, that the pontiff possessed no such power of granting those indulgences: and he as firmly declared, that there could be no efficacy in such pretended exemption. This conduct of Luther, as might well be expected, brought upon him the whole thunder of the pope. Leo sent forth his *anathema* against Luther; and Luther, in return, publicly burnt the pope's bull in the street of Wirtemberg. And thus the torch was lighted up in Germany, which, through the over-ruling providence of God, was to go out no more, until the dark night of popery, which for so many centuries had covered the christian world, was passed away. From thence the light communicated to this land; and, under the Lord's blessing, the whole nation at length emerged into the pure light of the gospel of Christ.

There was, and is, somewhat remarkable in the year 17, in several centuries. John Huss was burnt as an heretic at Bohemia, 1417; and at the stake, he uttered, in a way of prophecy, a threat to the papists, that after an hundred years they should be called to an account for it. And this dying declaration was delivered in so striking a manner, that certain of the Bohemians caused a motto to be stamped upon their coin, with this inscription, *post centum annos*. In 1517, Martin Luther, as hath been observed, began the revolution by burning the pope's bull. In 1617, to such a fulness had the streams of the sanctuary risen, in the advancing the great truths of God, that this period may be considered as the high water mark, in this kingdom, on this point. In 1717, the tide had turned, and run out to so low an ebb, that, to speak in the words of the prophet, it might have been said, "truth is fallen in the street." What the year 1817 hath produced, and in its eventual consequences will produce, time will fully develope.

indeed it was!) But, abstracting from the account of the church this *interregnum*; it may be truly said, that from the abolition of popery, to the death of James, the blessing of God, in the light of the gospel, shone eminently upon this land. And it might have been observed, as is recorded of the primitive days of christianity, that in this period also, the churches had rest, and were edified, and “walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.”

Let the reader pause, as he contemplates this state of things, and then make his own comment. Let him figure to himself the whole realm as actuated, on a subject of all others the most interesting, with one heart and one soul. In this sense, as concerning religion, the kingdom was but as one family. Not a single congregation of dissention—not a pulpit but what proclaimed the same doctrines—not a preacher but what preached the same truths! Let him ponder well the auspicious era; and calculate, if he can, what blessed consequences must have resulted, under the divine blessing, from such harmony in religion, both in respect of “the happiness of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.”*

* Let me not be misconstrued in this statement, I am speaking of the *general* complexion of the times. There were, no doubt, many, who in *private*, like the *free-will* men, as they were afterwards called in the reign of Elizabeth, did not relish the pure truths of God; and such as we know, at a future period from this, sought for an act of toleration. But there were no public meetings in those days, where a departure from the truth was advanced. Perhaps an higher proof of the unanimity which prevailed throughout the whole kingdom, on the subject of religion, cannot be desired than what the history of those times furnisheth, in a well-authenticated record.

‘Peter Baro, a foreigner and a refugee, had not only found asylum in this country from papal persecution; but, through public favour, had obtained an appointment of professor in the university of Cambridge. This man in a sermon, *ad clerum*, had the effrontery to advance certain heretical opinions, in direct opposition to the universally received doctrines of truth. And much about the same time, one William Baret, fellow of Caius College, stood forth to call in question the doctrine of *justification by faith*. The whole body of the clergy, with the heads of houses, took the alarm at these proceedings. Both were compelled to make a public recantation before the university. And Baro, in addition to his disgrace, incurred the queen's displeasure. An historian of known veracity tells us, that in a conversation which her majesty soon after

Let him pause again and again, as he beholds this beautiful order; then let him turn his thoughts, and call home to his recollection the present state of discord on points of faith, with which the kingdom is now torn. Let him calculate, if he be able, the divisions and subdivisions of the several sects among us; in some instances, indeed, carried to such a wonderful length, that they seem to be at a loss to find a name, whereby to designate their particular order. And when the reader hath duly pondered over the whole, let him appreciate the happy state with which the church of England, on this account, was distinguished in the sixteenth century.

It was during this period that the book of common prayer, the articles, and homilies were formed, and carried into a law. And from that time, to the present, have been, or are supposed to be, the standard of the doctrines which constitute the established religion of this country.*

I stay not to make any observations which might be thought invidious. It is to be lamented that for the last *two centuries* the tranquillity of the church hath been sadly interrupted, from various causes. A sense directly opposed to the plain and genuine spirit of the

held with archbishop Whitgift, the queen observed, that 'Dr. Baro being an alien ought to have carried himself quietly in a country where he had been so humanely harboured, and where both he and his family had been enfranchized.' — See *Strype's Life of Whitgift*.

* It may not, perhaps, be generally known; and if so, it will not be unacceptable to remark, that the liturgy and articles were not of the same date. The common prayer book was composed as early as the year 1549; though, perhaps, not immediately brought into use. The psalmody of Hopkins and Sternhold bears a later date, namely, 1552. And the articles were subsequent to both. The difference in the two translations of the book of Psalms is also worth remarking; the most ancient is the one which is used in the church in the ordinary reading of the liturgy, and is evidently taken from Cranmer's bible, first published in the year 1539. The other, is in the bible, in the translation made soon after the accession of James the First. This translation was formed in a synod appointed by the king's authority, and is what is now in use. Fuller, in his history, saith, that this was one of the best things produced by the Hampton court conference.

articles, hath been advanced by many; although to this hour, the establishment herself, still remains unaltered and unrepealed, in all her legitimate principles. But it is evident to every looker-on, that instances have not been a few, where men have attempted to give a different construction to the plain and obvious meaning of the articles; (and very plain and obvious to common sense they are, taken in their literal acceptation,) and have laboured in very vanity in the service; and not only been defeated in their views to carry conviction to others, but plainly manifested by their performance, that they have not satisfied themselves. And the probable circumstance, generally speaking, hath been, that in the early part of life, subscription was entered into, without due consideration, which in after days, on reflection, brought self-reproach. And even in cases where the mind had a proper sense of the real meaning of the articles, but considered subscription to them as a matter *pro formá*; no doubt many might have followed the beaten path, heedlessly of others gone before them.*

Under the present existing circumstances, therefore, without due attention in marking truth from the semblance of it, to draw the portrait of a bishop of the sixteenth century, in a faithful manner, would be attended with no small difficulty. For if the features be taken, in conformity with the plain sense of the articles,

* Mr. Whiston, in his *Memoirs*, hath given a curious anecdote on the subject of subscription. 'I must,' saith he, 'tell a melancholy story of my own knowledge. When I was once talking with the then lord chief justice King, we fell into a debate about signing articles which we did not believe for the sake of preferment. He openly justified the measure, and insisted upon it. 'We must not,' he said, 'lose our usefulness for scruples.' I replied, 'that I was sorry to hear his lordship say so; and desired to know, that as he was a lawyer, whether in courts of law there was allowed such prevarication?' He answered, 'certainly not.' And this produced this rejoinder from me. 'Suppose,' I said, 'God Almighty should be as just in the next world as my lord justice is in this: where are we then?' To which he made no answer. And queen Caroline, to whom I related the story, very properly said, 'the justice in his silence was right, for no answer could be made to it.'—See *Whiston's Memoirs*, p. 162.

which those men not only subscribed, but many of them had a hand in framing; it might be contended by those, who had frittered away the spirit of them, and squared them by the standard of modern expositors, that the portrait is not correct: and on the contrary, with those who accept the doctrines of the church of England, according to the simple and unvarnished language of the original compilers of the liturgy; the smallest departure from those principles, in the character of a bishop of those times, would be deemed, and justly deemed, an unfaithful picture.

The question therefore is, What is to be done? Are there no data to go by, in coming at the knowledge of the real character of those men on the doctrines of faith? Can it be indeed a matter of difficulty, to ascertain what were the real sentiments of the bishops of that generation on the great points of theology? Supposing for a moment, for argument's sake, that there never had been the thirty-nine articles, would not the writings of those great divines on the same subjects, have been tantamount in the discovery of their religious tenets?

I humbly think this to be a fair statement of the case. And if, from the documents of those times, handed down to us as they are in authentic records, the faith and practice of those venerable reformers from the errors of popery are clearly discoverable; surely common candour must be constrained to allow that these form an equal testimony for decision to the point in question, even if the articles of the church of England were laid aside.*

* I hope it will not be supposed, from this concession of passing by upon the present occasion, the articles, as if I meant to relinquish such an evidence, or that I lay no stress upon it. This would be as ungenerous, as it would be unfair. For the fact is, that I do lay the greatest stress upon the articles, as binding in the most solemn manner the conscience of every individual who subscribes them. I consider them (as every plain, honest man must consider them) unanswerable, and conclusive to all the points there agreed upon. For after all that

In following up this enquiry, it is happy for our purpose that we are in possession of numerous writings of

hath been said, or can be said, by the utmost ingenuity of human learning, to twist and twine the meaning of them, in accommodation to any time-serving purpose, the articles remain still the same; and surely of all plain principles, designed to be conveyed in plain sense, nothing can exceed the homely language of the articles of the church of England. And I cannot but think that those venerable and conscientious reformers of the church from popery must have acted upon the model of holy scripture in their decisions, and suffered nothing of error to have crept in, to countenance the smallest departure from the standard of "the faith, which was once delivered unto the saints."

And my opinion is still yet more strongly confirmed from comparing the writings of those men of God with the articles themselves, which carry with them an exact correspondence. They had a strong apprehension of the apostacy, which, according to the prophecy of scripture, would mark the after times of the church. Their writings, as is well known to those that are conversant with them, foreboded awful and perilous seasons in the latter day dispensation. They were men evidently taught of God. They accepted those prophetic parts of scripture, which were left by the apostles, as the marks and characters by which the church was to be known before the slaughter of the "two witnesses," (Rev. xi. 7.) as infallible and sure. And they acted upon them. Hence, therefore, they were the more anxious to lay down in the articles, a summary of the true faith, because they foresaw that the time would come when the mere professors of godliness, void of the power thereof, would not as the apostle had foretold "endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts would heap unto themselves teachers having itching ears, and would turn away from the truth, and be turned unto fables." 2 Tim. iv. 1—4.

It appears from the history of those times, after the reformation, that the higher orders in the church were not only eminent examples for their adherence to the truth in themselves, but anxious in watching over the conduct of others. And they certainly had strong presentiments of a falling away in the after days. For as the established church of England had taken such a decided part in the reformation, to countenance the departure from popery over the continent, they were no doubt the more tenacious that nothing of the gangrene of error should be found in this country. In particular, the universities watched over the students with the most sedulous circumspection; and not a college was suffered to advance a single point on theology, in any of its branches, which either by allusion, or in a more direct reference, led to any thing questionable on the distinguishing doctrines of faith.

May I add, by way of illustration, an anecdote given by one of the doctors of divinity, writing from college to a bishop of those times on the subject of the articles, which will serve to put the matter on its own basis. 'We have,' said he, 'some doings here of late, about one of Penbroke Hall, who preached in St. Mary's, about the beginning of Lent, and who seemed in his discourse to avouch the insufficiency of faith to justification, and to impugn the doctrine of the 11th article. For which, he was convented by the vice-chancellor, Dr. Lowe, who was willing to have accepted an easy acknowledgment; but the same party, preaching his latin sermon, *pro gradu*, upon Rom. iii. 28. said, that he came not *palinodiam canere, sed eandem cantilenam canere*. This so moved the vice-chancellor, that he demanded his sermon, which he refused to deliver. Whereupon, on Wednesday last, being Barnaby-day, the day appointed for the

the churchmen of that age; all which most decidedly concur in a sameness of sentiment on the great and leading points of doctrine. Indeed, a general uniformity is manifested through the whole of their writings. It cannot come within the limits of a work of this kind, even to make selections from papers which are so voluminous. I must deny myself such an indulgence. I only beg to refer every reader of common candour to consult the works themselves; and very sure I am, his mind cannot but receive the most ample conviction, that the subscription to the articles, and the real sentiment of their hearts were in most perfect unison on these doctrines. And if the reader can, and will have recourse to some of the old bibles of those times, and observe the marginal notes, and catechisms, which are bound up with some of them, he will soon discover what were the leading doctrines of the then day.

It was well known, that about that period (the sixteenth century,) the holy scriptures were translated from the original language by faithful men, into our mother tongue. This was the first thing of the kind hitherto done. And the labour was received by the whole nation (as might have been well expected,) with an ardour of affection, bordering upon enthusiasm. Myles Coverdale, William Tyndale, Richard Traverner, Thomas Matthews, and some few others, to whom the history of those times bear honourable testimony, were the first which took the lead in this great work. And all subsequent writers, who have noticed

admission of bachelors of divinity, and the choice of the bachelors of divinity, which must answer *Dei comitorum*, he was stayed by the major part of the suffrages of the doctors of the faculty. And though sundry doctors did favour him, and would have had him to be the man that should answer *Dei comitorum*, yet he was put by, and one Mr. Flatkers of our college chosen to answer. The truth is, there are some heads among us that are abettors of Mr. Tournay, (the party above-mentioned), and who no doubt are backed by others. I pray God that we may persist in the doctrine of our church contained in the articles and homilies.'

this transaction, have borne their approbation to the faithfulness of the same.

To these succeeded the labours of archbishop Cranmer, in the translation of the bible, which still bears his name. Not that the archbishop was the sole labourer in that work; but from being in the see of Canterbury at the time of the publication, he gave sanction to it, and it took more particularly his name. But whoever compares it with Coverdale's, or Tyn-dale's bible, will discover how great a part is copied from both. Soon after came out what is commonly called, the Bishops' bible; and so denominated, from being the joint labours of several bishops. This bible first made its appearance under the auspices of archbishop Parker, who succeeded Cranmer in the metropolitan see of Canterbury. The first edition of this work was published in the year 1568. But it should be here again remembered, that in respect to the translation, it differed nothing from the bible of Myles Coverdale. Some time after all these, namely, in the year 1576, was first published the great quarto bible, commonly called the family bible, and which was intended (and, perhaps, take it altogether, was really so) as a correct edition of all the preceding: and what made this work yet more valuable, it was full of marginal notes and remarks.

I have been the more particular in this relation, because I humbly conceive, that by a reference to the marginal notes and catechisms on the great points of divinity, as well as the remarks with which, more or less, those translations of the scriptures abound; the faith of the great divines of the sixteenth century, may be easily ascertained. It would be irrelevant to the plan I must use in sketching the features of character in the bishops of that day, to do more than refer to them. But beyond all question, certain it is that the whole are in the most perfect agreement with the articles. The

whole are the works of one and the same men. And in the plain, unstudied, and artless language in which the whole is written, it is impossible, but by perversity, to be at a loss to know their meaning.

If, indeed, the shadow of a doubt could be supposed to arise on the subject, in addition to the reference to those bibles, where for the most part those marginal notes and catechisms are bound up with them, we might consult a well known work of this age, and which hath been preserved to the present, I mean Bishop Ponet's catechism. Every one who is at all conversant with the English history of the sixteenth century, cannot but know somewhat of this celebrated catechism, on points of doctrine. It was first published in the year 1553. Edward himself was a great admirer of it. So partial, we are told, by the historians of that age, was the young monarch of it, that he constantly used it: nay, some went so far as to call him the author of it. There doth not appear, however, sufficient authority to make this conclusion. But very certain it is, the king took much pleasure in it. And by an order of the convocation held under an express warrant of Edward, it was used in schools; and the youths were directed to be taught in it.

The Lambeth articles constructed for the giving clear apprehensions concerning faith, are too well known to need being mentioned upon the present occasion. They were nine in number, and all highly expressive of the pure doctrines of the gospel. They took their name of Lambeth articles, from the palace of the archbishop, from whence they were sent forth. History relates, that they were the joint labours of the archbishop himself (at that time, Whitgift); the bishops of London and Bangor; Tindall, dean of Ely; and Whittaker, one of the professors of the college. Archbishop Whitgift made this remarkable subscription to them. 'I know them to be sound doctrines, and

uniformly professed in the church of England, and agreeable to the articles of religion established by authority.' And archbishop Hutton, at that time metropolitan of York, to whom they were sent for his sanction, returned them to the palace at Lambeth, with these words added to them: '*Hæ theses, ex sacris literis, vel aperte, coligi, vel necessaria consecutione, deduci possunt,*' i. e. 'These points are gathered from the holy scriptures, either expressly, or by necessary consequence.' And thus approved by the archbishops of both provinces, the Lambeth articles were sent to the universities, accompanied with a recommendation from the archbishop of Canterbury to the heads of houses, that care might be taken nothing of a contrary nature should be taught in our *almæ matres*.—See *Strype's Life of Whitgift*.

I have now, in as brief a manner as possible, endeavoured to collect into one point of view, what were the leading sentiments, on the great subject of theology in the reformed church of this country, at the period of the sixteenth century. I have, indeed, been somewhat longer in this introductory chapter, than I could have wished, or had originally intended. But it appeared to me, I confess, a matter so highly important, that the standard of faith at this period, should be well and clearly ascertained, before that the portrait of the bishops of those days should be brought forth to view, that I hope it will be considered a sufficient motive for preparing the way in this manner. The point, however, being now very fully, and I trust satisfactorily answered, in discovering the principles of those venerable reformers, there will be the less difficulty in forming the character of the bishops upon this standard. Faithful men, in all ranks and orders of society, cannot but act up to their principles. And in the high and sacred department where those men moved, whose portraits we wish to draw, we may well look for a proportioned

greatness of fidelity. It was the character of ancient Rome, that her senators formed *res publica regum*, a commonwealth of kings. But an infinitely higher rank the word of God assigns to the ministers of Christ, for they are said to be "kings and priests to God and the Father."

One observation more, by way of introduction, I would beg to make, before that we enter upon the portrait, namely, that we throw into the back ground of the piece, every consideration of all other periods of the church but of the sixteenth century. The professed object of this little work, is to give the portrait of a bishop of those times, according to the system of religion which then prevailed throughout the kingdom. With all the subsequent and intermediate periods of the church, to the present hour, this work hath nothing to do. What change of features have taken place; how different, in many instances, hath been the order, and more especially in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; these are points foreign to the subject. The far greater part of the last, and the whole of the former, are now no more. They have long since been summoned to their audit. And we are all hastening fast after them. "And to their own master, they (as well as we) stand or fall."

Let the reader keep this in view, as he examines the portrait. Nothing personal is intended in the picture. It is the bishop which is held forth. The features will be general, and suited to many of the venerable prelates of that age. They will, as far as the office extends, form a family painting, and carry with them a family likeness. And the writings of those faithful men of God, which are still with us, will serve to elucidate and explain the several compartments of the portrait. Indeed, in their writings, it may be said, that "though dead, they speak." And on the subject of divine truths, they have discoursed with so much light

and brilliancy, that their works, taken together, form a rich constellation in the firmament of sacred literature; that after now near two centuries have run out, they still shine with undiminished lustre. So that the inscription, with which the bust of one of them was accompanied, would have suited for the most part all: *‘ Vivit æternumque vivit, in scriptis suis; cedro dignus, in ore, et corde, doctorum: in memoria hominum, et monumentis temporum; illumque posteritas, sera venerabitur,’* i. e. ‘ He lives, and shall for ever live in his own writings, meriting an endless remembrance in the mouth and heart of the learned; in the memory of men, and in the monuments of the times; and posterity, at a long distance, will honour him.’

CHAPTER II.

OF THE GENERAL STATE OF LEARNING AMONGST THE ORDER OF BISHOPS IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

IT will, I believe, be readily admitted, by every one who is at all acquainted with the history of the English nation, during the sixteenth century, that literature formed a very prominent feature in the character of her bishops.

Perhaps no period of the church was ever equally remarkable, for the extensiveness of erudition among the whole body of clergy; and eminently so among the higher orders. As it is said of Moses, at the forming of the church in the wilderness, that he was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians; so it might have been truly said, at the abolition of popery, and the establishment of the reformed church in this country; they who formed the more dignified department of the sanctuary, brought with them into it vast accessions of human as well as divine knowledge. And it is a fact,

which cannot require further evidence than what the history of those times furnish, and the writings of those faithful men of God fully prove, the way to episcopacy then was never found by any but well known, and well proved abilities; neither in those days did any but such wear the mitre.

Indeed, from the complexion of the English nation, and the critical situation of the reformed church at this era; it would have been impossible, humanly speaking, consistent with public safety, that it should be otherwise. Upon the accession of Edward to the throne, what from the state of his youth, and what from the turbulency of popery, recently suppressed, but not destroyed; it required men of the first talents to move in those higher spheres of the church, from whence might issue, not only a preponderancy of power, but also a preponderancy of ability, to convince by argument, as well as command by authority. Those principles blended, could only form an adequate security, under God, for diffusing the blessings of the reformation through the realm, and for counteracting the wiles of popery, in demonstrating the purity of the gospel.

And hence the king, with his whole court, were prompted to regard it as an object of the first magnitude, that the rays of learning should be gathered into a focus, and concentrated in the persons of the bishops. Nothing less could promise to establish upon sound principles the reformed church; and to detect and expose the legendary tales of Romish superstition. And whoever reads over the names of Edward's prelates, and attends to what history hath recorded of their characters and writings, will be constrained to acknowledge, that there appeared in the church at this period, some of the best, and of the most learned of men that ever lived. For as long as the English annals shall remain, the illustrious names of those reformers will shine in every page, and form a body of the brightest

luminaries, like the pleiades in the chambers of the south.

Edward himself, notwithstanding his youth, was eminently formed for the encouragement of learning, both divine and human. Every historian hath marked the character of this prince with eulogy. Good old bishop Latimer who knew him well, speaks of him, in his sermons, with rapture. ‘Blessed,’ said he, in one of them, ‘is the land where there is a king so noble, and brought up so godly. I will tell you this,’ said he, ‘and speak it even as I think, his majesty hath more godly wit and understanding, more learning and knowledge at his age, than twenty of his progenitors, that I could name, had at any time of their life.’—*See Latimer’s Sermons*, vol. i. p. 89, 90.

And Mountague, bishop of Worcester, who lived in the days of James, and therefore cannot be supposed, upon this occasion, to be chargeable with using flattery, when writing concerning that monarch, gives the following account of him:—‘Edward the Sixth,’ said he, ‘though his days were so short, that he could not give full proof of those singular parts that were in him, yet he wrote divers epistles and orations, both in greek and latin. And what is never to be forgotten, so diligent a hearer of sermons was that sweet prince, that the notes of most of the sermons he heard, are yet to be seen, under his own hand, with the preacher’s name, and time, and place, with all other circumstances of his preaching.’—*See Mountague’s Works*, 1616.

And a bishop of more modern times than Mountague, in his history of the reformation, though by no means partial to Edward’s creed, yet, in justice to Edward’s character, speaks in those high terms of his singular worth and abilities. ‘He was only in his sixteenth year,’ saith bishop Burnet, (for it is him I mean) ‘when he was accounted the wonder of the times. He was not only learned in the tongues, and

the liberal sciences, but he knew well the state of his kingdom. He kept a book, in which he writ the characters that were given him, of all the chief men of the nation; and of all the judges, lord lieutenants, and justices of the peace, over England. And in it he marked down their way of living, and their zeal for religion. He had studied the matter of the mint, with the exchange and value of money; so that he understood it well, as appears by his journal. He also understood fortification, and designed well. He knew all the harbours and ports, both of his own dominions, and of France and Scotland; with how much water they had, and what was the way of coming into them. He had acquired great knowledge in foreign affairs, so that he talked with the ambassadors about them in such a manner, that they filled all the world with his praise. He had great quickness of apprehension, and being mistrustful of his own memory, he used to take notes of almost every thing he heard. He writ these notes, first in greek characters, that those about him might not understand them; and afterwards put them in his journal. He had a copy brought to him, of every thing that passed in council, which he put in a chest, and kept the key of it himself. In a word, the natural and acquired perfections of his mind were wonderful. But his virtues and godliness, were yet far more extraordinary.' — *See Burnet's History of the Reformation*, vol. ii. p. 212.

Under the auspices of such a prince, it is not a subject of wonder that his bishops were eminent for profound learning, and sanctity of manners; and that they excelled in the sacred departments they filled. Indeed, while the king himself studied divinity, and made notes of all the sermons he heard, it might well be supposed that the preachers Edward heard could not be deficient. It certainly was an age of sound learning, blended with the most artless and unstudied

simplicity of language. Whoever reads the writings of the first English reformers, cannot fail to remark this as the distinguishing feature of the times; and which uniformly runs through the whole of their works.

We have a beautiful example of this kind in the instance of Ridley, as handed down to us in the history of the lives of the reformers. I mean, in the simple, but affecting apostrophe he made to his college, in the prospect of leaving it. He foresaw that at the death of Edward, and the accession of Mary, a thorough change would take place in religion; and that popery would again revive. Under this impression he beheld the favourite haunts which, in the college, he so long enjoyed, with painful view, and is said to have broke out in those lamentable expressions: 'Farewell, Pembroke hall! of late my own college, my cure, and my charge! What case thou art now in, God knoweth; I know not. Thou wast ever named since I knew thee, which is near thirty years, to be studious, well learned, and a great setter forth of Christ's gospel, in God's true word. So I found thee. And blessed be God, so I leave thee. Woe is for me, my own dear college, if ever thou suffer thyself, by any means, to be brought from that trade. In thy orchard, the walls, butts, and trees, if they could speak, would bear me witness, that I learned without book all St. Paul's epistles; yea, and I ween all the canonical epistles, save only the apocalypse; of which study, though in time, a great portion did escape me, yet the sweet scent thereof I trust I shall carry with me into heaven. The profit thereof, I think I have felt in all my life time ever after.'—*See Rolt's Lives of the Reformers.*

And what a lovely proof have we of the greatness of Ridley's mind, who, in the midst of all his excellencies, could, and did say, when comparing himself and others of his brethren, the bishops, with holy John

Bradford, as he was accustomed to be called ; ‘ In my conscience,’ said he, ‘ I judge him more worthy to be a bishop, than many of us who are bishops of being parish priests.’ Who but must admire the sweetness of such a meek and humble frame of mind !

What an interesting representation do such things afford, of the devotedness and sanctity in life and manners, of those holy men of God. The very recollection of their venerable names in their cathedrals, as at any time we walk through the aisles of those buildings, adds a solemnity to the hallowed spot. There is a certain undescribable sensation of sacred pleasure imparted, and which passeth over the mind, on those occasions, peculiarly gratifying. The thought seems involuntary, when we feel constrained to say, here once lived, and were engaged in holy service, those highly honoured servants of the Lord, who now rest from their labours, and are among “ the spirits of just men made perfect.”

I pass over the awful reign of Mary, which formed a chasm in the auspicious history of the reformed church ; and to the ministry of the great and good prelates which filled the episcopal sees, during the life of Edward. Every one knows, who is acquainted with the church’s history of these times, the sad events which followed the demise of Edward, and the accession of his sister Mary. It was a mercy to this land that her government extended but to *five years*. But what a five years of sorrow to the church of God it proved. All who looked on and beheld the approach of Edward’s death, looked forward to it with the most lively apprehensions of distress ; and presentiments of the greatest evil (and experience too soor proved them well founded) were generally entertained. We learn from the memoirs of those days, that Peter Martyr was at Oxford when the first mass bell rung in the revival of popery. He instantly exclaimed

‘*Hæc una notula, omnem meam doctrinam evertit,*’ *i. e.*
‘This one bell overturns all my doctrines.’

But how did the prospect brighten up again, and shine with increasing lustre, when on the death of Mary, her sister Elizabeth ascended the throne? And how was the whole reign of Elizabeth adorned with godly and learned bishops, in all the departments of the church? Never, surely, from the days of the apostles, was there ever a period so truly prosperous to the interests of christianity. The queen not only countenanced every thing which had a tendency to promote the welfare of the reformed church, but she was herself the known lover and patroness of all great and good men, both in church and state. It formed, indeed, a grand feature in Elizabeth’s character, to be always looking out for men eminent in godliness and abilities to fill the episcopal chair.

Educated herself in the great truths of God, and well versed in them, she had learnt in that school of adversity which the Lord caused her to pass through, during her sister’s reign of oppression and persecution, how to improve such circumstances to advantage. There she acquired the truest lessons for the future regulation of her conduct. And in the retirement and mortification, Elizabeth was compelled to observe through the whole of Mary’s reign, after her brother Edward’s death, her chief time was spent in study, and in the acquirement of knowledge, both divine and human. Little did this princess at the time, foresee the uses which were afterwards to result from it. But here it was, the Lord sent her to school to gather instruction. And well did she profit in this school, (which hath always proved the best for such purposes) when, in the after days of her reign, those instructions taught her how to minister in the most profitable manner to the Lord’s glory, and her subject’s happiness.

One of the historians of those days, in his lives of

the reformers, hath given this testimony to her attainments in human learning: 'She understood,' saith Rolt, 'the Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish, French, and the Dutch languages. She had herself translated several pieces from the writings of Xenophon, Isocrates, Seneca, Boethius, and others of the ancient writers, and with no small taste and accuracy.'

And in respect to her frame of mind, the great lord Bacon hath left upon record her character, in his usual style of perspicuity and elegance. 'The queen,' said his lordship, 'as touching her religion, was pious, moderate, constant, and an enemy to novelty. For her piety, though the same was most conspicuous in her acts, and form of government, yet it was no less pourtrayed in the common course of her life, and her daily compartment. Seldom would she be absent from divine service and the other duties of religion, either in her chapel or in her private closet. In the reading of the scriptures and the writings of the fathers, especially St. Augustine, she was very frequent. And she, herself, composed certain prayers upon emergent occasions. Within the compass of one year after her accession to the throne, on the demise of her sister Mary, she did so establish and settle all matters belonging to the church, as she departed not an hair's breadth from to the end of her life.'

It might reasonably be expected, that under the monarchy of such a princess, the episcopal bench throughout the realm was gracefully filled. And it must with truth be acknowledged that Elizabeth's great men in the church at that time, were good men; and her bishops, "the excellent of the earth."

Mary died in November, 1558, and before the close of the following year, we find the learned and godly Matthew Parker, in the see of Canterbury, and others of equal worth and ability filling the bench. And during a period of near five-and-forty years to which,

in mercy to the reformed church, the queen's life was prolonged, there was a regular succession of illustrious men in the line of episcopacy, concerning whom it might be said, in point of sanctity of life and manners, as it was said of the giants we read of before the flood; "they were mighty in their day and generation; men of renown!"

And it is no less a duty which we owe to the successor of Elizabeth in the throne, to observe that he was equally alive in promoting to the mitre as the vacancies opened, godly and learned men. James knew how to appreciate the talents of great and good men, though, alas! it is to be feared he wanted grace to imitate what he professed to admire. For it is a fact that I believe will hardly be questioned by those who knew his history best, James, amidst all his eccentricity, and the many personal improprieties of conduct, contradictory as they were to his better knowledge, was allowedly the most learned prince of his day in Europe. And no higher proof can be needed in confirmation of it, than in his appointment of Usher, to the bishoprick of Meath, in Ireland, solely on account of his uncommon learning and godliness. For when much interest had been made among the great men of the court party, for the vacant mitre, James stood firm to the appointment of Usher; neither would he listen to any solicitation to the contrary. And it is said, that afterwards the king was accustomed frequently to speak pleasantly on the occasion, and to say that Usher was a bishop of his own making.

We have another anecdote in proof of James's attention and regard to men of learning, in the instance of George Herbert, commonly called Master George Herbert, orator in the university of Cambridge. The king had written a book, which he called *Basilicon Doron*. And perhaps, it might be from priding himself in the knowledge of the dead languages, that he not only gave it a greek title, but sent a copy of it

as a present from the king to the university. It of course behoved the heads of houses to gratulate the royal author for the merit of his work, and at the same time to thank him for his condescension towards them. This duty, by virtue of the office, devolved on Mr. Herbert, as the public orator. And in an address, fraught with the purest latinity of compliments to the king on his work, Mr. Herbert, in the name of the university, presented his verses to his majesty. It appears that in the close of the address from the convocation, the orator took occasion to say, '*Quid Vaticanum Bodleianumq. obijcis hospes? Unicus est nobis bibliotheca liber.*' The whole was a masterly performance, and so suited to James's taste, that the king eagerly enquired after the orator's name. And being told, he asked the earl of Pembroke (who was at that time in waiting) if he knew him? To which that nobleman replied, that he knew him well, and that he was his kinsman. 'But,' added he, 'I love him more for his learning and worth, than for that of his name and family.' At which answer, it is said the king smiled, and very courteously desired the earl's permission to love him too; 'for,' said his majesty, 'I take him to be the jewel of the university.'

But, independent of all other proofs, the synod of Dort, which at James's particular request received some of the most eminent English divines to be added to that convocation, becomes a decided testimony in favour of the learning of this prince, as well as his great attachment to the reformed church.

Perhaps there never sat such a council as this Dordrechtan (excepting the one at Nice, in the fourth century) from the days of the apostles. It was composed of the most learned men, gathered from all the parts of Europe. The synod of Dort might truly be called the synod of theology, and *flos scholasticorum*. Indeed, the subject they met to discuss, demanded

such an assembly. And the reason for which I have adverted to it, is by way of proof of the high state of learning among our English divines, at that period. Nothing could be more to the honour of the church of England, nor to the character of James, than the appointment of the truly great men which were delegated to attend at Dort from this land. They were Dr. Hall, afterwards bishop of Exeter, and then Norwich. Dr. Carlton, bishop of Llandaff. Dr. Davenant, bishop of Salisbury; and Dr. Ward. And of the vast assembly of divines from the various parts present, Dr. Hall had the distinguished honour of being selected to preach before the whole body the sermon in latin.

It appears from history, that James had so much the weighty business at heart, for which this council was convened, that, previous to the departure of his delegates, the king sat and conversed with them two hours, with the greatest familiarity; and at parting, begged the Lord's blessing upon their embassy.*—*See Fuller's History.*

And, although it is matter of deep regret, not only in the history of James, but in the history of every man, whether prince or beggar, when, in religion, head-knowledge is unaccompanied with heart-influence; yet, it is a most certain truth, in the life of this prince, however faulty his conduct in other matters, his con-

* If the reader be not acquainted with this part of the church history, in relation to the synod at Dort, perhaps it may not be unacceptable to him the information, that this Dordrechtan council was appointed for the free and full discussion of what was called *The Five Points* of the great and distinguishing doctrine of the reformed churches throughout Europe. The five points were, 1. The doctrine of election. 2. Particular redemption. 3. The inability of the human will through original sin. 4. The invincible efficacy of God's grace. And 5. The final perseverance of the saints. A very solemn oath was administered to each delegate on entering upon the office, that he would accept of no guide, and be directed by no authority to form his judgment but the word of God. The decision of this sacred council ended in the establishment of the whole five points as here enumerated. So much for the history of the synod of Dort.

victions of divine things were clear and decided. And if we may credit the ablest and most faithful historians of those times, to the very close of his reign, James uniformly countenanced and cherished the leading doctrines established at the reformation; and invariably advanced into the higher department of the church, the most learned and orthodox of his clergy.

We have upon record, the address of the university of Oxford presented to his majesty at Woodstock, and within a few months before his decease. It was delivered before the king, in the name of the convocation, by that eminently learned divine, Dr. John Prideaux, at that time vice-chancellor, and afterwards bishop of Worcester. Among a great many handsome things with which James was complimented, the vice-chancellor said, ‘ Do we rejoice, that the university of Oxford is preserved untainted from the leaven of popery? We are indebted for that preservation, under God, to your majesty’s care. Do we congratulate ourselves, that our seats remain uninfected by the arminian pestilence? It was your forecast, which supplied us with the timely antidote. Are the discipline of the church, the good order of our colleges, and the episcopal government itself, preserved from the levelling and confounding innovations of puritanism? It is your royal and experienced wisdom, which hath damped the rage of the puritans, and restrained them with the bridle they deserve. Yes! to you we owe, that popery hangs its head; that arminianism is repressed; and that puritanism doth not lay waste our borders. Within the last nine years, Oxford hath sent forth seventy-three doctors in divinity; and more than one hundred and eighty bachelors in the same sacred science. I, as your majesty’s divinity professor, had the honour to be concerned, in the conferring of those degrees. And I can confidently affirm, that all those two hundred and fifty-three divines, and more, are warm detesters of popery; remote from the favouring

arminianism; and strong disapprovers of puritanism.*

Though I have connected into one view, the monarchies of Elizabeth and James, in order for the better discovery of the learned men of those days, who filled the higher departments of the church; yet I am well aware, that in so doing, I have not strictly confined myself to what is proposed in the title-page of this work. I beg pardon for this departure. Indeed, it hath been in some degree unavoidable. Beginning the outlines of this portrait from the reformation, it should be recollected, that half the sixteenth century was nearly exhausted at that time; so that, strictly and properly speaking, to include an hundred years, or nearly that number, I have been necessarily led, as far as the end of James's reign, into the seventeenth century. I request forgiveness for this trespass. But beyond this period, I shall not advance. Indeed, I can extend my portrait no further, without vast alteration. Alas! very different shades marked the features of England's bishops in the succeeding reign of Charles! the complexion from the bench soon manifested the departing glory, as those eminent lights disappeared, one by one, whom James, at his decease, left, in all the sees of the realm!

And now let the reader pause, and let him contemplate, from what hath been brought before him, the general state of learning among the order of bishops in the sixteenth century. What a body of divines, taken altogether, did this era of the world produce? Indeed, it should seem, as if the Lord had determined

* The original of this elegant address of the vice-chancellor was, as may be supposed coming from the university, delivered in latin. It may still be seen among the articles; *Lectio in Theolog. Johann. Prideaux. Edit. Oxon, 1648.*

It should be remembered that the *puritans* of those days were a very different description of men from what was afterwards called *puritans*. Those in the time of James were persons unfavourable to monarchy.

to render memorable, in forming at this period of the church, a rich constellation to shine in one full blaze to his own glory, and to enlighten the people. And though with thankfulness, we desire to acknowledge, that every age of christianity even in the worst of times, hath still been blessed with great men here and there, to support the Lord's interests in the earth; yet never, except in the days of the apostles, was there made to meet, such an assemblage of godly and great men, as in this age of the church; as if formed for the society of each other, and to promote, at this critical season, the Lord's cause, by an accumulation of the Lord's grace in the hearts of his people.

I must not stay to particularize. But when we find in the same century with the great reformers of our church, the names of Bucer, Paul, Fagius, Voetius, Sebelius, Zanchy, and a long *et cæteri*, of cotemporaries, all ministering in the same moment, to the common interest of the true church of Christ; we are led to see, that it was an age in which, by the overruling appointment of God, great men were raised up to live together. Neither are we at a loss, in some measure, to discover the Lord's designs in this providence. Popery was indeed palsied; but, like the serpent the peasant brought home to his house, though frozen, yet not dead. And we find, the thaw of succeeding centuries hath warmed, and given it new life. It will be more from the Lord's mercies over us as a nation than our deserts, if similar effects, as followed in the poor man's instance, do not follow us. Blessed, however, is the memory of the sixteenth century, through the whole of it from the reformation, and to the end of James's reign in the seventeenth. God then gave the church pastors after his own heart, which fed his people with knowledge and understanding. Both at home and abroad, the protestant interest had great prosperity. For the faithful servants of the Lord united as in one common cause,

which, for a while, kept back the chilling hand of papal influence.

And the high esteem entertained by all the learned on the Continent for the English divines, of the reformed church, cannot be better conceived than by recording a well known adage of the times. It was the usual phrase abroad, when speaking of our clergy, to say, '*Clerici Anglicani stupor mundi*,' 'The English clergy is the world's wonder.' And it was almost proverbial, when any minister in the Lutheran churches on the Continent excelled in preaching, to say, '*Percipimus hunc hominem fuisse in Anglia*,' 'We perceive this man hath been in England.'

And let any man read the writings of those divines; let him observe the beautiful simplicity and godly sincerity which, like a golden thread, run through all their works: let him notice their plain unstudied language, in which all the great truths of God are delivered in a style altogether artless and unassuming: convincing more by arguments than borrowing strength from human eloquence: and, surely, we may challenge the acumen of all the censors which ever lived to con over, with an eagle-eye of criticism, their labours; and find cause to alter a single phrase, or correct a single sentiment, either in doctrine or in language. And yet they wrote not to get favour: not to acquire the praise of men: but they held forth the great truths of salvation, and sought only how best to commend their ministry to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

And what summed up and put a beautiful finish to their whole character, they lived what they preached, and taught only what they themselves practised. Some men can talk well of God by books, but those men spake from the heart. The general feature of those saints of God, corresponded to what Jerome said of Nepotianus, who by frequent and unremitting meditation of the scriptures had his mind so stored with them,

that the father called him, ‘ a magazine of knowledge, and the library of Christ.’

Such then were the prelates of the church of England in the sixteenth century. And as long as England shall remain a nation, their names will be handed down from father to son with testimonies of the most dignified approbation.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE GENERAL FEATURES OF CHARACTER, WHICH, FOR THE MOST PART, DISTINGUISHED THE ORDER OF BISHOPS IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

It was a short, but comprehensive description, which one of the apostles gave of a blameless bishop, when he said, “ he must rule well his own house:” ‘adding this as a reason: “ for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?” And the conclusion is just. For unless the man himself be renewed in the spirit of his mind, and both house and heart are under divine government, how can he be suited in any one department for the service of the sanctuary? But when a man hath been brought into a saving knowledge of the Lord himself, he is then formed for being instrumental to teach others. The bread which he hath eaten and found nourishing, he will gladly break to them that are hungry. The spring at which he hath slaked his own thirst, he will direct every dry creature he meets with to partake of also. For with such minds it forms a luxury, of the noblest kind, not to eat the morsel alone, but as the scripture saith, to be “ ready to distribute, and willing to communicate.” It was this fellow feeling, refined by godly love, which wrought so powerfully on the mind of the apostle John, when he so warmly and so affectionately recommended Christ to the church, from his

own personal knowledge and enjoyment of him. "That (said he) which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life. That which we have seen, and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." 1 John i. 1, 2.

I venture, therefore, to assume it for a principle, as well founded in reason as in revelation, that it must form a most essential part in the character of every faithful minister, of all orders and degrees, in the church of Christ—a man should be himself savingly converted to God before that he can go forth, in the ministry of the word, as the Lord's instrument for the conversion of others. An unregenerated heart can never speak *from* the heart, of the things which concern salvation. A man in whom no change hath been wrought from nature to grace, can know nothing of its importance so as to insist upon the necessity of it in others. As soon might the dead describe life; or the blind point out the loveliness of colours; or the deaf speak of the distinction in sounds. But when a man hath himself experienced the change of heart; from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh; and the *argumentum ad hominem* will come with power, when felt with power. The ground we have gone over we can speak of its safety. The armour we ourselves have proved we may recommend.

I stay not to describe in what this change of heart by regeneration consists. This would be beside my present purpose. My object is different. I only contend for the thing itself. I simply speak of it as among the essentials for the ministry. Every one who knows any thing of the doctrines of Christ, knows also that the great author of the gospel made this as the only possible means of admission into his kingdom. It was in

this point the distinguishing feature of christianity was marked. Here was the standard of decision: the criterion of character. The old schools of philosophy taught men the doctrine, *abscindere vitia*; to suppress and hide their passions. Christ enforced, *abscendere vitia*; the divine science of rooting them out. He founded the blessed system of giving "a new heart, and of putting a right spirit" in his followers. His was to be not simply the momentary supply, but "a well of water within, springing up into everlasting life."

A principle so essential to the very being and well-being of every follower of Christ, cannot in its nature be supposed but as indispensably necessary in all the ministers of Christ. And my present province, in describing the general features of character which marked the order of the bishops in the sixteenth century, will be to shew that the men of that age, for the most part, gave evident testimonies they carried about with them this prominent feature. They would have trembled, indeed, to have rushed into the ministry without it. They would have shrunk from the charge of souls while conscious they remained in a state of unrenewed nature. But when convinced in their own minds, of the infinite importance of salvation, in being awakened to the concern of it for themselves, they felt an anxious concern to see it wrought in others. And every relation which we have in history, concerning the holy men of old, very fully manifests that the work of God was upon their own souls before that they went forth to labour in the word and doctrine among the people. 'What God in his providence hath done for me,' said one of them in the memoirs of his life, written with his own hand, 'is worthy of everlasting and thankful memory! What I have done for the Lord, is worthy of nothing but silence and forgetfulness!'

It is a striking anecdote of holy John Bradford (as he was frequently called), in confirmation of the

caution and jealousy with which those venerable reformers entered the church, that much pains were taken with him before that he could be prevailed upon to take the cure of souls. His abilities, his zeal, his holy ardour, were well known to all around him. But, he shrunk from the ministry with timid apprehension, as bearing with it the most awful responsibility. Few possessed more firmness of mind in all things relating to transactions with men, than John Bradford: witness his undaunted boldness in martyrdom! But, in soul concerns with God, in respect of divine attainments, so humble did this great man lay in the dust before him, that as it is noted of Luther, so might it have been said of Bradford; '*Ut nec vox, nec calor, nec sanguis, superesset,*' 'Neither voice, nor heat, nor blood, appeared in him.'

It is said in the history of this martyr, that the great Bucer urged him to the ministry again and again. But Bradford was too diffident for a long space to listen to the persuasion. In one of their conversations on the subject, the historian who relates the fact, states, that Bradford among other points argued his inability for want of talents. And it is said, that Bucer retorted upon this very ground, by observing that if his materials were coarse, he should notwithstanding feed the Lord's household with the best bread he could give the people. His objections were at length overruled, and he became an eminent labourer in the ministry. Ridley, one of king Edward's bishops, was wont to say of him, that the Lord had made him an abundant blessing to the church. What a contrast is this diffidence in Bradford compared to modern times: when we behold numbers running uncalled and unsent to the ministry, as the unthinking horse rusheth to the battle!

It forms a very interesting account, in confirmation with what is recorded of the men of that generation,

in their diffidence to enter the service of the sanctuary, concerning the great Usher who afterwards became archbishop: and which with a little variation would have suited the greater part of the prelates in the sixteenth century. ‘This young and hopeful plant,’ saith his biographer, ‘in the very blossom of his age, found the true sense of religion in his serious conversion to God.’ And all the subsequent parts of his life and ministry, manifested how effectual that work had been wrought by the Lord. And it is a fact, worth mentioning, that, as a spur to diligence in watching over his charge of souls; not only at his entrance into holy orders, he resolved to be directed by it, but he actually took for his episcopal seal, when he received the mitre (and continued in the uniform use of the same, when made an archbishop, to the close of life), that weighty sentence of the apostle, “Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!” 1 Cor. ix. 16.

And a greater than Usher, even Paul himself (from whom the archbishop borrowed the motto), had his wonderful conversion continually in remembrance. And no doubt it acted, under the Lord’s grace, as an unceasing stimulus to prompt to ardour in the ministry. He rehearsed it to the elders of Jerusalem, when in full assembly. He repeated it before Agrippa, and the concourse of the gentiles at Cæsarea; to the church of Galatia; and to his beloved Timothy; to all these he communicated the wonderful tidings. His whole soul seemed to be on fire, in the recollection, that “the Lord (said Paul) should count me faithful, putting me into the ministry, who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious.”

And such, for the most part, were these eminent prelates, which formed the bench of bishops in the sixteenth century. Awakened by the Lord to the lively apprehension of their own everlasting welfare, they felt an awakened concern for the same in others.

The tendency of their affections were all directed into this channel. Warmed by the love of God in their hearts, like the heated vapour from water, which without warmth, would rather gravitate than arise, now excited by a divine flame ascends upward. And according to the order of that blessed prayer which the Lord himself taught his disciples; having first hallowed the Lord's name, and desired that it might be hallowed both in heaven and earth; they immediately added to it, "thy kingdom come."

But though it becomes an indispensable qualification for the ministry, that every man entering it should have the Holy Ghost first preached to his own heart, before that he is sent forth to preach to others; yet it is not enough in proof, that a man called by grace is called to minister in the word and doctrine. There is a vast difference between what is necessary to form the private christian, and what becomes necessary to form the public divine. A man may be abundantly blessed in his own soul, and yet be wholly unqualified for the ministry, and to watch over the souls of others. And it is one thing for a man to run unsent, and another to be sent by the Lord. That is a trembling question of the Lord, by the prophet, to the ordained only by human ordination, "Who hath required this at your hand, when ye tread my courts?" Isai. i. 12.

If men were accustomed to read their bibles with attention, they would discover how very sacred the entrance into the sanctuary service was under the old testament dispensation. "No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." Yea, as if to shew, in yet more striking characters, the dignity and sacred nature of the holy office, it is added, that "even Christ glorified not himself to be made an High Priest;" but he, that said unto him, "Thou art my Son," said also, and sworn him moreover into the office, "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchi-

zedec!" and certain it is, that without a call from God all the abilities upon earth, and all the earnestness of a man's own heart to the service of the sanctuary gives no commission. And the Lord Jesus saith, "that he that entereth not in by the door into the sheep-fold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief, and a robber."

There is, what the old writers called, the *finis cujus*, the end for whom; and there is the *finis cui*, the end for which; in all matters, and especially in things pertaining to the ministry, which are always to be kept in view. And if that end for whom be the Lord's glory, and the end for which, namely, the salvation of souls, be the great leading principle, all is well. What comes from God, will lead to God. And what is founded in the Lord's strength, and designed for the Lord's glory, will lead to the Lord's praise. In all cases of this kind, there will be also the greatest love and harmony between the minister and the people. Founded in Christ, and formed in Christ, one heart and one soul pervades the whole. The people are all united to their great head; and as members of the body to each other. Such a pastor and flock are one. And as was said of Augustine and Alippius, so it may be said of them, '*Sanguine Christi conglutinati*,' 'they are glued together in the blood of Christ.'

The prelates of the sixteenth century carried with them, in every department of their ministerial function, the divine testimonial of being sent of God. In point of human learning, they soared to the highest elevation. But the culminating crown of dignity, was their ordination of God. Luther was wont to say, '*Tria faciunt theologum, meditatio, tentatio, et precatio*;' that is, 'three things make a divine, meditation, trial, and prayer.' But there is a point beyond all these, and more essential than all, namely, the call of God. Beautiful to this purpose is the account given of the apostles. "As they minis-

tered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them." Acts xiii. 2.

Perhaps I cannot more effectually illustrate those truths, than by bringing before the reader the open and unreserved confession of one of the worthies of those days. He was not indeed a bishop; neither, in the full sense of the expression, was his ministry exercised in the sixteenth century; for it was somewhat later. Nevertheless, he was one of the old school. And although he lived, when the high water mark of religion in its purity had begun to fall, yet long before the tide had gone completely out, or sunk to the ebb which marked the following century, and hath unhappily continued ever since. And in respect to eminency as a divine, he certainly was as highly taught as this, or any other country hath ever produced since the days of the apostles. The man I have in my view, and of whom I now speak, is Dr. Thomas Goodwin, sometime president of Magdalene college, Oxford. The relation he hath left upon record of himself is as follows:

Speaking of his conversion to God, he saith, 'in considering the consequents and effects of the Lord's speaking to me, I was hopefully persuaded it was from God; for the things were fulfilled which God had spoken of. For *first*, I felt my soul, and all the powers of it, as in an instant to be clean altered and changed in the dispositions of them; even as our own great divines of our own country do set forth. *Secondly*, I found from the same time, the power of temptation to be in some measure dissolved in my heart; so that my understanding became enlightened, my will melted, and the heart of stone made an heart of flesh. And *thirdly*, I found my spirit clothed with a new nature inclined to good which before was all evil. Henceforth, I found two contrary principles, the spirit against the flesh; and the flesh against the spirit. And this difference I found, not by reading, or hearing

any one speak of it; but as Austin did, I perceived it in myself, and wondered at it. For I may say of this combat, that it is proper and peculiar to a man that is regenerate. It is not in God, or in Christ, who are a fulness of holiness, without any mixture of sin. It is not in devils, for they are all sin, without any mixture of holiness. It is not in good angels, for they are all holy. Neither is it in wicked men, unregenerated by grace, for they have no grace in them to fight with their corruptions after such a manner.'

Speaking of his call to the ministry, he thus expresseth himself; 'When I consider what was the aim and drift of my studies, in having been devoted by my parents to the work of the ministry; I bethought what would serve most to the glory of God in this service. And this overturned all the projects and designs of my heart hitherto. When the work of God wrought in my soul I came to this resolved principle, that I would wholly and altogether preach sound and wholesome words, without affectation of wit and variety of eloquence. And in the end, the project of wit and vain glory which marked the earlier days of my unregeneracy was sunk in my heart; and I left all, and have continued in the purpose and practice which was then wrought in me, by reason of my new birth, these threescore years. And never, from that time, have I been led away, to put in any of my own withered flowers that I had gathered, and valued more than diamonds, to the bringing them into a sermon, unto this day.

'I took leave for my whole life of all ecclesiastical preferments, and though I was afterwards made president of Magdalene college; my great motive, in the acceptance of it, was from the bottom of my heart to be useful in the university, in bringing young men that were godly to be fellows and students; which, in after times, might serve God in the ministry. And it was after such that I enquired, and sought them out as the

greatest jewels. And when, at any time, I failed of such, it was a grief to me. My soul and conscience both bear me witness.'

Speaking of the Lord's blessing upon his ministry, he thus related it. 'The most eminent property of my conversion to God was this; namely, that the glory of the great God was set up in my heart, as the square and rule of all I followed. And the Lord's blessing was upon me. For after I had been seven years from Cambridge, and coming out of Holland, I had for some years after, well nigh every month, serious and hearty acknowledgments from several young men, who had received the light of their conversion by my ministry, while I was in the university of Cambridge. And what success the Lord gave me at Oxford, while ministering there, I leave to Christ to declare at the last day.'

I offer no comment upon the history of this great man as here stated in his own words. Indeed the history itself needs none. I would only say, blessed must have been the times when the universities of the land had such holy men of God in the higher departments of our *almâ mater*, ministering in the word and doctrine; feeling in themselves such love to God and souls. He who became the *vinculum unionis*, the bond of union to unite their souls to the Lord, became no less the mover of life, to quicken and to unite together in Christ, the souls of the people. Surely both preachers and hearers, in those happy times, like branches formed on the same stock, grew up together; and as Erasmus elegantly expresseth it, were, '*unum concrescere, vel coalescere*;' 'bound and increasing together in one.'

And when we follow our view of this subject, as it relates to the higher order of the church in episcopacy of these times, the matter riseth to a magnitude still higher. Could it for a moment be conceived, that in any age of the church a man found entrance to the office of a bishop whose heart had never been changed by

grace; and of consequence his call to the ministry never sanctioned by the great bishop of souls: what calamity in common life, among the other situations of church, could be contemplated with equal awfulness!

It was the felicity of the age to which I refer, that the holy men which wore the mitre put it on with the greatest humbleness and diffidence of spirit. And as they began their episcopacy, so they went through the whole of their life in the exercise of it, with reverence and godly fear. Good old bishop Cowper's modest report of his elevation to the mitre, may serve as a sample of those times, in forming the picture and general features of character. *Noli episcopari*, was then indeed with truth spoken.

'God was pleased,' said the bishop, 'to open for me a door, in calling me to the charge of the churches in the southern part of the kingdom. For being named with others, by the general assembly, of such as they thought meet to be preferred to the episcopal dignity, (whereof I ever acknowledged myself unworthy,) and recommended by the fathers of our church; it was his majesty's pleasure to present me to that benefice due to the office whereunto the church had called me. God knows that this was done without my knowledge or seeking, directly or indirectly. For I could have been content all my days with a private life, resolved to give honour and obedience in God, to such as were called to those places. Here I was neither guilty of ambition nor of haste in embracing it. For between the date of his majesty's presentation and my acceptance, there intervened eighteen weeks. Yet, as the calling to this work was greater than any before whereunto I had been led, so the greater opposition was made unto me by men, whose lying libels and carnal contradictions forced me to spend time more unprofitably than I had done before, since my first entrance into the ministry.' And the bishop added; 'In this estate,' meaning the episcopal function,

‘do I now live, with my soul in my hand always ready to be offered to my God, whensoever the Lord shall call me.’

I must not swell this chapter further in speaking only to the general features of character of the bishops of that age, having proposed to enter somewhat more largely in the succeeding pages into the more particular parts, by which their venerable walk of life was distinguished. But I cannot take leave of those faithful servants of the Lord, under the view we have here marked of them, without observing that beautiful sameness and uniformity in their whole deportment, as manifested the grace which dwelt in their minds. They lived, what they professed to be, the servants of Christ: and seemed to have kept their eyes on Him, for every copy they wrote, however faint, and far short their imitations were; as Tertullian in his days observed, so they in their’s. ‘*Non loquimur magna, sed vivimus,*’ ‘We would not *speak* great things, but *live* them.’

CHAPTER IV.

THE BISHOP OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY IN HIS PUBLIC CHARACTER AND MINISTRY.

We have seen the general features of character which for the most part marked the English bishops of the sixteenth century. We would now follow up this view in beholding somewhat of the same, in the personal and public part of his ministry. From men so exalted and dignified, we naturally expect to find a proportioned elevation of mind and manners. And when the man of God comes forth to officiate in any of the departments of the sanctuary, when we thus behold him, he commands our profound reverence and respect. The atmosphere of his person brings with it a sanctity

not unlike what is painted of the holy apostles and prophets, with a glory encircling their heads. And the effect induced on every beholder is in correspondence. They strike all that see them with an holy awe. Every thing around is solemnized. They silence into sacredness. It is storied of Valence, the heathen emperor, that when he came in the fury of his indignation, to seize upon the person of Basil, such was the majesty of that saint of God in his countenance, the tyrant was overawed at the view, and for the moment staggered before him!

It hath been before observed of the eminency of learning, with which this age of the church abounded. But while human literature became subservient to great usefulness in the ministry, the godly of that generation perfectly well understood that their labours were not for the display of talent. Their object was solely directed to the divine glory. The tendency of their ministry was to win souls, and not to gain fame. During the season of their nonage in nature, until they had attained their majority in grace, they felt in common with others the attractions of seeking popular applause, and by studied eloquence to soar as high as possible in the esteem of men. But when they arrived to the manhood of grace, they "put away childish things." The learned Bradwardene tells us, that while in the unrenewed state of a carnal mind, when he heard of Paul's epistles, he exclaimed, '*Dedignabar esse parvulus.*' 'I disdain such little things.' But when the Lord, in the after circumstances of his life, taught him their blessedness, he esteemed them "more than his necessary food." He then understood what Paul had said, and with him could and did adopt his sentiments; to speak *five words in the church* with his understanding, that by his voice he might teach others also, to be more blessed than *ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.*

Among the great and leading features which marked the prelates of the sixteenth century, in their public character and ministry, was their preaching. Here they eminently excelled. Never from the days of the apostles had the church equal pastors to "feed the people of God with knowledge and understanding." They fully entered into the advice and spirit of the apostle, and "were instant in season, out of season, to reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering, and doctrine!" The great truths of God, both in cause and effect, were the uniform subject of their daily discourses. The glorious plan of salvation by Christ, became the one great object they had everlastingly in view. Christ was made by them what God in his three-fold character of person made him, the Alpha and Omega of every thing blessed. With them this was the "one thing needful." This the *το εργον*, the only work. They considered this as the *articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiæ*. With this the standing or falling of the church depended. So that to the accomplishment of this one great end, all the arrows in the quiver of their gospel were directed as to a centre.

In concerns of a secular nature, if at any time from their situation and rank they were necessarily called away from higher objects, here we find them in the display of the eloquence of the times. But nothing of the kind was suffered to creep in and mingle with their preaching. They considered themselves as dying men addressing dying men, on the first subject of life; and as such we never find them departing from the simplicity of the gospel. Such as the apostles preached, yea, Christ himself preached, the bishops of the sixteenth century in this kingdom preached; and the Lord greatly owned and blessed their preaching to the salvation of the people.

I must not indulge myself by bringing before the reader testimonies in proof, from the writings still

extant in many of the public characters of those days. But I venture to promise myself his thanks rather than his reproof, if I notice one, as a sample of the others, which very highly justifies my observations on this ground. There are some very interesting records of archbishop Usher, on the subject of his preaching, which are well authenticated, and which may serve by way of illustration, in speaking of the preaching of those times. And I do it the rather because I have found those records in an author of that period not very generally known; and an author, it should be observed, more remarkable for plainness, than elegance of style, who seems to have been more anxious simply to state the fact than to regard the manner of relating it.

‘Archbishop Usher,’ saith this author, ‘was a full and pithy preacher; who though he was master of excellent language when he pleased to use it, yet his matter for the most part excelled his words; and what he said had always more divinity than philosophy. He would continue, upon some occasions, at least two hours in preaching; and at those times more than ordinarily extend himself in prayer; and yet his matter was always as large as his time. The wine at the end of the feast, would equal, if not exceed that at the beginning. His language was studiously plain but graceful; and usually attended with the Spirit and with power.

‘One of his chaplains remarked of him, that though in himself an Apollos, an eloquent man and mighty in the scriptures, yet in his sermons, and especially those delivered at Oxford, he did much deny himself that Christ might be the more glorified. And he intended thereby (said the chaplain) to rebuke every thing of affectation among the young men of the university preachers. In a sermon of his, before his patron, king James, he made this remarkable observation; ‘great scholars (said he) possibly may think it not for their

credit to stoop low. But let the most learned of us that-are preachers try it whenever we may, we shall find that to lay this ground-work right, and to make an ignorant man to understand the mysteries we bring before our people, will call forth more skill and beget more pains, than if we were to discuss a controversy, or to handle a subtle point of learning in the schools.

‘ His fervour in preaching was not like mettle in a blind horse, that rusheth against any thing and every thing in the way, but was always managed with discretion. When in the work of labouring for souls, you might perceive, that like Paul at Athens, his spirit was stirred within him. One who knew him well, said of him, that such was his earnestness in the cause, that like his Lord, only in an inferior degree, “the zeal of his house did eat him up.” For though, like *Moses*, his temper was naturally meek and gentle, yet such was the longing of his soul for the everlasting welfare of the people, his words were not unfrequently like thunder, and his countenance glowing like the flashes of lightning. He often remarked after preaching, that sometimes what he had fully resolved not to utter in his sermon, he found himself so warmed with the subject, that when he came to any thing connected with it he could not refrain. The word was to him, acting in a similar way to the prophet, “a fire shut up in his bones, and he could not forbear.” So very near lay the cause of God and of souls to his heart!

‘ As his preaching was thus fervent so was it constant. Even to the close of his life, and that life extended to seventy-five years, he constantly preached once a week, and many times oftener. No preferments, no business, nothing but sickness stopped him in this labour of love. Though his places and his offices were such as might have excused him from the toil of preaching, yet he never made use of them as indulgences. It was a proverbial saying in those days, that ‘the greatest

scholars made the poorest preachers.' And queen Elizabeth was wont to say, and perhaps on the same ground, that often when she made a bishop, she unmade a preacher. But neither of these observations were in the smallest degree applicable to Usher. Mr. Leigh, an author of those days, in his epistle to the archbishop, said, 'You have really confuted both those maxims by your plain and powerful preaching; and by your constant labouring in it for more than fifty years.' And what is astonishing to relate, but literally true, the very sleeping hours of this great man was frequently employed in dreams of preaching to his people.'

One anecdote in relation to the archbishop, deserves to be added to this account, and which shews at once the sense he had of the importance of the ministry. Though no man carried his loyalty to an higher point than archbishop Usher, yet in preaching he never allowed himself to be awed by the presence of the king. And it is reported of him, once in his preaching at Covent Garden church, in the midst of his sermon, a messenger called him from the pulpit to attend at court. And it is said, that this faithful servant of the Lord descended from the pulpit to receive the message, and then said, 'I am as you see at present employed in God's business. When this is over, I will pay my dutiful respects to the king to receive his majesty's pleasure.' He re-ascended the pulpit, and entered again on his sermon as though nothing had happened.

One great part of character in the public ministry of the bishops, and indeed the whole body of the clergy in those times, was the *visitation of the sick*; and a very interesting part it formed. Here they learnt, for the most part, the chief information of the persons, and spiritual state of their people. It would have been reproachful at this period of the church, for a bishop to have been supposed ignorant of the welfare of the house of God, and of the several members of that house,

in things pertaining to godliness. It is a wonderful account that I have read somewhere of one of the sacred order, that there was not one of his accustomed hearers but whose person he knew; neither any of them but what he had some acquaintance with, in respect to the state of their spiritual concerns.

Visits to the *sick* formed a blessed branch of those holy men's office. And occasional calls upon the persons of their people in health was deemed, in those days of the church, a most essential part of the ministerial function. To enquire into the state of their minds, to watch their growth in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord; to pray for them, and to pray with them; and in private to enter more immediately and personally into their soul concerns, than the public exhortations from the pulpit would admit; these things were in the view of those servants of the Lord essential duties. Dignities of station in their esteem only afforded the opportunity of greater means of usefulness, rather than of grandeur. The truest honour with them was the Lord's glory. And independent of that pleasure of the heart, which ariseth from the consciousness of being useful, the bishops and ministers of the sixteenth century beheld their stations as the more elevated, the more responsible. "To whom is committed much, much will be required," were charges never in their esteem to be forgotten. The words of their Master were always vibrating in their ears, "occupy till I come."

It hath been observed in the former part of this work, that when the nation first emerged from popery, there were no diversity in the form of worship. The multitude which believed were of one heart and of one soul. And such was the case as long as this golden age of the church continued. But on the death of James, a change instantly took place, which gradually, like the breaking in of water, sapped the foundation and brought

down the wall, as "a city brought low in a low place."

As soon as the tide of opposition began to form itself against those faithful and eminent servants of the Lord, it raised all its strength against them; and gathering, as it did from many and various streams, the torrent poured forth from every direction, in the most violent current of persecution. It would form a separate subject for the pencil to give the mere outlines of this history. But the reader will be able to picture to himself some faint idea of the exercises to which those godly men were subject, if we read only the appeal which bishop Hall made from the Tower, when imprisoned there, while bishop of Norwich. It gives us, indeed, a striking portrait of the greatness of his mind, as well as becomes the fullest justification of his character, in the faithful discharge of his episcopal function. I cannot, perhaps, better close the present chapter, than in relating his defence in his own words.

'Truly,' said this prelate, 'I have, in the presence of my God, narrowly watched over, and searched mine own bosom. I have impartially ransacked this fag end of my life, and cautiously examined every step of my ways. And I cannot, by the most exact scrutiny of my saddest thoughts, find what it is that I have done to forfeit that good esteem wherewith some say I was once blessed.

'I can, and do secretly arraign and condemn myself of infinite transgressions before the tribunal of heaven. Who, indeed, that dwells in an house of clay, can be pure in his sight, that chargeth his angels with folly? O God! when I look upon the reckonings betwixt thee and my soul, and find my shameful arrears, I can be most vile in my own sight; because I have deserved to be so in thine. Yet even then, in thy most pure eyes, Lord, let me not abdicate my sincerity. Thou knowest

my heart desires to be right with thee, whatever my failings have been. And I know what value thou puttest upon those sincere desires, notwithstanding all intermixture of our miserable infirmities. These I can, and do penitentially bewail to thee; but in the mean time, what have I done to men? Let them not spare to shame me with the sinful declinations of my age, and fetch blushes, if they can, from a wrinkled face.

‘ Let mine enemies (for such I perceive I have, and those are the surest monitors) say what I have offended. For their better invitation, my clear conscience bids me boldly take up the challenge of good Samuel; “ Behold here I am! witness against me before the Lord, and before his anointed! whose ox have I taken, or whose ass have I taken, or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it.”

‘ Can they say that I bore the reins of government too hard, and exercised my jurisdiction in a rigorous and tyrannical way, insolently lording it over my charge? Malice itself would not dare to speak it; or if it should, the attestation of so grave and numerous a clergy would choke such impudence. Let them witness, whether they were not still entertained by me with an equal return of reverence, as if they had been all bishops with me; or I only a presbyter with them, according to the old rule of Egbert, archbishop of York, ‘ *Intra domum episcopus collegam se presbyterorum esse cognoscat.*’ Let them say, whether aught here looked like despotical; or sounded rather of imperious commands, than of brotherly complying? Whether I have not from some beholders undergone the censure of a too humble remissness, as perhaps stooping too low beneath the eminence of episcopal dignity? And whether I have not suffered as much in some opinions,

for the winning mildness of my administration, as in some others for a rough severity?

‘ Can they say (for this aspersion is likewise common) that I barred the free course of religious exercises, by the suppression of painful and peaceable preachers? If shame will suffer any man to object it, let me challenge him to instance but in one name. Nay, the contrary is so famously known in the western parts, that every mouth will herein justify me. What free encouragement have I always given to all the sons of peace that came with God’s message in their mouths! What mis-suggestions have I waved! What blows have I borne off in the behalf of some of them, from certain gainsayers! How have I often and publicly professed, that as well might we complain of too many stars in the sky, as too many orthodox preachers in the church!

‘ Can they complain that I fretted the necks of my clergy with the uneasy yoke of new and illegal impositions? Let them, whom I have thus hurt, blazon my unjust severity, and write their wrongs in marble. But if, disliking all novel devices, I have held close to those ancient rules, which limited the audience of our godly predecessors; if I have grated upon no man’s conscience by the pressure, no, not by the tender of the late oath, or any unprescribed ceremony; if I have freely in the committee, appointed by the most honourable house of peers, declared my open dislike, in all innovations both in doctrine and in rites; why doth my innocence suffer?

‘ Can they challenge me, as a sly and back-stair friend to *poper*y or *arminianism*, when I have in so many pulpits, and from so many presses, cried down both? Surely, the very paper I have spent in refutation of both these is enough to stop more mouths than can be guilty of this calumny.

‘ Can they charge me with a lazy silence in my place, with infrequency of preaching? Let the populous

auditorics where I have lived witness, whether, when having furnished all the churches near me with able preachers, I took not all opportunities of supplying such courses as I could get in my cathedral? And when my tongue was silent, let the world say, whether my hand was idle?

‘ Lastly. Since no man can offer to upbraid me with too much pomp, which is wont to be the common eyesore of our envied profession; can any man pretend to a ground of taxing me of too much worldliness? Surely, of all the vices forbidden in the decalogue, there is no one which my heart, upon due examination, can less fasten upon me than this. He that made it, knows that he hath put into it a true disregard (save only for necessary use) of the world, and of all that the world can boast of, whether for profit, pleasure, or glory. No, no! I know the world too well to dote upon it. While I am in it how can I but see it? But I never care, never yield to enjoy it. It were too great a shame for a philosopher, a christian, a divine, a bishop, to have his thoughts grovelling here upon earth. For mine, they scorn the employment; and look upon all these sublunary distractions as upon false censure, with no other eyes than contempt.

‘ And now, sir, since I cannot, how secretly faulty soever, guess at my own public exorbitances, I beseech you, when you hear my name traduced, learn of mine accusers, whose lyncean eyes would seem to see farther into me than mine own, what singular offence I have committed!

‘ To shut up all, and to surcease your trouble, I write not this, as one that would pump for favour and reputation from the disaffected multitude; for I charge you, that what passeth privately betwixt us, may not fall under common eyes. But only with this desire and intention, to give you true grounds where you shall hear my name mentioned with a causeless offence, to

yield me a just and charitable vindication. Go you on still to do the office of a true friend; yea, the duty of a just man, in speaking in the cause of the dumb, in righting the innocent, in rectifying the misguided; and, lastly, the service of a faithful and christian patriot, in helping the times with the best aid of your prayers, which is daily the task of

‘JOSEPH NORWICH.’

From the Tower, Jan. 24, 1641.

CHAPTER V.

THE BISHOP OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY, IN HIS PRIVATE LIFE AND DEPARTMENT.

When we speak of the private life of the man, in any station or character, it cannot be understood that it means his secret communion with God. These are in the retirings between the Lord and the spirits of his people. But by the private life of any individual, is meant no more than what is detached from what is more open and exposed in the public transactions with the world. The bishop of the sixteenth century, therefore, is enquired after in this chapter, from such traits of conduct as may be discovered in his general walk and deportment, in the more retired situation of life. No doubt an uniformity pervades the whole. A godly man is the same in all. Nevertheless there is sometimes more of the real character discoverable at home than is seen abroad. We get into a closer acquaintance with men when we are permitted to follow them into their retirements; and learn more of them when they are enabled to unbosom themselves there, than when we view them only at a distance in their public offices and characters.

If we begin, on this ground, our contemplation of the bishop's portait, in his study, though we do not

indeed follow him step by step in all his employments there, yet the prelates of the sixteenth century, in the voluminous publications which they sent forth from thence, most plainly and loudly proclaim how intense their applications must have been while there engaged. And if we may form a judgment from the savour of their writings, how much engaged their hearts were also in the work of studying Christ, we are compelled to conceive the highest veneration for them: not only on account of the greatness of their labours, but also for the greatness of their zeal; in that their writings carry with them so much of the name, and grace, and spirit of Christ. Nothing can be more evident than that they first tasted in their own souls what they so affectionately recommended to others. They remind one of those faithful men of old who brought down a good report from the promised land, when they shewed the rich clusters of fruit the country bore, in order to invite the Lord's people to go up and take possession of it. So, those holy men of God persuaded by their writings to the love of Jesus; while we discover so much of the savour of Jesus in all their accounts of him.

In respect to the greatness of their labours, it is incredible from whence they gathered time, from the demands of their public ministry, to attend so closely, as their numerous publications manifest they must have done, to those private employments. And amidst the general mass of folio writings, which this early age of the reformed church produced, there is one immense work which surpasseth every other in point of greatness and importance; which is itself a prodigy of learning; and was then, and is now, and to the end of the world will be, the greatest glory of those times; I mean the translation of the bible. When it be considered, the long darkness under which the christian world had been involved from papal influence; the slenderness of mate-

rials from any former aid to a work of this magnitude; the small and inconsiderable progress at that time made in the art of printing; to behold so vast an undertaking, and so divinely executed, as the very first impression of the English bible proved to be; can only be referred into the sovereign grace of God watching over the work, and preventing all *errata*. For, surely, no one divinely taught will hesitate to conclude, that the next great gift of God in the scriptures themselves, is the translation of them into our mother tongue; and of all national blessings England ever knew, it stands unrivalled as the first and best.*

* The limits of this work will not admit of enlargement on the histories of those great men, to whom the church of God is so highly indebted; yet I hope the reader's indulgence if, in a way by note, I detain him to a short outline concerning one of those translators of our bible, which to me is I confess highly interesting. The person, I mean, is Myles Coverdale, sometime bishop of Exeter. He was among the first, if not the very first, which took the lead in this labour of love. And when it be considered, that so elegant a writer as bishop Lowth, in modern times, hath not only borrowed from bishop Coverdale, but adopted the very words in the most interesting parts of his translations of Isaiah: I cannot but hope that a paragraph or two concerning him will be acceptable to the reader.

Myles Coverdale, as appears from his memoirs, was born in Yorkshire, in the reign of Richard the third, about 1484. He was educated in the Roman heresy, and became a monk of the order of St. Augustine. At the reformation, he abjured popery, and entered into holy orders. He appears to have been but little known or noticed, during the reign of Henry the eighth. But soon after the accession of Edward the sixth, he was among the leaders who taught the pure religion. In the year 1550, on the death of Dr. John Harman, bishop of Exeter, he was consecrated to that see; being promoted (according to Wood's history) for his singular knowledge in divinity, and his unblemished character. '*Propter singularem sacrarum literarum doctrinam morseque probatissimos.*'

The first English bible (saith the editor of Calmet's dictionary; *Addenda et corrigenda*) or complete translation of the scriptures printed, was that of Myles Coverdale. The first edition of which bears date 1535, dedicated to king Henry the eighth. The title is *Biblia*, and marked M^DXXXV.

The sequel of this great man's history is truly affecting. We know not which to admire most, the firmness of his mind, or the ill-requited treatment he met. He was ejected from his see of Exeter, and thrown into prison on the death of Edward, and during the reign of Mary. But, by the powerful intercession of some who loved him then at court, his imprisonment was changed into banishment. Upon the demise of Mary, he returned to England: but he never recovered his bishopric. He was, however, collated to the benefice of St. Magnus church, London bridge. It appears from a letter of his own, still on record, addressed to Cecil, queen Elizabeth's secretary, that he was too poor to pay the first fruits, and therefore he pleaded for an exemption. It was granted him. The concluding

But though large portions of time were set apart by those venerable men to study and to abstract themselves from the world, as their labours witness; and their mornings early and evenings late must have been spent in this service; yet let it not be supposed but that the walls of their closets could they have spoken would have witnessed for them also, how much their private prayers followed up and went before their public ministry: and, like their Lord, how ardently and affectionately they bore the persons, and the spiritual interests of their people before the mercy-seat. If, as hath been said by some, the people's prayers are the pastors best books, surely we may well suppose his prayers for them are his best preparations, under the Lord's grace, for usefulness. And while we follow the good pastor into his study with the morning light, and contemplate him as there engaged in prayer and study for his ministry and people; we may well suppose that in his coming forth to his household for family worship, he will bring with him from the sanctuary a devotedness of mind, as one prepared by the Lord, for all the duties of the day.

It was the custom of the times of which we are speaking, for the master of every godly house to bless the several members of his family at their first meeting each other in the morning; and, like Boaz, when he

paragraph, in the letter he wrote to Cecil upon the occasion, is very affecting. 'I am not likely,' he said, 'to live over the year, and am going to my grave. And, therefore, if now poor old Myles might be provided for, he should think this enough, and to be as good as a feast. And so, beseeching the secretary to take this boldness in good part, he committed him, and all his, to the gracious protection of the Almighty.'—Signed, *Myles Coverdale, quondam Exon.*

Such were the humbled circumstance in the close of life of the man to whom, under God, this nation owes to this hour such unspeakable obligations. For the work of God, which the Lord enabled him to accomplish, is a mercy never to be done away, while the English name and language remains. Children yet unborn will have to bless God for this work and labour of love. And the name of Myles Coverdale ought to be had in unceasing remembrance. I just stay to add, that the good old man lived about two years after he sent his letter to Cecil, and was fourscore and one when the Lord took him home. •

entered the fields of his reapers, to say, "the Lord be with you!" And they in return answered, "the Lord bless thee!" Ruth ii. 4. And it is astonishing and exceedingly to be regretted that a custom, evidently formed in gracious principles, should have been, as it now is, so generally fallen into disuse. Certain it is, that from the first ages of the world even heathens were accustomed at their first meeting and again at their separation from each other to wish health and peace. Thus the Egyptians to the brethren of Joseph, when it was said, "Peace be to you!" Gen. xliiii. 23. And in like manner the Persians in their salutations; "Peace and at such a time!" Ezra iv. 17. The christian greeting may well be supposed to be called forth, and in an higher note, when gracious souls meet those that are gracious; for their gratulations are founded in Him, who is their peace and bond of union. He hath said, "Peace I leave with you! my peace I give unto you! Not as the world giveth, give I unto you!" John xiv. 27.

In my enquiry after the order of family prayer observed by the bishops of the sixteenth century, I have not been able to discover any records. No doubt it was conducted with great order by the head of the house himself. Chaplains every bishop might have, and chaplains we know they had. But these were never intended to supersede the bishop's own service in any one department of duty. And more especially in those solemn transactions, of an eternal nature, between God and man's own soul; the presentation of himself and household before the throne can never be done by deputy. Prayer and praise with supplication and thanksgiving, in making our requests known unto God, are unsuitable services for a proxy to perform. Even Solomon, in his days, considered that supplication was to be offered by every man "which knew the plague of his own heart." 1 Kings viii. 38, 39.

But though there are no documents, as far as my researches have led me, to discover the order observed

in the family worship of those holy men of God; yet from certain fragments here and there interspersed in their writings we have authority to conclude, that the reading and expounding portions of the word of God formed a part in those sacred services. And it is reasonable therefrom to believe also, that not only among the bishops but the clergy and the godly houses, the master or head of the house, according to the patriarchal custom, became the priest of the family by first calling the attention of his household to the word of God, and then presenting himself and them in prayer and praise before the throne of God. He who might best be supposed to know the spiritual state of each, and of all, was best calculated to follow up his exhortation with prayer for each and all; and, as the Lord might give him grace, to ask the suited mercies for all their circumstances. I do not presume to speak decidedly on this point; it is but conjectural. Nevertheless it seems highly probable. For I find an observation concerning one of these godly men by his historian, which saith that in prayer he was like Jacob, that could upon any emergency wrestle with God and prevail. And we know that it was a common saying, concerning Luther's prevalence in prayer, '*Iste vir potuit cum Deo quicquid voluit:*' *i. e.* 'That man had such power with God that he could have whatsoever he would.'

The interval of worship, in the daily services of the cathedral, it should seem, were very generally occupied by the bishops, in visiting the sick, and being visited by the people under distress of soul. Those men of God did not consider their ministry finished by preaching in public, or writing in private, on spiritual concerns. They knew the Lord's people to be a tried people, who need somewhat more personal comfort and advice. And from the great diversity of cases which mark the features of the Lord's people in exercises from without and within; they studied the blessed art of enquiring

into souls, and to invite the tempted and distressed to unload their minds before them, that according to the apostle's direction, they might "bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." This formed, therefore, a very gracious and interesting part in the bishop's ministry.

And if we may credit history, or indeed if we may judge from the savour of those men's writings, they were greatly engaged in this labour of love. The servant of the Lord, and especially in those highest departments of his church, considered it not more a duty than a delight, when opportunities of this kind favoured for administering consolation to any of the Lord's distressed ones. Hence, the bishops of those days were always, and at all times, accessible to the poorest of the people. They considered it no interruption to be broken in upon, when the afflicted members of Christ needed their counsel, or their prayers. Nay such visitors amply recompensed them for their trouble, in furnishing to them subjects from real life to form their sermons by. What one afflicted soul felt, others they knew might be supposed to be exercised with also. And hence, those men of God learnt, under God, how to speak a word in season to weary souls, and to comfort them that mourned. It brought home God's truth to their own hearts also: and furnished them with the sweetest instructions both for themselves, and for their usefulness in their ministry. So that such interruptions became a luxury of the purest kind. They were always at home to such visitors. How would it have struck a bishop of the sixteenth century with astonishment to have been told, that an access to their persons was not attainable but through a troop of servants in livery!

And it was a fashion peculiar to this age of the church, for the bishop's palace to have one day of the week set apart, to entertain the poor of Christ's house-

hold. Let the imagination figure to itself a certain number of this kind refreshed with the bounties of the table in their bodies; and afterwards their souls yet more blessedly entertained with the truths of grace. Fancy a bishop sitting within such a circle, and entering upon the doctrines of the gospel, to comfort the poor of Christ's flock with the consolations of Jesus, when he had comforted their bodies with the supply of the bread that perisheth with using. What an idea doth it awaken of a true bishop of Christ? Will it be said, that such a character is *outré*? Will the reader say, that my portrait is a fiction, and hath never been realized? Be it so. The question is, whether the thing itself be, or be not suited to the character? Ask him, who in the moment that he washed the feet of poor fishermen, and had all things put into his hands, and was Lord of heaven and earth, whether the act would be too condescending? Let that Lord determine the propriety or impropriety of the measure, whose direction to his apostles is: "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant?" Matt. xx. 26, 27.

Whether the preceding observation be correct, in respect to all the bishops in the realm of the sixteenth century, I will not contend. But I shall take the freedom to speak with more confidence in relation to another feature in the character, when I say, that the clergy of each diocese were in the general habit of visiting their respective diocesan, on subjects of theology; and both their palaces and their tables were open to welcome them with fatherly affection and esteem. If a doubt could arise, concerning the veracity of this assertion, the history of the times would bear me out in the plain statement of the matter of fact.* Indeed, there can

* Strype, in his life of Whitgift, relates the apology of Wolton, bishop of Exeter, on certain points complained of, and very modestly speaks of his courteously entertaining a godly man, on account of his great learning and sanctity.

be no reason to question the truth of it. The plain habits of life and manners, the homely fare of the noblest tables, compared to modern times, might well be supposed to have been very differently marked with guests also, in those days, from what they now are. And in respect to the subject on divine things, which, for the most part, occupied their conversation; the truths of God, defended by those venerable men, as well clergy as bishops of the sixteenth century, very fully prove that their general discourse tended to godly edifying. Their common rooms, from what passed in them, might well have been called '*ecclesia colentum.*'

Independant of every other consideration, it would form a well-grounded argument, that the bishop and his clergy, in every diocese in the realm in the sixteenth century, had frequent conferences on divine subjects, to strengthen them against the common enemy of the faith. Disputations in those days with the abettors of popery, were very common. The great Usher was violently attacked, while young in the ministry, by a famous jesuit, of the name of Fitz-Simonds. And daily disputes took place, more or less, between the clergy of the reformed church and the papistical party. So that the interest of christendom brought the learned among the faithful frequently together, to strengthen each other's hands and hearts, "in the faith once delivered to the saints."

It was at this period, that God, in his providence, directed the mind of the prelate, just before mentioned, to procure at a vast expense of cost and labour, a Syriac version of the new testament, in order to rescue from the imputation of being spurious, that part of the gospel according to St. John, which is recorded in the first eleven

'Mr. Cole,' said he, 'a master of arts, of eight years standing, and of as great towardness, as any of the university in his time, after he had been a traveller at Geneva, and other universities in France, I took him, his wife and servants, into my house, and gave them their tables almost two years. And the archdeaconry of Totness falling void, I gave it to him.'

verses of the eighth chapter. Grotius had ventured to call its authenticity in question. And Papias, a disciple of John himself, was said to have deemed the whole account of the woman taken in adultery, as circumstantially related in the opening of that chapter, apocryphal. And the enemies of the truth taking advantage of these things, added, that in the Syriac version of the new testament it was not found. These assertions roused the attention of the incomparable Usher, and he actually employed certain Turkish merchants in the Levant, to purchase for him all the old Syriac books which they could procure. This was done. And to the great joy and consolation of the true church of God, the faithful record of this transaction of Christ, with the woman taken in adultery, was found in the Syriac testament, *verbatim et literatim*. He immediately sent a copy of it to the great oriental critic, Ludovicus de Dieu, written with his own hand. And so convinced was this eastern diviņe of its genuineness, that he inserted it in his latin translation upon the evangelists, pages 443—5.*

* I must not swell the body of this portrait too large by drapery; yet by way of making it more full in texture, I would beg in this compartment of the piece to strengthen some of the more prominent parts of it. Certain it is, that the clergy, as well as the bishops, were often engaged in the controversy of the times, and not unfrequently opposed by the advocates for popery.

Bishop Hall, while rector of Halsted, being importuned to accompany his friend, Sir Edmund Bacon, to the Continent, in the suit of the Earl of Hertford, then going ambassador to the Archduke Albert, at Brussels, he accepted the invitation. 'I had,' said he, 'a great desire to inform myself, by ocular proof, of the state and practise of the Roman church, the knowledge whereof might be of no small use to me afterwards in my holy station. Upon my arrival, I availed myself of the first opportunity; I sought out for conversation among the different orders of the priests in that persuasion. And one day, by invitation, I went to visit father Costenus, the most learned as was reputed of all the jesuits. As I entered the door, the porter shut it upon me with saying, *Deo gratias!* When the father came in, he instantly began with an eulogy upon the Romish church, out of which he said there was no salvation. And he would have proceeded to have lost his breath and labour had I not very civilly interrupted him with saying—'Sir, I beseech you mistake me not. My nation tells you of what religion I am. I came not hither to change it; neither have I any doubt of its truth. But I have heard of certain miracles of the Lady Virgin, and which I am told you aver. I am come hither, therefore, to have it from your

One distinguishing excellency which marked the era of the sixteenth century, and which we find, more or less, was in the daily observance both of the higher and inferior departments of the clergy, was the catechizing the people on the great and leading points of divinity. This was a period eminently blessed for the instruction imparted by this means among all ranks and orders. Indeed, it appears from the history of those times, that few families, if any, but were brought up in it. An historian of undoubted veracity, in his account of one of the bishops, hath said so much in his praise, that I promise myself the thanks of the reader if I give it to him in his own words: ‘In catechizing,’ saith he, ‘which the bishop set up in his own family, he found it, as he declared, to be made a profitable way for the instruction of the people; and that none were more sound and confirmed christians than those who had been thus taught. So very earnest was this great man, in the recommendation of it through his diocese, that he drew up a form, by way of helping the younger students in divinity; and affectionately entreated them to accept it, as a token of love for them and their flock.’

This writer of his memoirs adds to this account, that the bishop made a point to have his own household go through those exercises frequently in the week, but especially on the Lord’s day evenings. And upon those occasions, he not only admitted, but encouraged any from the neighbourhood to join with his family. He

own mouth.’ Hereupon, saith the rector, the father and I settled our places at the table, and buckled to, as in a way of further discourse. The jesuit proceeded to relate a very wretched account of reputed miracles wrought by the Lady Virgin, which he firmly believed; but none of which had come within his own knowledge. And when I questioned the veracity of such things, he became very angry, and vented great abuse against the church of England, which, he said, could not produce a single miracle. I calmly replied, that though it was very true we could not pretend to such stories of reliques and prodigies, as the church of Rome boasted, and which required more faith than fell to the lot of most men to credit; yet we could assert what was far better in miracles of grace, in the dispossession of evil spirits by prayer and faith. The jesuit rose up in great wrath, and denied the whole of it. And here our conference ended.’

would, saith this biographer, as soon and with as much cheerfulness have admitted into his chamber, and enter into discourse with any that had the life and power of godliness in them, though of the lowest rank, as the highest. And when abroad, if at any time invited to preach by the way, where in his travels he lodged, he would as readily comply with the poor man's request as with those in authority. He possessed the art of persuasion by those means, without appearing to intend it. And his whole life, in this particular, became what Osiander termed *suavissima concio*, the most persuasive sermon.

And if we may credit the history of those times, it is said, that the reformers from popery all laboured in this way, and attributed the firm establishment of the pure faith under God's blessing among the people, to the general use of it. Nay, it is said to have been the complaint of the jesuits; they conceived but little hopes of bringing back to the Romish error, and unsettling the minds of the reformed church, while attending with earnestness to the use of catechizing.

It seems to have been on this account, that the apostle in his epistle, besides sending a general salutation to the church, sent a special one to certain persons who stood in the character of parents or masters of families, for their exemplary conduct in this particular to their households. Thus, to Aquila and Priscilla, "with the church that was in their house." 1 Cor. xvi. 19. So, in like manner, to Archippus, a godly minister, for the church in his house. Philem. 2. And one of our bishops of the sixteenth century, Davenant, bishop of Salisbury, makes his observations upon it to this amount; that this special salutation by the apostle was, because of the godly order and discipline manifested in the government of their families. His words are: *Adjungit specialem salutationem ob specialem et eximiam hujus viri pietatem, equum enim est extraordinarium illis deferre*

honorem quorum egregia virtus præ cæleris eminet et effulget in ecclesia.

Upon the whole, then, without enlarging on this feature in the portrait, I venture to believe, that whoever contemplates the picture with due attention, will readily and cheerfully confess, that the bishop of the sixteenth century was as truly amiable and lovely in his private life and deportment, as in his public ministry and calling; and in both truly great. In his person there was a gravity discoverable suited to the dignity and exaltedness of his high character; and with a meekness no less calculated to condescend to men of low estate. The grace the Lord had planted in his soul, sent forth the blessed fruits of it to all within the sphere of his influence. And having in himself felt the power of godliness, he attempted to diffuse the same to others.

In his family, as well as in the church, the man of God appeared. Whatever tended to promote the interest of Christ, evidently took place in all the parts of conduct to every other consideration. Dignity, rank, and consequence were for ever lost sight of, that by a gracious condescension he might win over to the cause of Christ. The great outline of the bishops' conduct seemed to have been formed upon the apostle's model: "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but as ensamples to the flock." And, indeed, it must be acknowledged, that these godly men laboured in the word and doctrine, in season and out of season; neither counted they their lives dear to themselves, so that they might finish their course with joy, and the ministry they had received from the Lord. And as Luther remarked, so very generally it should seem was the exceeding zeal of those venerable servants of the Lord, 'that the labours of the ministry will exhaust the very marrow from

the bones, and bring on death.' '*Labores ecclesiastici succum exhauriunt abimis medullis senium mortemque accelerant!*'

CHAPTER VI.

THE BISHOP OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY IN THE ORDINATION OF HIS CLERGY.

If amidst the general eminency of character which marked the bishops of the sixteenth century, one part of conduct shone more resplendant than another, it was, unquestionably, in that feature which appeared in their jealousy lest they should ordain unfit persons to serve in the ministry. The precept of the apostle to Timothy, to "lay hands suddenly on no man," seemed to have been kept by them always in view. And if ever any wariness in this particular might exempt from reprehension, they of all others were kept from being herefrom made partakers of other men's sins.

It hath been observed, in the former part of this work, how high the general temper of the times soared in learning, both human and divine, among those who wore the mitre in the reigns of Edward, Elizabeth, and James. But it is a justice due to the universities also to observe, that those seats of learning were equally eminent for all literary and spiritual attainments. Here, indeed, it was, under God, in those hallowed cloisters, were cast in the seeds which, in the after seasons of life, brought forth such rich fruits to refresh the church. This was the nursery from whence the plants took root and sprung. From this garden arose those trees of the Lord's right-hand planting, which, under divine cultivation, like the cedars of Lebanon, became lofty and wide-spreading, and sent abroad their branches in every direction, to beautify and give forth both shade and fruit to make glad the city of God.

And, perhaps, no part in the English history is more interesting, than that which hath recorded the godly order and sound eradition which distinguished all the colleges and halls, both of Oxford and Cambridge, at this period of the church. Then it was, our *almá mater* received her sons into the warm bosom of her fostering care; considering them as so many sacred charges, the far greater part of which were to be educated for the ministry of God's holy word and ordinances. Then it was, the walls of those colleges and halls could bear witness to the prayers, holy studies, and godly exercises both of the graduates and under-graduates of the whole university. Then it was that the heads of houses watched over their youthful charge in spiritual things as well as temporal; anxious to send them forth, when called to their holy function, not only well-taught in human learning but divine. And who shall count the number whom the Lord called from those sacred inclosures, at this auspicious period, to minister in the Lord's name, and to go in and out before the Lord's people? Who shall record the number of the sons of Zion born there, except the Lord himself, when he writeth up the people? Surely, if the sixteenth century formed so illustrious an era in this land, (as all the world must confess it did) in producing so many eminently great and good bishops; what glory and praise did those holy men of God reflect back upon the university, from whence, under divine teaching, they received their first rudiments of learning?

One distinguishing feature, which deeply marked those seminaries with honour, was the attention shewn to educate the pupils in the knowledge of the holy scriptures in their original tongue. Hence the professors of Arabic and Hebrew were not only well versed in the oriental languages themselves, but conscientiously instructed the youth of the colleges, designed for holy orders, in the same. It was considered then, as it ought

to be considered now, the *sine quâ non* for admission into the church. They thought, and rightly thought, that no higher reproach, next to positive evil in conduct, could attach itself to the sacred character, than a deficiency in the knowledge of the Hebrew tongue. And although the holy scriptures themselves had been newly translated, and faithfully translated too, by the labours of the most learned men; yet they considered that this became no cause for leaning implicitly either upon the faithfulness or correctness of any man's labours. The sacred profession they were about to enter, demanded imperatively a personal acquaintance with the holy word itself, in its own original language. And notwithstanding the translation then newly formed became by law the standard for general use, yet it was a duty every clergyman owed to himself, and the church of God, to be able at least to judge of the correctness of that translation. And no man in those happy days of religion, belonging to the sacred order, would have judged himself undeserving of reproach, had he been conscious of his ignorance of the bible in the original. It was a great encomium given of Budæus, that even without a tutor he was so well acquainted with all the dead languages, that he could speak both greek and latin with as much facility as his mother tongue.

It is a further justice due to the character of those great men, which adorned the church of England in the sixteenth century, that their learning was not limited to the *dead* languages, but they were generally conversant with the *living*. And happy was it for the reformed church that they were so. For when the English nation was emancipated from the Romish superstition, Europe sent forth her champions for the truth of God in every direction. And as this country opened her bosom to shelter the protestants who fled from the persecution of the papal power, the great and opulent of our people received into their houses those

illustrious foreigners, who sought an asylum from the storm.

But had the prelates, and the clergy in general of that day been ignorant of every language but their own, never would they have been able to have shewn themselves in the manner they did, under the Lord's strength, defenders of "the faith once delivered to the saints." The universities in particular found great occasion, in the different colleges where the learned strangers from abroad for a time resided, to speak to them, as those of old did, "in their own tongue the wonderful works of God." By their great knowledge in divine things, and their general acquaintance with the several languages of the Continent, all circumstances tended to promote the one glorious cause, and strengthen the common weal of the reformation. So that both the universities at this happy era, became little less than a daily convocation, composed of the highest taught divines, both at home and from abroad. It might have been termed *sanctorum patria*; and every individual forming this bright constellation, more or less, have borne the name *philologus, philosophus, et theologus eximius*!

But the general acquaintance which the young men matriculated in the university had with the dead languages, and biblical knowledge of the word of God, as well as their ability in conversing in the several dialects of the Continent; their great feature of character consisted in the higher attainment of the knowledge of their own heart. They were taught of God before that they came forth to teach others; and had received, for the most part, a saving work of grace in themselves, before that they ventured to preach to the church salvation.

It was the felicity of this era, that from our *almá mater*, the youth who were sent forth for holy orders, came under impressions of grace, and founded their au-

thority to the ministry in the being called of God. And the blessing of the Lord evidently went before and followed their labours. The history of those times furnish ample proof of such a body of clergy and people, as mutually enjoyed and benefited one another.* Imagi-

* I cannot more effectually prove the validity of this statement, than in referring the reader to a number in the diurnal publication of the Spectator, which was published in the opening of the eighteenth century; and which, by taking a retrospect of that which preceded it, throws a light upon the subject. The author of this number in the Spectator, be who he might, meant to censure the doctrines of grace, observed in the universities; but in reality doth not only confirm the truth itself, of its then forming the principal feature in the character of the candidate for holy orders, but at once proves the reality of what I have shewn, and forms the highest testimony of the soundness of doctrine, in the grand and essential truths of our holy faith, which then pervaded that seminary in all orders of the people. The number I refer to, is 494, Friday, September 26th, vol. vii.

‘About an age ago,’ saith the writer, ‘it was the fashion in England, for every one that would be thought religious, to throw as much sanctity as possible into his face; and, in particular, to abstain from all appearance of mirth, as marks of a carnal mind. At this period, a young adventurer in the republic of letters, and just fitted out for the university, with a good cargo of latin and greek, went to college. His friends were resolved that he should try his fortune, as they termed it, at an election, which was drawing near in the college, and he presented himself for that purpose at the door of one of the heads of houses. He was received at the door, by a servant who was one of the gloomy generation that were then in fashion. The servant conducted him, with great silence and seriousness to a long gallery, which was darkened at noon-day, and had only a single candle burning in it. After a short stay in this melancholy apartment, he was led into a chamber hung with black, where he entertained himself for some time by the glimmering of a taper, till at length the head of college came out to him, from an inner room, with half a dozen night caps upon his head, and religious horror in his countenance. The young man trembled; but his fears increased when, instead of being asked what progress he had made in learning, he was examined how he abounded in grace? His latin and greek stood him in little stead; he was to give an account only of the state of his soul—whether he was of the number of the elect—what was the occasion of his conversion—upon what day of the month, and hour of the day it happened—how it was carried on, and when completed? And the whole examination was summed up in one short question, namely, *whether he was prepared for death?* The boy, who had been bred up by honest parents, was frighted out of his wits at the solemnity of the proceeding, and by the last dreadful interrogatory; so that upon making his escape out of the house of mourning, he could never be brought a second time to the examination, not being able to go through the terrors of it.’

Now making all due allowance for the high colouring given by the writer, of the ‘half a dozen night caps,’ and the ‘religious horror of countenance’ in the head of the college, and the like; this fanciful author hath undesignedly proved what I aimed to shew, namely, that the university at the period he states, and which I am speaking of, made the doctrines of grace an essential rule for

nation may frame to itself somewhat of those halcyon days, when both minister and congregation, "walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost were multiplied;" but to enter into the full and absolute enjoyment of it, can only be the privilege of such, as in themselves are partakers of it.

It were well to make a pause here, and consider the striking contrast in conduct and deportment between the sent of God, and the sent only by man. While those, who never felt the plague of their own heart, (and therefore can have no apprehension whatever how to speak a word in season to him that is weary,) leap at once over all the divine fence to the fold; the called of God to the sacred office, as we read in scripture, though sanctified and set apart from the womb, shrunk from the high calling with holy fear and apprehension. When God spake to Moses from the bush, commanding him to bring out his people from Egypt, and to go before them in the wilderness; the man of God cried out, "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel from Egypt?" And after repeated assurances from the Lord of his presence to go with him, and the certainty of his success; still the awful charge made him tremble at the prospect, and he expostulated with the Lord, saying, "O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant; but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue." *Exod. iii. 11.—iv. 10.* When Jeremiah, though assured by the Lord, that "before he formed him in the belly, and before he came forth out of the womb he sanctified him, and ordained him

all the youths matriculated for the church to be possessed of. I only leave it with the reader therefore to give me credit for the truth of my assertion, that in that day such was the state of things at the universities. The reader I leave to his own reflections on the same. He will confess, I hope, that grace stood high in the then esteem of the heads of colleges.

to be a prophet unto the nations;" when so divinely called, yet under an awful sense of the vast charge, he also exclaimed, "Ah! Lord God! behold I cannot speak, for I am a child!" Jer. i. 5, 6.

As far as we are enabled to form opinion, from the writings handed down to us, of those great men of the sixteenth century, the bishops were strict to the greatest nicety of strictness, in the examination of candidates for holy orders. It appears to have been a matter of no small anxiety with them, whom they ordained. They certainly had an awful sense upon their mind, to preserve the church from pastors unsent of God. They feared to wound their own consciences; and they alike dreaded to wound the consciences of the people. They no doubt concluded (as every one who thinks rightly must conclude) that no blessings could be expected from any ministry, which carried not with it the Lord's name. The word of the Lord by the prophet, was before them. "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran. I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied." Jer. xxiii. throughout. So again; "Thus saith the Lord God, woe unto the foolish prophets that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing. Behold! I am against you, saith the Lord God!" Ezek. xiii.

When the holy season arrived for setting apart the servants of the Lord to the ministry of his word and ordinances; those ember weeks, as they were called, were spent wholly in godly exercises, reading, exhortation and prayer. The intervals of public worship at the cathedral, were occupied in a way suited to the great business which was impending on the Lord's day which was to follow. And the plan adopted was as similar as possible to what is related in the Acts of the Apostles, at the special ordination of the servants of the Lord, when the Holy Ghost said, "separate me Barnabas and Paul, for the work whereunto I have called them." Acts xiii. 2.

In a particular manner the last evening, preparatory to the Lord's-day, which followed for the ordination, we have reason to conclude, was observed with special strictness. The bishop gathered the whole of the young men together, that finally, and fully, before it was too late, if any one cause existed for which the ordination of either of them should be suspended, or for ever laid aside, it might then be known. And there is great reason to conclude, that besides prayer and exhortation, questions of the most solemn and heart-searching nature were proposed by the bishop to each, and every one individually, on the great points of divine truth. And their knowledge of them, and enjoyment of them in their own souls, with the Lord's personal call to them to make known to others demanded. Such as, whether they felt such a desire to the service as led them to conclude, the moving to it was of the Lord? Do you believe the Lord is sending you into his service? Do you so depend upon this, as to seek all your furniture to the work from him? Is there a constraint laid upon you to preach the gospel; yea, a woe upon you if you preach it not? Is it your earnest wish and desire, and under the Lord's help, your firm determination also, to give yourself to reading, to exhortation, and to doctrine; that by continuing in them, you may both save yourself and them that hear you? Are these among the first and leading principles, for which you desire to give yourself to the ministry, first in dedication to the Lord, and then to his people? And finally, and above all, do you hope and trust you are called to the work, and have received these impressions from the Lord himself? And will you by constant prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, make your requests known unto God, that "the peace of God which passeth all understanding may keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus?"

The imagination may, in some measure, conceive, but no description can fully convey how very sacred such an interview must have been at a season so solemn; and with the prospect of ordination then in view, when questions of such a heart-searching nature took place preparatory to the introduction to the ministry. Let the reader figure to himself a venerable bishop, portrayed in all the anxiety of one responsible for admitting none but faithful servants of the Lord into his church; and standing between God and souls, to act the father over his youthful charge! Let him behold him, encircled with those sons of the prophets, waiting for the solemn moment approaching of dedicating them to the Lord! Let him view the whole circle, first, in serious enquiring, and then all bending their knees together in prayer, and the Lord in the midst bending the knee of their hearts, in pleading the divine presence and blessing to direct them! Surely, we might expect the consequence to follow which Tertullian, in the holy boldness of faith, declared to be the result of the prevalency of prayer in his days. ‘*Cælum tundimus et misericordiam extorquemus.*’ ‘We knock at heaven, and the merciful heart of God flies open to receive us!’

I have not been able, from the records of those times, to gather sufficient matter to state the whole proceeding which took place in those seasons of ordination. But I venture to assume it for a principle hardly to be contended with, that every part of the service corresponded to the sanctity of the day. With such bishops, and such clergy, and coming from universities such as Oxford and Cambridge, where the truths of God were both preached, lived up to, and acted upon; surely the setting apart to the ministry must have been very solemn and interesting. And it will not be merely conjectural, or if it be conjectural, it is well founded in strong conviction, that the ordination sermons at those seasons were wholly directed to the great leading points

of doctrine, and life, and manners ; in which the blessedness of all the sacred functions must consist.

The province of preaching on such high concerns cannot with propriety be committed to chaplains. For, although rank doth not always imply superior ability ; yet, it is well known that the authority of office cannot fail of giving a preponderancy to what is said or done. And very sure I am, the highest dignity of every bishop is to act himself as the chaplain of the Lord. The man that is a bishop, and hath the truest apprehension of the nature and responsibility of his office, cannot but know, that it is to neglect the gift that is in him (if so be that gift is from the Lord's consecration), when he doth not meditate upon these things ; and when he doth not give himself wholly unto them. To depute a chaplain to give charge to his clergy, is to lessen the importance of it. And although the ordination sermon ought not to be delivered *ex cathedrá* ; yet age and dignity will temper all that is said. Indeed, it might be expected that the apostle would be seen and felt, when, like Paul, the bishop exhorted by the meekness and gentleness of Christ. And, surely, there is somewhat the imagination enters into with a strong prepossession of delight, when the gracefulness of age is beheld coming forth to instruct youth. What a lovely picture is given of the apostle in this particular, in his pastoral exhortation to the church of the Thessalonians ! His whole heart seems to have gone forth in love towards them ; as if, while he considered his ministry for their welfare, his very soul was no longer his own. " We were gentle among you, (said he) even as a nurse cherisheth her children : so, being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us." 1 Thess. ii. 7, 8. Surely, a bishop never appears more venerable and lovely, than when condescending to

speak in this manner, with tenderness to his clergy, on the great truths of God. Though he apparently comes down to the level of those whom he addresseth; yet the persuasiveness of the man doth not lessen, but rather give dignity to the prelate.

I must not indulge the imagination with the supposed idea of being present at the ordination held by the bishops of the sixteenth century. But, if a writer living in the opening of the nineteenth century might be allowed to form an opinion of what passed at such a service, in the conduct of the ordainer towards the ordained; it were easy to conclude, that his sermon could not be deficient in the great points which must be everlastingly suited to the church of England's service, as long as it shall remain the established church of this country; and very eminently so at the time here referred to, when the nation had just emerged from popery. Under this impression, it may be reasonably inferred, that the chief points of discourse delivered by the bishop in his ordination sermon, were on those most intimately connected with the service.

If I were called upon (the bishop might be supposed to say) to point out what form the grand discriminating features in the ordination to the ministry, I should not hesitate to class them under a few special heads. The clear and evident marks of regeneration, on the minds of the persons seeking ordination; the clear and evident call of God to the ministry; an earnest concern in them for the salvation of souls; the wishes of godly persons acquainted with their principles, for their being placed over them; and the prayers of the faithful going before and following them for a blessing on the ministry. Where these qualifications are found, there can be no hesitation to admit such candidates into holy orders. There seems to be every thing to intimate the predilection of God.

And that these are essential qualifications, and of

indispensable necessity, is evident from another consideration. It hath been said by some, (but without foundation) that the church of England hath derived her authority in the appointment of her ministers, by immediate succession from the apostles. But not to observe that this, even if it had existed, which it never did, is totally done away by the irruption of popery; certain it is that no church upon earth, as an establishment, can lay claim to such a privilege. It is the Lord alone which calls to his service. Even in the college of apostles, when a vacancy was made by the death of Judas, the surviving eleven ventured not to fill the place in with another, until that they had brought the matter before the Lord. We hear them saying, "thou, Lord, which knoweth the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen." Nay, it is probable that they never would have added another, had not God himself directed to the choice, by that remarkable prophecy concerning the traitor Judas; where it is said, "let his days be few, and let another take his office." Ps. cix. 8. Acts i. 20—24. Hence, there are no successions by descent. The sacred office in the church, like grace in the heart, is not hereditary. It will be well, therefore, that every individual servant in the house of God, and in all the departments of it, should be able to give to every man that asketh him a reason of the right of ministry that is in him, as well as a reason of the hope that is in him with meekness and fear. For otherwise, his case may not be unsimilar, though the safety of his person may not be in such danger, as the man we read of in the Acts of the Apostles; who, when attempting to exercise the ministry over the evil spirits, had this mortifying repulse, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?" Acts xix. 13—16.

It will be always a consolation of the highest nature to every truly ordained minister, that carrieth about

with him the credentials of his high calling, in the work of God upon his own heart, and the blessing of God upon his labours, while serving in the work of God towards others; that these are the best and most infallible marks of ordination in his own soul. And where these are, they must prove, and will be acknowledged by godly men of all degrees and orders, as the sure standards of character in the ministry; yea, even by those among our dissenting brethren who are pleased to think episcopal ordination a nullity.

And while the bishop might be supposed insisting, to some degree of length, on the several branches of duty belonging to the ministerial character; it may be reasonably concluded also that he availed himself of the opportunity of addressing the congregation present to interest their affection, and to desire their prayers for the Lord's blessing on their ministry. But these are points so obvious, that in a work of this kind they need not to be enlarged upon. I shall therefore dismiss the subject of this chapter, with only observing in the words of the apostle, how blessed were those times when such godly men ministered, and "held fast the faithful word as they had been taught, being able by sound doctrine both to exhort, and to convince the gainsayers."

CHAPTER VII.

THE BISHOP OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY IN THE VISITATIONS OF HIS CLERGY AND DIOCESE.

It must have been a very high gratification to the truly godly of the sixteenth century, both of clergy and people, to have followed the bishop of those times in the circuits of his visitations. In such a suite, and upon such occasions as became the great object of their journey, the imagination can hardly conceive any thing more truly pleasing.

In the memoirs of one of the archbishops of those days, we have the following account by his biographer: 'He went round his diocese,' saith this writer, 'every year, preaching and catechising from parish to parish. He laboured in this service, without intermission, except when residing on his own cure of souls. He gave away in those journies all his income beyond the small expence of his own person (which he ever used most sparingly) to the poor. He studied to raise in his clergy a greater sense of spiritual matters, and of the charge of souls; and was in all respects a burning and a shining light, and highly beloved and esteemed by his whole diocese. He visited all the churches of his charge annually; preached himself in most of the churches, and heard the ministers preach. He did this with a view that he might not only know their zeal, and the doctrines which they preached, but that they might know his. And not only this, but that he might give countenance to them among their parishioners. And at home, if at any time there occurred a vacancy by reason of sickness or any other cause, he made a point to supply the pulpit himself: which not only prevented the neglect of the duty, but also conveyed to the congregation what sweet harmony subsisted between the bishop and his clergy in promoting the glory of God.'

What a beautiful feature of character is here! Surely it must have endeared him to every beholder! Let the reader figure to himself the man of God thus going through his diocese, not simply to a city or great town, but in every district and parish; and, like a shepherd, searching and seeking the sheep out of all places whither they were scattered in the cloudy and dark day. The persons of his clergy could not but be well known to him by an annual visitation. And if, as hath been said by some, those seasons were chiefly directed to enquire after the spiritual state both of ministers and

people, their growth in the divine life, and the yearly addition of the faithful, we have reason to conclude that in numberless instances the persons of the people were equally known to him also.

The public services of the churches, in the visitation sermons, charges, and exhortations, must have been very blessedly suited to those times of primitive godliness. And the very conversation at the table, amidst the plain and homely food then furnished, no doubt, made every thing gracious and edifying.

One of the writers of those days, in his account of the bishop which fell more immediately under his notice, speaks much to this purpose. He saith, that in heavenly discourse and conversation upon all occasions, he manifested his love to souls, and his labours for their godly improvement. If you travelled with him on the road, he could easily spiritualize all objects, and turn the journey heavenwards. If, in a visit, he was more importunate to minister to the welfare of the souls of his company than to their bodies. If at the table, he would be clearing difficulties of scripture, especially among his clergy, or when other learned men did associate or visit him. And so very interesting was his whole conversation, in improving every subject to the edification of his hearers, that the best taught, or the humblest capacities, could not but much improve by his table talk. He was so excellent in this way, that Dr. Bernard, a contemporary of those times, said of him, that it often put him in mind of the words of the queen of the south to Solomon. "Happy are these thy servants that stand about thee, and continually hear thy wisdom."

We have to lament that amidst the general records of those times, there is not (as far as my reading hath extended) a single document of the plan observed in the bishops' visitation. Nevertheless, from the general memoirs of their lives, it is easy to infer to what sacred

points, on the great subject of theology, the whole purport of their sermons and charges was directed. Indeed the ordination service, which must have been compiled in those days, very plainly sheweth that men who composed so very sweet and interesting a form for address to the then ordained clergy, accompanied with a charge so pointed and express as is there exhibited, cannot but be supposed to have followed it up in all the several visitations, when making enquiry of the spiritual welfare of themselves and their people.

And, surely, the imagination cannot form to itself a sight more lovely, than to behold a venerable bishop encircled by his clergy, all met together under a conscientious sense of the Lord's presence, and all earnestly desiring the Lord's glory. A convocation of this kind hath in it, what the schools of old called *benedicere alicui*; when the elder, as a father, was looking up to God for blessings on his child. And there is no less on the other hand, the *benedicere aliquem*; when the youngers wished well to their elder, looking also to the same God for his blessing upon him. And let the imagination present to itself such a view of a bishop with his clergy; and we realize in some degree what took place in the apostles' days, when under the influence of the Holy Ghost, "they continued daily, with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness, and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people."

It were easy to conceive, though we are not furnished with the history to relate, what were the general outlines both of what is called the bishop's charge, and the services of holy worship on those occasions. For if, as most assuredly must have been the case, the great and leading principle of every visitation was enquiring into the spiritual state of the church, both in the ministers and people; the subjects of all discourse could

not but have had an immediate direction to the accomplishment of these purposes. Hence the duty of the visitor, and the duty of the visited, were engaged in the same thing; and all, as the eyes of one man, keeping only in view the Lord's glory. No faithful servant of God, called by him to the high office of a bishop, could for a moment forget from whom he derived his authority; and for whom the great object in promoting his service he obtained it. And as at his consecration, he solemnly engaged to shew himself gentle and merciful for Christ's sake; and that the people then present became witness how faithfully he pledged himself to behave in the church of God; every character of this description necessarily began the charge to himself, before that he directed that charge to others. Ο εν διδασκων ετερον σεαυτον ε διδασκεις.

It is not a very difficult matter, for the imagination to figure to itself an assembly of the divines of this age, all God-fearing men, with the bishop at their head, and the hoary saint of God speaking to them with all the affection of the father and the friend, on the sacred nature of their order, and the vast interest, both as to others and to themselves, in which that order involved them. It can be no violence to truth to suppose, that under the impression of his own weighty charge, he opened his address in reminding, first himself and then his clergy, of the dignity of their high calling, and the awful responsibility to faithfulness in which that calling placed them.

I confess, that I am the more prompted to figure to my imagination such a view of a bishop of the sixteenth century, thus engaged in his visitation, because I find, in one of the writers of those times, this striking observation: 'God,' saith this writer, 'had but one Son, and he made him a minister.' Hence he is called in scripture by the royal, yea, the divine title, "the Bishop of souls." I appeal to the reader, therefore, whether men

with such views of the ministry, must not have had at all times, and especially in the solemn seasons of their visitations, the most lively apprehension of the nature and dignity of the office, who could express themselves in this manner!

Modern manners may have frittered away the spirituality of things; but the age of which I write, had them most solemnly in remembrance. It was an age truly apostolic. And the bishops of those days felt, concerning the ministry, as Paul did when, in his epistle to the church of the Romans, he adverted to Christ's calling under this very character. "Now I say, (said he) that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision, for the truth of God." Rom. xv. 8. And if ever Paul, after his conversion, felt a glow of self-complacency, it was when he said, "the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who hath enabled me; for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry." 1 Tim. i. 11, 12.

And I confess, that I am yet again further prompted to form to my imagination, such a beautiful order of things at those visitations, because the men that went round their dioceses, to enquire after the state of godliness among their clergy and people, were some of the same men who compiled the liturgy, and drew up that very solemn form, which is still in use for the ordination of the ministry. When, therefore, I read the bishop's charge, given to the clergy when he ordained them; can it be supposed possible for him to say less, or to lose sight of that charge, when afterwards he goeth through his diocese to visit them?

Could it for a moment be supposed, that in any period of the established church of this country, men in any department of its offices, whether bishops or clergy, were to enter sacred orders for secular views, and make a merchandise of the church, *supposing*, as the apostle

saith, that *gain is godliness*; in this case, indeed, we might expect to hear more of this world's goods in a bishop's charge, than of the blessings of another; and the visitation feasts, as well as the visitation discourses, would be more directed to things temporal than things eternal. But the sixteenth century, the golden age of the establishment of this country, was eminently distinguished by great divines; and the bounds of modesty are not overstepped when it is said, they went forth, as well bishops as clergy, with their lives in their hands, with a single eye to the glory of God.

Let the reader glance only at the ordination service, in the solemnity of the charge given to the young men on entering the ministry. And then let him judge for himself, whether all subsequent visitations were not formed upon the same model. Take a passage or two only of the interesting service, by way of sample.—‘You have heard, brethren,’ said the bishop to them, ‘as well in your private examination, as in the exhortation now made to you, and in the holy lessons taken out of the gospel, and the writings of the apostles; of what dignity and of how great importance this office is, whereunto ye are called. And now again we exhort you, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you have in remembrance into how high a dignity, and to how weighty an office and charge ye are called; that is to say, to be messengers, watchmen, and stewards of the Lord. To teach and to premonish, to feed and provide for the Lord's family. To seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for his children who are in the midst of this naughty world; for they are the sheep of Christ, which he hath bought with his death, and for whom he shed his blood. The church and congregation whom you must serve is his spouse and his body. And if it shall happen the same church, or any member thereof, do take any hurt or hindrance, by reason of your negligence, ye know the greatness of

the fault, and also the horrible punishment that will ensue.'

Can any one who reads this charge, and much more to the same purport, as is contained in the ordination service, and followed up, as it always was upon these occasions, with the most solemn questions and with prayer; can any one, I say, for a moment suppose, that the visitation charge, and the visitation sermons, were less earnest on those weighty points? If they aimed to impress upon their minds the arduous trust of messengers, watchmen, and stewards in the church of Christ; if they admonished them to look after them, and nourish them; to feed, and to provide for the Lord's family; and to seek after his sheep, scattered in the midst of a naughty world; if these laborious and affectionate offices were yet more strongly recommended to them by that solemn consideration, that the church is Christ's spouse, and his redeemed his sheep, for whom he shed his blood; could men so awakened to such a sense of the importance of those things, yea, bishops who had ordained and sent forth servants to the high calling, and for whose conduct, under certain points, they became responsible; could they be otherwise than anxious in their visitations to enquire after the events of their ministry? To imagine a supineness or inattention to such momentous concerns, would be to imagine men lost to every sense of conscience, honour, and integrity. The thing is impossible. No! every principle of common sense leads us to conclude, that those seasons of visitations, were seasons of peculiar refreshing to the whole body of the clergy and the congregation which were present upon the occasion; and that the bishop exhorted the whole assembly in a manner suited to the high nature of his office, and the great object for which it was to be supposed that he visited his diocese.

I stay not to go over even the writings of what may be thought formed the subject of his charge. No doubt,

as messengers, watchmen, and stewards, those several characters opened to a large field of discourse. Neither can it be supposed upon so fair an occasion, but that the man of God, while addressing his clergy, availed himself of the opportunity of addressing also the people. And while he recommended himself and his diocese to the prayers of the faithful, he invited no less their affection and good-will to the persons and ministry of their pastors. He might have said, and no doubt he did say, that as the office of a minister is great and arduous, it would tend to lighten those labours, when the people of his charge carried him, in the arms of faith and prayer, before the Lord for a blessing, both upon his person and his services. And it must have been a moment of the most animating nature to have been present at such a visitation, and to have seen and heard the bishop call upon the full assembly of the people, in the language of the apostles of old, "Brethren, pray for us!"

If, from the house of God, we follow the bishop and his clergy to the house of refreshment, no doubt we shall find a corresponding gracefulness in every department of conduct. The necessary demands of the body, when properly qualified, so far from interrupting the higher claims of the soul, are found very blessedly to minister to enjoyment. "Every creature of God is good, saith an apostle, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving." And how blessed and savoury may the conversation be, if while men partake of the bounties of God's providence, their souls are feasted with the higher manifestations of God's grace? But could it be supposed possible, for the sons of the prophets to make a carnival of those seasons; and when the public service of the church at a visitation was over, the private conversation at the inn, manifested a total departure from the things of God; what an awful idea would such a scene awaken in the mind?

Every circumstance connected with the history of

the church in the century we are contemplating, carries with it the strongest conviction, that the conversation at the house of refreshment for the body, became an echo to the discourses and solemn services ministered in the house of prayer to the soul; and that both had a direct tendency to one and the same end, namely, the divine glory. Indeed, the homely plain fare used upon those occasions, which was just enough to answer the common wants of nature, and no more, had this advantage also, that no interruption could well arise therefrom to take off from the higher concerns of grace. And the personal conversation which was hereby afforded to the diocesan and his clergy, to enquire in a more immediate manner into each circumstance as might arise; gave opportunity to discover the progress of godliness both among the clergy and the people; and such as could not be so well attended to, in the public services of the church.

The reader may raise to his ideas (and perhaps, if he recollects as he doth it, the age of the church to which this history refers, he will not be wide of the mark), some of those several interesting topics of conversation, which may be supposed to have filled, in the hours of social intercourse with the bishop and his clergy. Subjects of the most interesting nature, could not but be always in the view of the whole table. And no doubt, from the common circumstances of human life in the instability of it, scarce a visitation returned, but the vacant place made by death, in the instance of one or more, who at the preceding season formed part of the company, but now for ever gone, gave occasion for solemn thought, and for raising suitable reflections of improvement to all the survivors.

And as this period of the church, from the recent departure of popery, and the arising around of various classes in profession, made it necessary for the champions of liberty to be on the look out, while feeding the

church within, to defend no less the truth without; we may reasonably conclude that among the edifying conversation of the table, the bishop was not wanting in instructing his brethren how to meet the errors of the day with all godly zeal tempered with meekness. It was a famous maxim of Luther, '*ruat cælum potius quam una mica veritatis pereat.*' 'Let heaven (said he) rush, rather than one crumb of truth should perish.' But it is a blessed property of grace, while the servant of God contends earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints, that this is done in the spirit of meekness and godly fear. I admire the mild and gentle reply of Augustine to an angry disputant, who would admit nothing but the *ipse dixit* to his own dogma; '*nec ego te* (said the saint), *nec tu me; sed ambo audiemus Christum.*' 'I will neither hear thee, nor thou me, but let us both hear Christ.'

It were needless to enlarge. All circumstances connected with those seasons of visitation, could not but bear a beautiful coincidence of order, with this era of the church. Both the bishops and clergy being under the influence of grace, must have carried with them a corresponding influence in all their characters and offices. Their meetings, in public services, and private conferences, savoured of godliness; all tended to the use of edifying, that it might minister grace unto the hearers. And however singular such a view might appear, in times not so distinguished, there can be no doubt but that the close of every visitation ended in prayer, as servants of the Lord whose charge upon them was considered so weighty; and whose meeting might be no more, before called upon to give in the account of their stewardship at the judgment seat of Christ.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BISHOP OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY, IN THE EXERCISE OF HIS PATRONAGE, AND DISPOSING OF LIVINGS AND PREFERMENTS.

However imperfectly we have been enabled to execute a faithful representation of the bishop of the sixteenth century in his visitations, for want of more records of those times; yet, under the present view of the servant of the Lord, in disposing of the subordinate departments of the household committed to his charge; we are happily better prepared, by a simple statement of the facts. There could be no doubt, indeed, but that every one of those stewards of God, lived and acted under the conviction that the very idea of the patronage he possessed, was committed into his hands, solely for the promotion of the divine glory; and that he dared not, as he hoped to be found faithful to his trust, to allow private interest, or private friendship, to supersede the solemn responsibility in taking care of the church of God. To have given a single appointment to any but what in his conscience seemed the most promising to minister to the good of souls; would have been an outrage in those days, which no bishop, even had he been so disposed, would have presumed to have done.

We cannot have a more lively proof in point, than what the history of those days hath preserved to us from a charge of this kind exhibited against a bishop, in the province of Canterbury, and which the unjustly accused man refuted in the most modest and able manner. The charge, as appears, brought against him was, for that he had shewn partiality in providing for his own relations in preference to others of greater merit. And however singular such a charge may seem to the taste of the present age; this was evidently then

considered as a crime of no venial kind. The bishop's answer is remarkable, and was in these words :—

‘ I made not my father-in-law minister ; he being admitted ten years before I was a bishop. He is not of my diocese, nor had his benefice of me. I have heard he hath been of better credit than this accuser speaketh. And that he hath been an harbourer of godly men in their trouble ; and is, at this day, a grave, honest, and godly old man. God will one day give sentence upon all impenitent slanderers.’*

And it should seem that the impeachment of this bishop not only went to charge him with enriching his family, at the expence of keeping back godly men more deserving, but that he was slandered also for negligence in his function. Hence we find the good man in the same answer to the crimes laid against him, making his modest retort in these words :—

‘ I was in the late days of trouble, (meaning the reign of Mary) an exile in Germany. And since my return, I have been a preacher admitted and exercised therein these twenty-three years. I read the divinity lecture, in Exeter, twice weekly for four years, and preached twice every sabbath. I only, with one other, remained on my diocese in the great plague, preaching publicly, and comforting privately, such as were infected with it. This last summer, living at my *commendam* in

* It is very blessed to observe, that in all ages, the same mark and standard of character is uniformly distinguishing the faithful servants of the Lord. What Paul said in his days holds good in all days ; “ as deceivers, and yet true, as unknown, and yet well known ; as dying, and behold we live ; as chastened, and not killed ; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing ; as poor, yet making many rich ; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things,” 2 Cor. vi. 8—10. This bishop fell into reproach and disesteem for his faithfulness. Had he lorded it over his clergy, and preferred the providing for his own natural relations and friends after the flesh, to the cause of Christ and his spiritual church, it is likely that none of these charges would have been brought against him. Oh ! how blessed are those words of Christ ! “ If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. 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,” John xv. 18, 19.

the country, I preached every Sunday. And elsewhere have had a dutiful care of my charge. And if God give grace will do my endeavours to perform my duty. But will any man accuse me, if being old I be not so strong as when I was young; or that now, hearing and composing as a public person matters incident to my calling, I cannot do all things and be in all places. The residue of the article being untrue and reproachful I omit, knowing that God will destroy lying and deceitful tongues.'

It appears among the prominent features of this age, that as the utmost care was taken to select the most eminent among the clergy for bishops, who were sound in faith, and well reported for learning and godliness; so the bishops were as anxious to select from their clergymen of the same qualities with themselves to fill the stalls in their cathedrals; and the rectories and vicarages in their respective dioceses. We have a very interesting document, in confirmation of this, on record, presented to the lord treasurer in 1576, which among other things, expressed the sense the nation at that time entertained concerning the appointment over churches. 'England,' saith the writer, 'was praised by Erasmus, because their choice was made of their bishops for gravity and learning. Whereas other countries did it more for birth and politic respect of worldly affairs. And let me add,' said he, 'the bishops make as good a choice of discreet ministers. For by these we daily see our country people, are drawn to amendment of manners and religion. Learning and persuasion will little avail with our people, if love and good life be absent. And when bishops have set up good lights, they must be as vigilant to snuff their candles, or else some will wax dim with worldly desires.'

It would be extending our subject, to a very great and unnecessary length, to particularize in special instances, the anxiety and sedulous attention, observed by

the bishops, as the patrons of the several incumbencies, in presenting with cautiousness, to the pastoral charge. Whatever cases might occur, (and no doubt some might occur, for corrupt nature is the same in all ages), where interest at times prevailed over right; yet such in general was the conscientious regard, paid by the prelates of the sixteenth century, to this department, that we may with safety conclude, the predominant principle which swayed in the minds of those who were themselves partakers of grace, operated to present to livings such as were alike possessors of grace.

I venture to assume this for a principle, inasmuch, as the standard of character, which the scripture had formed for the model of all church government, and from whence those God-fearing men had framed their plan for ordination; could not but be equally made their guide, in all the regulations they observed, in the appointment of ministers, to the respective parishes. It were a violence to the common understanding of mankind to suppose, that while they had in view the apostle's charge for ordination, they lost sight of the precept he had connected with it, of their watchfulness in the appointment of ministers to their stations. "I charge thee (said Paul to Timothy) before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another: doing nothing by partiality. Lay hands suddenly on no man; neither be partaker of other men's sins," 1 Tim. v. 21—22. Such a charge, and connected in its train, with such solemn and eventful consequences, no doubt, the men of that age and generation, conversant as they necessarily were with the scriptures in view, and which tended not only in inducing caution who they ordained, but who they inducted into benefices. Partiality to any, unsuited to the charge of Christ's flock, became not only treason in the sight of God, but implicated them as the apostle

expressed it, in other men's sins. They did thereby become partakers with them, and were with them awfully responsible.

In Walton's life of Hooker, we have some very striking anecdotes of the conduct of Whitgift, at the time he was archbishop of Canterbury, on this subject; which are highly honourable to himself, and truly satisfactory to the credit of the church, in proof how tenacious at that time were all orders of the people in their attention to see faithful ministers placed over the respective churches. It cannot be brought within the compass of a work of this limited nature, to state all that the historian hath recorded of this great man. He hath indeed given at large the archbishop's appeal to the queen's majesty upon the subject, beseeching her grace to co-operate with him, in her large patronage, to countenance none but such as had in view, above all things, the glory of God, in their appointment to places in the church. I cannot forbear making a short quotation from the archbishop's public letter to her majesty on this subject, which, while it went to shew his ardent zeal for the divine glory, in the good of souls, was no less accompanied with the greatest modesty, and in a language decorous and becoming.

He began with humbly beseeching her majesty to hear him with patience, and to believe that her safety and the church's welfare were dearer to him than life, but his conscience dearer than both. And under these impressions, he had presumed to approach her majesty, with reverence, on the subject of the church's patrimony. The situation in which her majesty's royal bounty had placed him, as metropolitan, called upon him, from every principle of gratitude to her majesty, as well as his conscientious discharge of the high trust committed to him, rendered it a duty he owed to himself, to bring before his royal mistress his boon. And as the scriptures of God had declared princes to be the

“nursing fathers to the church ;” ‘ God forbid (said the archbishop) that your majesty should be passive in any thing which had a tendency to the weal of the church.’

The prelate went on to point out how the revenues of the church would decay by inattention. And that with a view to make the order of the clergy respectable, and their labours esteemed by the people, nothing should be allowed, which might tend to the degradation of the one, or to incur the danger of disaffection in the other: but both, so blended in attention by her majesty’s bounty and favour to good men, as laboured in the word and doctrine, as might manifest her majesty’s zeal for God, and the welfare of the sacred order. And so imploring pardon for his affectionate plainness, he begged still to be continued in favour, and humbly took leave of the subject with her majesty.

I have the rather gathered this fragment from the historian of those times, concerning Whitgift’s petition to her majesty the queen, on the subject of the church; not so much in relation to queen Elizabeth, as to the archbishop himself. For a man that could and did feel so much interest, as to address royalty upon this occasion, could not but be alive to the rectitude of his own administration on the same ground. And indeed, Whitgift, at the head of the church, with the large patronage he thereby possessed, thus acting, must have had a preponderancy which could not fail to have its due weight through the whole realm.

We find similar proofs in the succeeding reign of James. Nay, the king himself was so truly earnest, to have the several rectories and vicarages of the kingdom filled in with godly men, that in the history of 1603, when the convocation of the clergy was sitting, he sent a special message to them on the subject: and observing, that his own presentations not being sufficient to provide for the whole, of faithful ministers, he earnestly recommended the archbishops,

and bishops of the dioceses to co-operate with him in this service.

I have before stated in this little work, that amidst all the eccentricities of James, and many personal improprieties of conduct, which his history too sadly furnisheth, he was allowedly the most learned prince of his day in Europe. And it might be added, that though the political horizon, unhappily favoured a too lax conduct of manners, yet in the midst of all, James, as far as profession went, maintained an orthodoxy of character. It may not be safe to assert, that his views of the doctrines of grace, were any more than mere speculative apprehensions; the conviction of the head, not the regeneration of the heart; yet publicly, and as far as his royal authority was exercised, on subjects of theology, the leading feature of his character was in perfect conformity to the doctrinal articles of the church of England. A reference to his own writings most decidedly prove the truth of this statement.

I am not to be told, that an elegant historian of our own country, Mr. Hume, hath gone so far as to assert the contrary. But with all this writer's elegance, we must not be led away from plain matters of fact, to give credit to this relation. James both lived and died in the profession of the true faith. True (as Mr. Hume hath said) he did not at all times equally contend for the pure faith once delivered unto the saints. His court towards the close of his reign was frequently made up of men, too much tinctured with the doctrine of free will. Laud, who in the succeeding reign, had so much sway over the mind of Charles began towards the termination of James's government, and the rising sun of Charles, to manifest the complexion of his mind, in the propagation of free will. All this is true. Yet in confirmation of the orthodoxy of James, though as before observed, it is to be feared, that it was more of the head

than of the heart; yet his public acts were all in favour of the doctrinal articles of the church. A more palpable testimony cannot be desired than what the annals of his reign furnish, in that this monarch commanded the books of Vorstius the scholar, and successor of Arminius, to be publicly burnt at St. Paul's Cross, as the condemnation of that heresy. And this was done, in the year 1611.*

It will therefore be but a fair inference to give James the credit, which indeed the history of that reign shews, that the king himself was anxious to fill in the several places of the church, both among the higher and the lower ranks of the clergy, with faithful men. And I must here again conclude, what few I believe will be disposed to deny, that both the bishops and curates of the sixteenth century, were men sound in the faith, and examples of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

It will I think be readily admitted, that if the king was so zealous in defending the truth, that zeal was not less burning, in following of it up, with taking care to see that men of like complexion with himself moved in the different departments of the church. And an higher proof cannot be needed, than what the death of James, at once produced, and his successor Charles immediately adopted. For under the very first year of Charles' reign, 1625, the articles of the church of England, though still remaining the same in point of law, lost all their force in point of obedience. True indeed,

* Dr. Fuller, in his church history, hath pencilled the character of Vorstius in strong colouring. He hath described him as the writer of heresies, and the abettor of the doctrine of the Samosatensians. He laboured to do away the belief of those adorable perfections, which distinguish the divine essence in Jehovah. James took fire at the introduction of such writings into his kingdom, and having ordered them to be burnt, he sent a request unto the states of Holland, where Vorstius lived, that the Senate would banish him their kingdom. This is related at large in the works of king James I. page 354.

as long as the different sees retained the same bishops, and the rectories and vicarages were held by the same pastors, all moved on seemingly as before. But this state of things lasted not long. As vacancies were made by deaths, men of contrary principles succeeded, until gradually free grace had given way to free will, and an awful change followed through the kingdom. It was not an interval of more than eight years, when on the death of the metropolitan archbishop Abbot, which took place in 1633, when Laud, the instrument of this wonderful change, was translated to Canterbury, and Lambeth palace for the first time since the reformation, (excepting the short reign of Mary) had the flag of free will displayed in full triumph on its towers.

It was but a few months after Charles' succession to the throne, namely, in June 1626, there was issued a proclamation, commanding every clergyman under the degree of a bishop, or a dean, not to preach on what was called high doctrines, namely, free grace. And the prohibition extended even to bishops and deans, in relation to the doctrine of the seventeenth article. That the royal mandate had not universal operation through the realm by men of conscientious minds, need not be observed. And I mention indeed the history itself, in proof of the title of this chapter, namely, that the great mass of the clergy were God-fearing men; and the bishops of the sixteenth century in the exercise of their patronage, had filled the several places of preferment in the church, with men of like complexion with themselves. And had this not been the case, the king's proclamation of inhibiting the several preachers from holding forth such doctrines, would have been unnecessary.

I please myself with the assurance, that I shall have the approbation, rather than give offence to the reader, if as a further confirmation of the faithfulness of God-

fearing men, in the age of the church I am referring to, I relate an anecdote in point. It is recorded in Fuller's church history, under the article of a letter from bishop Davenant, bishop of Salisbury, to Dr. Ward, book xi. page 140, 141. I will give it in the bishop's own words.

‘ Being appointed to preach before the king at Whitehall, I took for my text the close of this verse, Rom. xvi. 23. “The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” In which I took occasion to expound the threefold happiness of the godly. First. Happy in the Lord whom they serve. Secondly. Happy in the reward of their service; namely, eternal life. And thirdly, happy in the manner of their reward, namely, ‘*gratuitum donum in Christo*:’ ‘the free unmerited gift of God in Christ.’

‘ And on the latter branch I enlarged in shewing the eternal purpose of God thereto, which we call election. And this I followed in shewing our conversion, regeneration, and justification; which I termed the embryo of eternal life.

‘ And last of all, in our coronation, when full possession of eternal life is given us.

‘ Presently, (said the bishop) after my sermon was ended, it was signified unto me by the archbishop of York, and the bishop of Winchester, that his majesty was displeas'd that I had stirred this question which he had forbidden to be meddled withal, one way or the other. My answer was, that I had delivered nothing, but the received doctrine of our church, established in the seventeenth article: and that I was ready to justify the truth of what I had then taught. Their answer was, that ‘the doctrine was not gainsayed; but his highness had given command that these questions should not be debated. And therefore, he took it the more offensively, that any should be so bold, as in his own hearing, to break his royal commands.’

‘ And here for the time the matter rested. I heard no more of it until coming to the Tuesday sermon, one of the clerks of the council told me that I was to attend at the council table the next day at two o’clock. I said I would obey.’ Fuller in his further relation of this event, saith, that ‘ the bishop on his first coming into the council chamber, presented himself before the board on his knees. But one of the temporal peers bid him arise, and stand to his own defence, being as yet only accused, and not convicted.’ The storm shortly after subsided, and the bishop had permission to wait on the king in person, and to kiss his hand.

The above anecdote, with what hath been already advanced on the subject, will serve to illustrate the design of this chapter, and throw a light upon the dignified character both of the bishops and clergy of those times. And here let the reader pause, and figure to his imagination the bishops of the realm, in the several provinces, all acting under one and the same influence in this department of their high office, uniformly having in view, as the first and leading object, the divine glory in themselves, and in their disposal of ecclesiastical preferments. Let it be supposed, as was certainly the case, that each of them knew his own clergy, in their several dioceses; their abilities, zeal, diligence, and regard to the welfare of souls. Let him further consider, that those fathers of the church always kept in remembrance the responsibility of their trust. And then, let him ask himself, from the statement before given, whether there could have been any improper admission into the livings and benefices of the realm? Surely, it must have been a blessed time to the church, when none crept into it from motives of filthy lucre; but men anxious to discharge the arduous work of the ministry, as those who watched for the souls of the people, and that were conscious of their accountable calling; and, like the

apostle, could and did say: "Brethren, pray for us, that we may be found faithful, and give in our account with joy, and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you."

And now then, in concluding this chapter, I venture to hope, that I have shewn the patrons of livings, as well among the bishops and clergy of the sixteenth century in the exercise of their patronage, and in those they patronized, were actuated above all things with the desire of the divine glory. They formed their calculations of the value of livings, not by what they gained of money, but what good was done to souls. Not by what they derived from the people, but by what, under the blessing of the Lord, the people derived from them. And we have reason to hope, from the history of those times, that many a rector, vicar, and curate, could, and did say, in language similar to the apostle to the church of the Thessalonians, "For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail. For labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God. Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe. As ye know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory." 1 Thess. ii. 9, &c.

I make no further comment upon this chapter, I simply state the fact. I have from the records of those times shewn what were the general features of character in those God-fearing men. And I venture to conclude from this trait, by which among many others of amiableness they were known in their disposal of livings, that this was, as I have observed in the preface of this little work, the golden age of the church. And verily, I believe that few, if any of those men, would

have looked for gain from this quarter, but had their eye stedfastly fixed, both in their own acceptation of benefices, and in the giving to others, to promote the glory of God.

And it was this detachment from the things of this world which made them so much alive to the great objects of another. Like that great man Augustine speaks of, in his *De civitate Dei*, Paulinus, bishop of Nola, who counted nothing of the goods of his hands, but of the Lord's grace in his heart. So that when the Goths plundered the city, he had nothing to lose that he valued. And the prayer which is still upon record of him, plainly shews that he could and did say, with the apostle, " But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

CHAPTER IX.

THE CLOSE OF THE CHARACTER OF THE BISHOPS OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

We have now gone over the principal features, which, for the most part, marked the life of the bishops of the sixteenth century. And from the whole, I venture to persuade myself that a correct and faithful portrait hath been given, and that the character appears truly lovely. No doubt it might have been drawn more full, and upon a larger scale. But it was a portrait only which was originally proposed, and not a whole length painting. And if what is here sketched be considered but as so many outlines, every beholder which is pleased with the representation, may, in his imagination, fill in all that is necessary to form the more finished character. Very blessed must have been the times, and highly

favourable to true godliness, when men so earnest in religion, moved in those high spheres, and so laboured in the word and doctrine. And a writer who lived at this period, hath given a short but comprehensive statement, how those servants of God were esteemed; and the veneration the people had of their persons and character. For speaking of the bishops in their general deportment, he saith, ‘ that in the gentleness and meekness of conversation, and their accustomed sweetness in instructing the people, they seemed to vie with each other in an holy emulation, how to recommend religion with episcopal dignity.’

And, certainly, the times in which they lived demanded that the bishops should be men of sound erudition, blended with true godliness. What the apostle charged upon Timothy, seems to have been felt, and closely followed by those God-fearing men. “ Watch thou in all things : endure afflictions : do the work of an evangelist : make full proof of thy ministry.” These objects were always in their view. They lived what they preached. They held the torch to their own hearts before that they invited others to benefit by the light. And in the faithful and unremitting discharge of all the high duties of their high calling, as well by example as precept, they obtained the just and unreserved veneration and love of every beholder. And their praise is still in the church ; for their writings continue to benefit mankind now they are no more. Neither will their names cease to be memorable as long as England shall remain a nation; but to the remotest period of the christian world, in the true church of Christ, be ever mentioned and accompanied with the most distinguished honour.

It is somewhat difficult to particularize the last acts of godly men, when there is of necessity a general uniformity pervading the whole character. And so much of sameness indeed ran through all the departments of

conduct, among those faithful and good men, that what is said of one may be, more or less, said of all. The close of life in the bishops of the sixteenth century, speaking of them in general was, as might be supposed, not only in peace, but, for the most part, triumphant. They died, as they had lived, praising God. The Cranmers, and Ridley, and Latimers, who were carried in chariots of fire to the kingdom, left behind them the most blessed monuments, that God's grace shined with great lustre in their deaths. But the Parkers, and Whitgifts, and Ushers, who died on their beds in peace, though less dignified, for want of the martyr's crown, were not less sanctified in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; but went out of life "rejoicing in hope of the glory of God!"

It is not the privilege of all the Lord's servants, however eminent in their life, to be permitted to speak of God's faithfulness in their death; and to sing their *epicedium*, as David, the sweet psalmist of Israel, did in his last words, 2 Sam. xxiii. 1, &c. No doubt every redeemed child of God, as well as every faithful minister of Christ, would desire that his close of life might be such as should best minister to the Lord's glory. Nevertheless, it is a gracious act of the Lord to any one, and every one of his faithful servants, when permitting them to sit up in their beds, as the patriarch Jacob did, and rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord, both in providence and grace. It must have been a very animating scene, to have seen the dying father, amidst his family, and to have heard him giving his last testimony to the Lord's faithfulness, when he said, "'The God which fed me all my life long—the Angel which redeemed me from all evil.'" Gen. xlviii. 2, 15, 16. And in all ages we are compelled to consider it as a highly dignified departure in the servant of God, when going in a few days, or in a few hours, to join the church above, to behold him taking an affectionate farewell of the church

below. Who would but wish to be present at the last scene of a godly minister, and hear him bless God, and blessing the church with his parting breath!

We have some few scattered fragments handed down to us, of the dying testimony of those great and good men, which serve to shew how eminently the Lord's presence was with them at the last. It is a well-known principle of philosophy, that, according to the laws of motion, the nearer any thing moving approacheth the centre of attraction, the greater will be the velocity. But this doctrine is infinitely heightened in divine philosophy, in the case of the faithful moving towards the Lord, the centre of all their attraction. He who hath long known the Lord, and had his mind continually tending towards him, when approaching the boundary of time, and the opening of eternity, will feel his affections drawn out in greater desires after the Lord. Like streams, whose course are all verging towards the sea, when arrived to the mouth of the ocean, pour themselves more rapidly into it; so the people of God going out of life gather strength to their faith, and in the hour of departure pour themselves with greater assurance into the bosom of their Lord.

Some of the most interesting parts in the records of those men, are those which inform us of the views they then had, in relation to themselves, as ministers of Christ, and their past services in the church. One general feature on this ground marked the whole:—they made Christ *το παν*, the all of acceptance. And the ideas they entertained of their own insignificance, cannot more strikingly be shewn, than in what one of them observed to a friend who was near to him, just before his departure. 'I had thought,' said he, 'that very often my warmth had carried me too far; but now, in looking back, and considering the importance of the ministry, it seems as if my words had been frozen. Could I go from this bed once more to the church, I

should now speak as I ought always to have spoken, with the earnestness of a dying man to dying men, on the great truths of salvation.' And when the friend remarked, that he had been not only eminently engaged, but eminently useful in the ministry; he exclaimed, '*Auferte ignem!*' 'Take away the fire!' He dared not to admit the most distant thoughts of profitableness towards God.

Though we have no documents from whence to gather the charges given to the younger clergy, by those ancient servants of God in their last hours, we cannot but conclude from the eminency of their characters, that few of them went out of life without adding this testimony to their ministry. The last words of dying saints are for the most part very ponderous and striking; and yet more so of dying ministers. And some of the Lord's faithful servants have sought it, as a special favour from the Lord, that they might then be enabled finally and fully to record the divine faithfulness to his people. What a lovely example of the kind the history of the patriarch David affords. "O God (said he), thou hast taught me from my youth, and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works. Now then (said he), O God, when I am old and grey headed, forsake me not until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come," Ps. lxxi. And when the apostle Paul had given his final direction to his son Timothy, and had an immediate prospect of his martyrdom, he added, by way of conclusion, "I charge thee, therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine." And to animate him the more, he reminds him of himself, and his labours, and the sure prospect of eternal happiness which awaiteth

him. "For I am now ready (said he) to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. 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 them also that love his appearing," 2 Tim. iv.

And it is our mercy, that these scriptural records are followed by other testimonies of the faithful in all ages, whose close of life have been illustrious among the martyrs of God. When Polycarp was brought forth for execution, his enemies tampered with him to save his life, by renouncing christianity. 'What!' said the hoary saint, 'have I known and served Jesus Christ these eighty-six years, and found him so good a master, and shall I disown him now?' And when Valens, the emperor, would have cajoled Basil, by the offers of honours and dignity, to give up his faith; the man of God exclaimed, 'offer these things to children; you know that we despise them.' And when the tyrant changed his voice, and in a fury threatened him with tortures, Basil coolly replied, 'Threaten these things,' said he, to your purple gallants, that give themselves to pleasure, and are afraid to die.'

The century which had been principally had in view in this work, was not without some very blessed examples also of a similar strength of faith, in similar circumstances. The English history of this period hath recorded very many memorable acts of those saints of God, who left the world attended to heaven with the tears and prayers, the love and praise of all the thousands who looked on, and beheld their faithfulness, in the midst of tortures to God.

But I close the portrait. And let the reader form his own judgment how far there is a correspondence to the original, as drawn by an apostle. "For a bishop

(said he) must be blameless as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre: but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine, both to exhort, and to convince the gainsayers.”



THE

PORTRAIT

OF

THE CHURCH.

THE
PORTRAIT OF THE CHURCH,

TAKEN FROM LIFE, ACCORDING TO THE STATEMENT OF HOLY
SCRIPTURE.

IT is an object of infinite concern to every redeemed and regenerated child of God under divine teaching, to have always in remembrance his high connection and character. For, from hence we learn, that the present state of the church is neither her original nor her final state. She was chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, and her being, and well-being in Christ, will continue when the world and all that is in it will be done away. Hence, it is both the privilege and the interest of the church, to be tracing upon every occasion her origin, and to enjoy her immunities up to their source, among the ancient settlements of eternity. For as she claims relation before all time to her glorious head and husband, she is entitled thereby, by virtue of her union and marriage, to dower. She takes her Lord's name : she hath interest in her Lord's property. And she bears by right the arms of the family in the election of grace, as registered in the heraldry of heaven. Thus endowed, it is the common interest and birth-right of the whole church, and of every individual of Christ's

mystical body, when called by sovereign grace, to keep up and preserve from day to day, unceasing intercourse and communion at the heavenly court. Every regenerated child of God, should accustom himself to connect in one, (as so many links in the same chain,) present mercies with everlasting love. For as there is not a single instance of the Lord's manifestations here below to any of his chosen, but what brings with it the Lord's token as coming from his original purpose from above, it would always tend to enhance the blessing when the Lord's sign manual was seen on the cover. I should lose the sweetest part of every gift of my Lord, were I to lose sight of the Lord himself in the mercy. Whereas, when I am enabled to behold the several streams of favour which flow in upon my soul, as issuing from the fountain of his everlasting love, I find a tenfold blessedness in every one. All the comforts of the present time-state, are heightened by this connection. They afford a joy unspeakable, and full of glory, when known and received as the result of divine purpose and grace, given to the church in Christ before the world began. And in my apprehension, it forms the choicest of all memorandums in the diary of life, when we can, and do, mark down every renewed manifestation of the present, with the date of the past; and in the mercies of time, behold the Lord's unchanging covenant promises from all eternity.

And what tends to magnify yet more such marvellous grace, is the freeness and the distinguishing nature of it. The Lord's love to his church, and the Lord's choice of his church, hath no one cause whatever but his own sovereign will and pleasure. There could be nothing out of God to prompt to such acts of marked favour: and there could be nothing in man to merit it. The Lord is in himself an ocean of blessedness, to which nothing can be added, and from which nothing can be taken. The Lord hath indeed expressed this great

truth himself, in language so infinitely sublime and decisive, as must challenge everlasting silence in the hearing of it from all his creatures. “Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance. Behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing: and Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt-offering. All nations before him are as nothing, and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity.” Isa. xl. 15.

But we must not stop here. For in our contemplation of this unparalleled condescension in God, who needed nothing from his creatures, and to whom nothing could be given by any of his creatures, we must further add, what the scriptures have revealed in relation to himself. He is said to be, “the King eternal, immortal, invisible. He only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen nor can see.” 1 Tim. i. 17. and vi. 16. And elsewhere we find the Lord making proclamation of himself. “Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy.” Isa. lvii. 15. And again: “Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him, saith the Lord? Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord?” Jer. xxiii. 23, 24. We read, or hear of those wonderful perfections in Jehovah, and they impress a certain somewhat on the mind of his infinite greatness. But what created powers can be competent to conceive, much less declare what is contained in such attributes? Surely none less than God himself can explain, what eternity, immortality, invisibility, and an immensity which fills all space, mean? I pause for the moment in this view of God’s glory as in himself, to observe, how very blessed it is, and what a sure evidence of grace, when we can and do adore him for the possession of such perfections

as we cannot apprehend, nor ever shall apprehend to all eternity. For this is not barely blessing God for the exercise of his goodness to his church, but for what he is in his own nature, and being, and essence. We glorify the Lord that he is so great a Lord, and so greatly to be praised; and of whom it may, and must be said according to holy scripture, and without an hyperbole, "his greatness is unsearchable," Ps. cxlv. 3. And hath this great God, this Almighty God, this high and lofty One, who only hath immortality, and inhabiteth eternity, condescended to choose to himself a church from his creatures, and to put himself into covenant relations concerning them? I would ponder the thought for awhile in silence.

But neither must we stop here. For our astonishment is yet further excited, when we go on to the contemplation of what the scripture hath both graciously and clearly revealed, namely, that as this high and lofty One, which is, and which was, and which is to come, hath his being distinguished from all his creatures in a Trinity of Persons, so hath he as graciously made himself known to his church by special acts of love, which clearly define each person in the unity of the divine essence. Here opens to the spiritual apprehension of every redeemed and regenerated child of God, in the church of our most glorious Christ, such views of divine love as passeth knowledge. The personal acts of God the Father of love to the church in Christ, are stated in all the parts of scripture. The church not only originated before all time in his choice of the church in Christ, but the Father gave her to Christ, gifted her with eternal life in Christ, with grace in Christ, and with all spiritual blessings in Christ. The personal acts of God the Son in his love to his church, not only testified equal grace, but equally defined distinction in person. For he betrothed her to himself for ever. And hence the prophet in after ages sung that

love song to the church, "for thy Maker is thy husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, the God of the whole earth shall he be called," Isa. liv. 5. And the personal acts of God the Holy Ghost in his love to the church, gave equal proof both of affection and power, and no less of his own eternal Person and Godhead. For in the benignity of his grace he made the church his temple, and undertook to dwell there, and to walk there. And what hath not been so generally attended to, as the infinite importance of the subject demands, but which, upon the present occasion, I very earnestly would recommend to be noticed, is this, namely, that these distinct acts of the Holy Three in One, do necessarily prove the glorious doctrine of a Trinity of Persons in the Godhead, and that this Trinity of Persons is essential to the very nature and being of a God. Let this point be duly considered, and its weighty nature will be as duly appreciated.

And what endears the whole to the church of our most glorious Christ, in the instance of every individual of Christ's mystical body when regenerated and brought into spiritual apprehensions of what the apostle calls, "the full assurance of understanding to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ," is this delightful consideration, namely, that it is in his person, "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;" all manifestations of Jehovah are made. He is both the covenant and the messenger of the covenant, to reveal and to accomplish all the vast designs which relate to the church. By virtue of his compound nature, God and man in one, he and he alone is competent to the infinite work. And while both reason and revelation concur in the scripture testimony, "that no man hath seen God at any time," from the same assurance, we learn that "the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father he hath declared him," John i. 18. And the Holy Ghost

by his servants, hath shewn the competency of our most glorious Christ in his double nature thus to do. For as "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," all manifestations include both. Hence, the apostle John speaking of "that eternal life which was with the Father, and was now manifested to the church," prefaceth the account with saying, "it was that which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life." 1 John i. 12. The Son of God by the assumption of manhood becomes the visible Jehovah. He is tangible, touchable, and capable of being looked upon. And thus that blessed scripture which folds in its bosom, and in a single verse, the account of the whole Persons in the Godhead, is fully proved: "for God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." 2 Cor. iv. 6.

From these preliminary observations, which are the statement of scripture, concerning the origin of things, on which all is bottomed of revelation; it will be no difficult matter to give the portrait of the church taken from life, according to this standard. And which in the first compartment of the picture, will present a lovely form indeed, when, (as the word of God expresses it) she came up to the divine view, "chosen in Christ, holy and without blame before him in love." Eph. i. 4.

The Holy Ghost hath pencilled some of the more prominent features of the church, in that *epithalamium*, or love-song, in which the espousals of Christ with his bride are figuratively, but elegantly set forth, Ps. xlv. She is described as "all glorious within;" her clothing is said to be of "wrought gold." The meaning is, that she was all pure, all holy, all spotless. She was such

as, in Christ, Jehovah could and did behold with complacency and delight. Chosen in Christ, and adopted in Christ, and accepted in Christ; she was, as Christ said of her, "thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee." Song iv. 7. This is the first view of the church, and as she was in Christ. For it is proper to observe, that nothing in the church is, or can be lovely, but as she is beheld in Christ. Jehovah, in his Trinity of Persons, can behold nothing lovely, or to be pleased with, but as beheld in connection with himself. The choice of the church, and the adoption of the church, and the acceptance of the church, is "in the beloved." Eph. i. 6.

Moreover the church's beauty and holiness, and glory, is not only in Christ, but for Christ. God the Father so speaks to the church when calling her daughter, because of her marriage with his son. "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear, forget also thine own people and thy father's house, so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty, for he is thy Lord God, and worship thou him." Ps. xlv. 10, 11. What a blessed testimony is here given by God the Father himself to the Godhead of his dear Son, and to the union of Christ with his church.

And to add no more. What a plain and palpable, and incontrovertible truth doth the whole contain in this portrait of the church as she was before all time, and as she will again be to all eternity, when this time-state is over, that as she was first presented to Christ in all those jewels of grace, and holiness, and glory, so she shall be when Christ shall bring her home, and present her to himself "a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that she shall be holy and without blemish." Eph. v. 27.

Such is the first view of the church in our most glorious Christ, as she came up at the command of God before all worlds. And this is the portrait according to the statement of holy scripture, which the Holy

Ghost hath drawn in this original compartment of the picture !

We have viewed the outlines of the church of our most glorious Christ, drawn according to scripture, in her first and original features, when to the infinite mind of God in his Trinity of Persons, and at his command, she came up before him in all that loveliness of character, "chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, holy and without blame before him in love." Eph. i. 4.

In the prosecution of the portrait, in the next compartment of it, we come down to the time-state of the church, when, as the same holy scripture hath stated, God was pleased to go forth in acts of creation, and the church was called into being in her state of nature, in the person of the first man of the earth, Adam. And here we find similar features, of a corresponding purity and holiness to the original design. We are told, that "God created man in his own image," Gen. i. 27. Hence, he was formed with all inward rectitude; and not necessarily subject to fall, by any outward temptation. And from being placed at the head of all creatures in this lower world, of consequence, he became eminently included in the account given by the Lord himself, when beholding his works of creation, it is said, that "God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good." Gen. i. 31.

The sacred records, in presenting this statement of primitive innocence, do not proceed but a little further, before that we read of a woeful change wrought upon the first man, and in him, the wreck of all nature, when by transgression he offended God, and pulled down misery, ruin, and death upon himself, and all his posterity. The account given of this apostacy, and the effects, are related in a few words; but in terms enough to make our whole nature tremblingly alive in the relation. "Sin entered into the world, and death by sin :

and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Rom. v. 12. The Lord's own testimony of this universal delinquency of mankind is most awful: "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth; and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Gen. vi. 5.

It doth not come within the province of portrait painting, to sketch any thing more than the picture itself. Nevertheless, as there have not been wanting some, in all ages, who have ventured to impeach God, as if the apostacy of man was in the divine decree, (confounding fore-knowledge with fore-appointment,) I would pause in this place, before I go on to the prosecution of the church's picture, to observe, that all such ideas have their origin solely in the presumptuous reasonings of the human mind; untaught of God, unfounded in truth, and unwarranted by holy scripture. A few considerations will set this matter in a clear light. As, first, all creatures, as creatures, are necessarily, by their very nature, mutable. It belongs only to the infinite and eternal mind to be unchangeable. Sameness and immutability, constitute the distinguishing attributes of Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons: no creature, therefore, can possess them. Of consequence it will follow, that the very mutability of man's nature, though made perfect, implied a liability to imperfection, and of falling from his integrity. Here, therefore, is found a sufficient cause, in accounting for the apostacy of man, without impeaching the sovereignty of God. And this doctrine was placed upon its proper basis as many ages since as the days of Solomon, when, under divine inspiration, that wise man thus stated it:—"He applied his heart (he tells us) to search and to seek out wisdom, and to know the wickedness of folly." And what was the up-shot? "Lo! this only (said he) have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have found out many inventions." Eccles. vii. 29. But, secondly, upon the

footing of creature obedience;—the very standard of character rested on this ground: for though man was necessarily, by nature, a mutable creature, and could be no other, as distinguished from his infinite Creator, yet that mutability did not subject him to fall, though it left him capable of it. The test of his obedience, as relative to the tree of life, is a proof. For otherwise, a state of being not liable to change, would have subjected the possessor of it to a mere nugatory existence; to whom neither the merit of obedience, or the demerit of disobedience, could have been annexed. And lastly, to add no more, the fall of Adam not only manifested his mutability, but that the fall was in himself. His yielding to temptation could not be the result of the divine decree; for “God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.” James i. 13. Hence, the sovereignty of Jehovah stands where it hath from everlasting, and will to everlasting stand, unimpeachable in relation to the Adam fall. The conclusion of Solomon is the unerring conclusion of the subject—*God made man upright; it is man that found out many inventions.* I cannot fold up these observations on man’s fall, without adding a short remark on what the Holy Ghost hath said on this subject, by his servant James, namely, that “God cannot be tempted with evil;” for the doctrine brings with it, according to my view, one of the most blessed of all considerations, in respect to our future and eternal state. And though what I have to offer herein, I would desire may be read as within a parenthesis, (like that of John’s first epistle, i. 2. which is among the sweetest parts of that chapter,) yet such a parenthesis, as contains in its bosom a fulness, for the most enlarged joy. The spiritual church of our most glorious Christ, by regeneration, is made “a partaker of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” 2 Pet. i. 4. Of consequence, she is part of Christ, united to Christ, one

with Christ; and as she is now preserved in Christ, from this union with her glorious Head, so will she be everlastingly preserved in him to all eternity. Hence in that eternal world her mutable nature, derived from Adam, will be done away, and her being derived from Christ will preserve her in his immutability for ever. If the church had been simply recovered from the ruins of the fall, without this union and oneness in Christ, by his almighty salvation, she might, (had the Lord so willed) have continued in glory as the elect angels are, by Christ's *dominion*. But now, her everlasting continuance is secured from an higher and a nearer source, namely, her *union* with Christ; without this she could not have been made *eternally* secure. For as angels have fallen, angels might fall; and were they not elect angels upheld by Christ, they would fall; themselves being mutable. But the church stands upon no slippery ground of any thing changeable; for she is in Christ, when recovered from her Adam-fall transgression: and as "God cannot be tempted with evil," so neither can the church, which is in Christ, be evermore liable to temptation. What a ray of light, and life, and glory, doth this view of our most glorious Christ bring in upon the redeemed and regenerated church of Christ! What a proof is at once given of the certainty of her eternal and everlasting state! Now do I see, and by God the Holy Ghost's gracious unction enjoy a double blessedness, in those words of my Lord, when he saith, "Because I live, ye shall live also." John xiv. 19.

The reader will not fail to recollect, that what I have just said, (yea, the whole of the preceding paragraph,) I desire may be included in a parenthesis. In prosecuting the portrait of the church, I must now call back his attention to that part, which having represented the purity of nature in which we were created, in the person of our first father, Adam; then stated the miserable

condition to which all men were reduced by sin, and under the just sentence of death.

Our portrait, in this compartment of it, will exhibit a whole colouring of foulness, blackness, and deformity; without a single shade in all the piece, as far as relates to ourselves, to soften the disgusting picture.

By the entrance of sin, the whole face of nature became changed. The church of our most glorious Christ, as well as the whole race of mankind, being seminally in the loins of Adam when he fell; he, as our first father, head, and representative, included every generation which should follow: all lost in him all creature holiness, and all became alike the objects and the subjects of all depravity. To speak of this awful state in a comprehension of language, we may say, that in each, and in all, there was, and is by nature, a total dereliction to every atom of creature purity; and a complete inherency of sin in the very essence and being of our nature. And, what gives the finishing colouring to the foul portrait, there is nothing left in the human mind, as man is in himself, to favour the least hope of recovery. He is helpless, hopeless, and in a state of bondage and vassalage to all the creatures of God; a captive to sin; to Satan; to his own guilty conscience; to a thousand lusts; to the alarms and apprehensions of the broken law of God; to the continual fears of death, judgment, and eternity. Such is the state of every man by nature; and such the woeful change induced in all the circumstances of human life, by the apostacy of our first father! The prophet, in his account of the greatest monarchy of the earth, described in strong characters the wonderful change which should take place, in the after circumstances of history; and which, while the same was literally fulfilled in the events which followed in that kingdom, becomes a striking representation of imagery, in the ruin of the mind of man by the fall. "Babylon,

the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation; neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there, and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged." Isa. xiii. 19, &c.

But we have not finished the full length portrait of fallen man, until that we have shewn how universal the family feature of sin marks the whole race. The virus is so malignant, that no place, or climate, no age, or generation, no time, or space hath softened, or can soften it. Let mankind be diversified as they may, let their being be young or old, let the epoch for the calculation of the monarchy of human transgression be dated before or after the flood, the reign is the same. Though nearly six thousand years have run out since Adam fell, the poison rageth with equal violence through the veins of all his posterity, and death wields his sceptre with unrelenting power, as much now as then. Moreover, the inheritance which our first father entailed upon his children by sin, differs altogether in this particular, from the bequest of all other earthly parents. When the head of a family dies, he divides his substance for the most part in their several proportions, among his household. And how large soever his domain may be, each child can have but his lot. But our father, though reduced by his fall to a state of beggary and insolvency, left alike his whole inheritance of sin and death to all. Every son and daughter of Adam, in those miseries of our fallen state he hath entailed upon us, hath so completely the whole devolved upon each, as if Adam had

left but one child, and that one the sole heir. And as the reign of sin is universal, and the inheritance by sin alike the portion of the whole posterity, so the guilt and filth of sin in the sight of God must be the same, however diversified among men. There is no difference between one man's sin and another's, in respect to obliquity, because all ariseth from the same source. Sinful actions are but as so many streams from the deadly fountain, blossoms and fruits from the same deadly root; and all that manifests itself of corruption without, come only from the corruptions working within. Hence, as the constitution of our bodies differ, some of robust habits, others tender; some cold and phlegmatic, others warm and lustful, there will be a variety of appearances. Symptoms will differ, but the disease is the same. As the predominant principle may be, some will feel disposed to covetousness, others to extravagance; some to the lusts of the flesh, others to the pride of life; but all spring from one and the same corrupt nature, an atheism, or enmity against God. And in those instances where the different passions contend in the human breast, and one propensity to evil eats up another, this only proves the doctrine if possible yet more forcibly, in shewing, that the whole nature is the same, and the heart corrupt, in various evil suggestions striving for the mastery, like rivers all originally flowing from the sea, when meeting in the different currents, by collision, raise a froth and foam, until the most powerful prevails. I stay not to remark the prevention of evil from the restraints of grace. Who indeed shall calculate to what extent this daily operates in life? but restraints of grace yet still the more confirm the doctrine of the universal fall of nature. The tiger is not less the tiger because he is chained. Education, refinement, and the fear of man may smother what passeth within; but the divine decision admits of no appeal. After the fall, God

“looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.” Gen. vi. 12.

And if we go on in the picture to describe the effects, where shall we begin, or where end? All the miseries, sorrows, rapines, slaughter, faithlessness among men, and rebellion against God, all flow from hence. The world is one great hospital of human woe; and every house or family, more or less, “a lazar house, of heart-sick agony, and dire disease,” to close in life. Every pain we feel, and every distress we meet, confirms the scripture testimony of the fall. The treachery of mankind, the perfidy of friends, the deceitfulness of relations, all preach man’s apostacy from God. And if we go down to the chambers of the dead, and open the charnel houses of those that lie there, let the question be put, and sounded through the tomb, and, as hollow rocks receive the sound of blustering winds, and reverberate in echo to the same, it will be confirmed. Are these the effects of sin?—effects of sin will rebound! Are these the spoils of death?—spoils of death will be murmured!

I tremble at the portrait I have drawn! Is this the real, true, scriptural testimony of the fall of man? And is the church of our most glorious Lord involved in the common calamity? Am I implicated in it? And is there, can there be a way to escape? Blessed be God! the church’s union with Christ, which was from everlasting to everlasting, brings in an effectual remedy from all the ruins of the fall. And as that union amidst all the ravages of the fall, hath never for a moment (as impossible it should) been broken; here the poor desolated sinner, ruined by the apostacy of Adam, finds an adequate resource of complete recovery in the Lord Jesus Christ. The monarchy of Satan is fully manifested in the transgression of the first man, who is of the earth, earthy. And the monarchy of

Christ is as fully shewn in the obedience and death of the second man, so called, which is from heaven, even the Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Ghost hath given his warrant, and set his broad seal of heaven to this, when, by his servant the apostle, making this blessed proclamation, "As sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. v. 21.

Our last view of the church, presented her in such a deformity of character, as was in itself enough to appal the mind, and cause every beholder to turn with disgust from a representation so awful. Indeed, no one dry-eyed, can contemplate the state of our degradation and misery by nature, which in greatness and extent becomes incalculable to all human understanding. Angels, did they possess faculties susceptible of the impression might weep over it. One feature, however, (as hath been already observed) remained to brighten the gloom of the horrid picture; namely, that the church, though foul and fallen, and in herself hopeless and helpless, and meriting nothing less than hell, yet, never for a moment lost her right in the marriage union to her glorious head and husband, the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be our God! under all her desperate circumstances this connection held good; and was, and is, and everlastingly must be indissoluble to all eternity; and, as we are apt to say in common life, and truly we cannot but say so respecting the affinities among men, that if any member of a family fall into disgrace and shame, nevertheless the tie of relationship is not broken thereby: (my children are no less my children, however if by ill conduct they may have made themselves wretched) in like manner, the church continued Christ's church, his spouse, his wife, when become filthy and loathsome by sin, as when first given to him in marriage by the Father before all worlds, and when "holy and without blame before

him in love." The bond of the nuptial contract, and made by our glorious Lord himself, admitted of no repeal. The charter formed in the ancient settlements of eternity, nothing in the events of a time-state could do away. The gracious declaration of the Son of God on the subject, he expressed in those words, "I will betroth thee unto me for ever. Yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in tender mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord." Hosea ii. 19, 20.

And I know not whether it hath ever struck the reader, but so it is, and truly scriptural; namely, that all marriages in human life, yea, and every other affinity in the common charities of life, however perverted by our corruptions, have their origin from hence, and are intended to adumbrate and shew forth the blessed union of the Son of God with his body the church. For all beside him are but shadows. He, and he alone is the substance. Prov. viii. 21. The Holy Ghost, by the ministry of his servant the apostle Paul, hath so beautifully displayed this in his epistle to the Ephesians, as at once confirms and establisheth the doctrine on its own proper basis. For, speaking of the duties of the married state, and in a more particular manner of the obligations of husbands to their wives as one flesh, he drops the subject altogether as in reference to common life, and in so many words expressly saith, that it is the person of our most glorious Christ, as the head and husband of his body the church, which he all along had in view, and adds, "this is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church." And to illustrate the matter yet more plain and palpable, he adverts to the marriage of our first parents in the garden of Eden. He shews that that marriage was but the shadow, the substance forming that shadow had been long before in the marriage of

Christ with his church. And all that is there said, in relation to Adam and Eve, had an infinitely higher concern in allusion to Christ and his church. It was not simply for our first father, considered in himself, that the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." But the primary intention had respect to our most glorious Christ in assuming our nature, that he should not be alone, but his church chosen in him, raised up for him, and given to him, unto whom as his spouse he might impart all communicable grace here, and glory hereafter. It was not of Adam simply as our first father, the scripture had its first and leading object, when beholding his wife he said, "this is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh." For, the Holy Ghost unfolding the mystical meaning of the words, makes a direct reference of them to the church's oneness with Christ, saying, "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." And finally, and as an unanswerable close to the whole, when it is said, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh." This could have no reference whatever to the first man, which is of the earth, earthy, for he never had an earthly father or mother to leave. But, considered as having respect to the second man, (so called) "which is the Lord from heaven," here the scripture opens to us in all its glory. For the Son of God left his Father to tabernacle in substance of our flesh, that "he might give himself for his body the church; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy, and without blemish." Compare Gen. ii. 18. to the end, with Eph. v. 22. to the end.

From this statement of the oneness and relationship

in marriage between Christ and his church, (and which I beg once again to remind the reader is wholly scriptural) it will appear, and from the same authority, that the recovery of the church from the ruins of the fall belonged only to her head and husband; the right of redemption (according to the law of God) being his. Levit. xxv. 25. His was the gracious work to raise her up from her degraded miserable state; his, and his own arm alone, which could bring salvation. And hence, among his other glorious names, by which he was to be known to his church, this he was to stand forth in eminently conspicuous, "the repairer of the breach, the restorer of the paths to dwell in." Isaiah lviii. 12.

But we shall have a better, and a more clear and scriptural apprehension, both of the infinite greatness and nature of the work, and of the infinite ability in our most glorious Christ for the accomplishment of it, if, under divine teaching, we previously consider somewhat more particularly the Almightyness of his person, who comes home so endeared to his church in this high character of her Redeemer, who stood before so nearly related to her as her head and husband; for it is only by a spiritual and scriptural knowledge of his person, that we can have a spiritual and scriptural apprehension of the finished salvation he hath wrought; and from both to rest with holy confidence, and the full assurance of faith in him, who is, "the Lord our righteousness!"

It was and is a most marvellous condescension in one of the persons in the Godhead, to take into union with himself that holy portion of our nature, whereby Jehovah in his Trinity of persons might make known "the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus." So that there might be unfolded to the spiritual church, as far as our finite capacities are capable of receiving informa-

tion, how the mystery of God in his Trinity of persons, is revealed in the special and distinct manifestations of each, and brought home to our apprehensions in the person of our most glorious Christ. Hence, (if the expression be warrantable) Jehovah in the unity of the divine essence, existing in a Trinity of Persons, hath come forth from the invisibility of "the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see, and made himself known in the face of Jesus Christ." 1 Tim. vi. 16. 2 Cor. iv. 6.

But it will tend, under divine teaching, to heighten our spiritual views of the Person of our most glorious Christ, if we take into the contemplation, what the holy scriptures in many parts of the divine records warrant, namely, that other, and no doubt far more sublime objects than what related to the church, were in the purposes of Jehovah, when it was resolved that one of the Persons in the Godhead should take our nature into union with himself. For as this marvellous condescension in the Son of God did not, for indeed it could not, lessen his own eternal power and Godhead; beside the purposes in the decrees of Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons relative to the church, we read of other glorious intentions which resulted from this high appointment. The Son of God in this union of nature, became the object of divine complacency. This alone, had there been no other, far exceeded all the blessings intended thereby to the church. The Son of God, in his well known character of wisdom, thus expressed it himself. Speaking of being set up before all worlds, and from everlasting, he said, "then I was by him as one brought up with him, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him," Prov. viii. 30. And elsewhere he speaks of a personal glory he had with Jehovah in himself. "And now, O Father! glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was," John xvii. 5. In both

these instances, they cannot be considered in relation to the divine essence simply as such; for the being brought up with him, and being daily his delight, are expressions not corresponding to the perfect equality of the Persons in the Godhead. Neither could it be admissible on this ground, Jesus desiring the Father to glorify him. But they evidently refer to personal distinctions of glory, and consequently prove, that in the taking into union with himself our nature, there were higher objects than those relative to the church to be accomplished thereby. And when to these we add what is said of our most glorious Christ, in his double nature as God and man in one, namely, that he is not only the head of his body the church, but the “fulness that filleth all in all;” that he is the “Creator of all things that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities or powers;” and that not only all things were created by him, but for him, and that he is before all things, and by him all things consist: surely all these tend to raise our contemplation of our most glorious Christ, to an infinitely higher pinnacle of glory than what results from his having assumed our nature, for the accomplishment only of those purposes (very blessed as they are) in relation to his church; and they serve no less at the same time the more abundantly to endear him to our hearts. We shall do well, therefore, if under the divine unction from the Lord, we are enabled everlastingly to keep in view such glorious things of our most glorious Christ, to greatness and exalt him to our apprehensions; lest at any time when we behold him in his unparalleled humiliation for the recovery of his church from the ruin of the fall, we overlook and forget his underived sovereignty and essence in the Godhead, in common with the Father and the Holy Ghost. It will be always blessed, as it is always our privilege to blend in one the united contemplation, that

he, "who made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God!" Phil. ii. 5, 6.

If with those impressions on our mind, we now prosecute the portrait of the church, and behold the wonderful process by which the Son of God brought her back from the debased state into which she had fallen, to that original purity in which she was first chosen in him before all worlds, the subject will open to us in all its fulness of glory. It is indeed astonishing to observe, with what a grandeur and sublimity the scriptures of God have ushered in the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Redeemer of his church and people. All the persons in the Godhead are introduced as taking part in the proclamation. "Behold! (said God the Father) my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth!" Isa. xlii. 1. "Behold me! behold me! (said the Son of God himself) look unto me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else, a just God and a Saviour!" Isa. lxxv. 1. and xlv. 21, 22. "Behold! the Lamb of God, (said God the Holy Ghost by John) which taketh away the sin of the world!" John i. 29. And on his approach, the command went forth for the inhabitants of the upper world to join in the adoration of him. For thus we read, "when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, and let all the angels of God worship him," Heb. i. 6. And to the church he saith, "he is thy Lord, and worship thou him," Ps. xlv. 11. And unto the Son himself he saith, "thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever," Heb. i. 8.

And as if all these proclamations concerning the advent of our most glorious Christ were not enough, we find him acting as his own herald, both to the almightiness of his person, and to the infinite greatness of his work, where we thus read, "wherfore when he

cometh into the world he saith, sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure, then said I, lo! I come. (In the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God." Heb. x. 5—7. I need not ask, who was the mighty speaker of these mighty words? for they could be spoken by none but the Son of God. Neither need it be asked to whom were they spoken? for here again the scripture is equally plain, it was an address made by the Son to the Father. But it becomes a question, and a question of infinite importance to ascertain, who heard them spoken? Surely we must know, from the general analogy of scripture, that in the sacred council of the Holy Trinity, none could be present but the divine Persons. And, as all scripture is given by inspiration of God, I pray the reader not to pass away from the contemplation of these words, until that he hath first pondered them well, and considered what matchless grace is manifested herein to the church. That God the Holy Ghost should reveal what passed in this heavenly council between the Persons in the Godhead, and the very words then spoken by the Son of God to the Father, should be made known to the church in the moment when coming forth for the salvation of his people! Oh! how very blessedly do such transactions testify to that glorious truth in scripture, of the Holy Three which bear record in heaven, "the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these Three are One!" 1 John v. 7.

Now, that we may have the clearest spiritual apprehensions, and on scripture ground, of our most glorious Christ, when thus according to his own statement he came to accomplish the salvation of his church, it will be proper to consider the subject under all its bearings. And although in drawing the portrait of the church in her recovered state, when her glorious husband "was

made sin for her who knew no sin, that she might be made the righteousness of God in him;" we must necessarily be confined into narrow limits; yet the outlines of the subject (and these will be enough under divine illumination to answer every purpose,) may be compressed under those three particulars, namely, first, our most glorious Christ engaged to become the surety and sponsor of his church, and in that character to bear the whole weight and guilt of her sins by imputation. Secondly, he engaged also to sustain, and endure in his own holy person, all that was due to her of divine punishment. And thirdly, he guaranteed to redeem his church from all iniquity; to bring her back to that original state of holiness which she had in him before all worlds; and to "present her faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." A short attention to each of those leading points will render the subject abundantly clear; and if, under an unction from the Holy One, our minds are spiritually and scripturally taught, we shall be led to the same conclusion as the apostle, when he said, "Christ is all and in all."

I begin with the first of these three particulars, namely, "our most glorious Christ as bearing the whole weight and guilt of the sins of his church by imputation. The transfer of sin and guilt by substitution, began from the fall. The very first sacrifice in the garden of Eden preached and set it forth. And every subsequent offering from the days of Adam, through all the intermediate ages to the coming of Christ, had no other object in view. All were no more, neither were they ever designed for any thing more, than as shadowy representations of "the one offering of the body of the Lord Jesus Christ once for all, whereby he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Hence Christ is expressly said to have been, "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the

world." He was the substance; all others were shadows. And as there can be no shadow but what must be formed from the substance, Christ is said to have been "verily fore-ordained before the foundation of the world," 1 Pet. i. 19, 20. I stay not to enumerate the many illustrations of this great doctrine under the law of sacrifices, for this would be little short of bringing forth the greater part of the old testament. But I would advert to one, which upon the present occasion will supersede the necessity of any other; I mean, the representation of our most glorious Christ as the Almighty burden-bearer of his people's sins by typical figure on the day of atonement. You have the whole account, Lev. xvi. And I beg, that that solemn service, which was observed once every year in the Jewish church, may be duly considered. For sure I am, nothing as a type or shadow could more accurately prefigure the Lord Jesus Christ, bearing by imputation the sins and guilt of his church and people. And with all possible reverence may it be said, that without an eye to him, the whole was an unmeaning institution. Heb. x. 3, 4. Let the reader particularly remark with me, in that service, this solemn injunction. "And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat; and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities into a land not inhabited." Lev. xvi. 21, 22. Who doth not, or who will not see in this the striking representation of our most glorious Christ, laden with the whole burden of the sins of his church, and not a single one omitted. Observe how the command is worded. All their iniquities, and all their transgressions in all their sins. And let it not be overlooked, that Christ did not uncalled, unauthorized, unanointed, take

the sins of his church upon him. "He glorified not himself to be made an high priest." Heb. v. 5. He was sworn into office by an oath. Ps. cx. 4. And the grand feature in the whole, is summed up in these words: "the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Isa. liii. 6. Pause now, and contemplate this Almighty burden bearer, of the whole weight and guilt of the sins of his church by imputation! behold him in the underived nature of his essential glory of Godhead! Consider him in the immaculate purity of his person, as God and man; "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens!" And then say whether any one truth can be more fully established and confirmed, than that in this wonderful transaction, our most glorious Christ acted as the surety of his church and people. Like Judah of old who in this instance typified our Lord Jesus Christ, what he said to Jacob concerning Benjamin, in being responsible for bringing him home again, had a greater reference to our most glorious Christ's engagement to his Father for his church: "I will be surety for her, of my hand shalt thou require her: if I bring her not unto thee, and set her before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever." Gen. xliii. 9. Pause a moment longer over the view, and then say, did our most glorious Christ so engage for his church? Was his engagement accepted? and in confirmation, did the Lord lay on him the iniquity of us all? Then must it undeniably follow, that when the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all, the Lord must have taken from the church the whole of sin which was laid on him; for neither law nor justice could admit, that it could be on both. Hence the whole redeemed and regenerated church of our most glorious Christ, must be totally and for ever exonerated from sin, and all its weight and burden; and what was said in allusion to the days of the gospel is now fulfilled; "Christ hath redeemed us

from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." Gal. iii. 13. "In those days and at that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found, for I will pardon them whom I reserve." Jerem. i. 20.

We have beheld our most glorious Christ, standing forth under the endeared character of the head and husband of his church, covered with the whole of her sins by imputation; and as completely transferred from her to him, as if he himself had actually committed them. For in those terms is expressed the charter of grace, "the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." It will be our next concern, to behold the Lord of life and glory, delivering himself from the weight and guilt of her sins, by sustaining all that was due to her of divine punishment in consequence thereof, in his own holy person, and thus doing away sin, in all its tremendous effects, by the sacrifice of himself.

In prosecuting this part of the subject we are bounded within very narrow limits. We can form no adequate conception of the thing itself, unless in the eventual consequences of mercy to the church, either in relation to its nature or extent. No created mind of the highest intellect, can look deeper than the mere surface. If we take our stand upon scripture ground, and are taught of God, we may and do discover that the person of Christ is the great mystery of the gospel, and the salvation wrought by Christ is the great mystery of godliness. But we can go no further. And after we have thus far advanced under divine teaching, in the spiritual apprehension of the subject, we may take up the humbling language in the book of Job, and say, "Canst thou by searching find out God?" Job ii. 7. The only possible clue to lead to the smallest discovery, is by having impressed on our minds in an unction from the Lord, spiritual and scriptural apprehensions of the infinite glory and

dignity of Christ's Person. For while we are enabled to have in view the conviction of his own underived essence and Godhead, in common with the Father and the Holy Ghost: then will every good undertaking of his in the redemption of his church, both in his active and passive righteousness, appear to us in all its fulness, and suitableness, and all-sufficiency. The Lord the Spirit so unveils the almightiness of the Person of our most glorious Christ, to our spiritual knowledge of him; and then this part of our portrait in Christ sustaining the divine punishment due to the sins of his church as her surety, will serve to bring her up to our view; not only as having had all her sins transferred to him, but he removing them from himself, so as never more to appear in the church of our Christ.

Let it be remembered in the opening of this part of the portrait, that the sentence passed at the fall of man, and consequently the church included in it, comprized all the great and leading features of sorrow, misery, trouble, and at length death; or as the words very emphatically express it, "dying thou shalt die." Gen. ii. 17. Intimating the death of the soul, as well as the body, in what is called in scripture the second death, which consists, according to the statement of the sacred word, in an everlasting consciousness of being and misery, "desiring to die, and death fleeing from them." Rev. ix. 6. So that here is an abridgment of all the curses of the fall.

I cannot propose to take the reader by the hand to go through the holy scriptures on this subject. For this would be little short of traversing the bible; and indeed, even if done, it is not the province of men or angels to unfold and explain the mysterious pages. Even the evangelists, though divinely inspired, attempt not any thing more than the simple relation. They do indeed speak of the wonderful subject of Christ's sufferings and death, in terms as shew the awfulness of what they wrote; but seem to labour for expressions,

while rehearsing the same to the church. When they speak of Christ's exercises in the garden of Gethsemane, in the prospect of his death opening before him, each adopts different modes to mark the features of his mind. Matthew states that Jesus said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." Matt. xxvi. 38. Mark tells the same, but adds, that "the Lord Jesus began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy." Mark xiv. 33. like one whose hair stands erect, as if beholding somewhat horrible, or supernatural; or, as our Lord himself expresseth it in another scripture, when he said, "My heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels." Psalm xxii. 14. And Luke still, if possible, in stronger terms describes the state of the holy sufferer, when saying, "And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." Luke xxii. 44.

I pause over the trembling subject! such views of Christ can only form the true mirror for beholding sin in its real colours.—There are no events in human life, in all the accumulated and aggravated forms of misery, can describe what it is, in its heinousness, or convey an idea of the baleful malignity of it. The drowning of the world by water at the deluge; the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire; the whole earth as one hospital of sorrow and woe; yea, hell itself, with its everlasting burnings; let all be taken in one aggregate—nay, suppose the whole creation of God was offered up as a burnt-offering for human transgression; all could not demonstrate in equal characters the tremendous nature of sin, as that of the Son of God in becoming incarnate, and sweating a bloody sweat, from the agony of his mind under the pressure of it. He, and he only, felt the full effects; for he only knew it in its nature, though but by imputation.

But we must not stop here. We proceed in the subject.—When from the foul brook of Cedron, and the

garden of Gethsemane, we follow our most glorious Christ to the cross, and behold him there, as we are commanded, "the Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world." And it is most blessed to behold him in this high character. By sustaining in his own sacred person the whole *punishment* due to sin, as we have seen him before sustaining on himself the whole *burden* of sin; the infinite and essential dignity of his Godhead, is that which gives validity and efficacy to all that he wrought or suffered; and, therefore, most effectually and for ever, removes sin, and all its consequences, from the church of Christ.

Let us attend to the subject under a few leading particulars, which will be sufficient in point for the whole. The church of Christ, as well as the world, from the Adam-fall transgression, hath alike broken the law, and became subject to the divine judgment. Now it is certain, that as the breach of the law is directed against an infinite God, none but one who in his own nature is infinite and eternal, can make reparation. Behold then, our most glorious Christ, who is one with the Father, "over all, God blessed for ever," comes forth to the accomplishment of this service; and is therefore called, "the repairer of the breach, the restorer of the paths to dwell in." Isa. lviii. 12. And the Lord himself, when making proclamation to the church of the same, thus expresseth it, "the Lord is well pleased for his righteousness sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable." Isa. xlii. 21. Again, doth *justice* put in her plea, and demand retribution from the Surety of the sinner? Behold! here it is, in ample payment. He who is infinite in his Person, can alone make satisfaction to the infinite justice of God; and he hath done it; for he saith himself, "Then I restored that which I took not away." Psalm lxix. 4. And God confirms it in that gracious proclamation to the church, when saying, "Deliver him from going

down to the pit; I have found a ransom." Job xxxiii. 24. But is not the church under the penalty of death for sin? Yes! and here again steps in her glorious Surety, to answer this claim, as well as the former. For thus we read, "Forasmuch then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them, who, through fear of death, were all their life time subject to bondage." Heb. ii. 14, 15. But was not the sentence of God to Adam, and all his posterity, (and in which the church was alike implicated) "Dust thou art, and to dust shalt thou return?" Gen. iii. 17. Yes; and therefore we read that the holy sufferer should say, "Thou hast brought me into the dust of death!" Psalm xxii. 5. Here again, the infinite dignity of his Person, while it gave efficacy for the redemption of his church from the grave, rendered it impossible that he himself should be holden of it. This Almighty Holy One was incapable of seeing corruption. He had said, by his servant the prophet, ages before, and at his resurrection he proved it,—“I will ransom thee from the power of the grave; I will redeem thee from death! O death, I will be thy plagues! O grave, I will be thy destruction! repentance shall be hid from mine eyes!” Hosea xiii. 14. But was not the church subject to the *second death*, by reason of the fall? and by what process of grace did the Lord Jesus Christ deliver from thence? Here the infinite nature and dignity of our most glorious Christ, gave equal efficacy, in delivering his church from the *second death*, as his laying in the grave did, in delivering his church from the everlasting dominion of the *first*.—He had said himself, a thousand years before his incarnation, to his divine Father, “For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.” Psalm xvi. 10. And this did God the

Holy Ghost, by the mouth of Peter, confirm at the day of Pentecost. Acts ii. 27. And although little more is said than what those scriptures have stated, on this part of the subject, yet to the everlasting comfort of the church, we are taught, that as in his triumph over the grave, the triumph of his church over the grave is secured also; so his victory over hell hath no less secured the victory of his church. Threescore years after he had finished redemption work, and had returned to glory, he appeared to his servant John, not only to give assurance to him, but to the whole church through him, that he had conquered all his enemies, and had "the keys of hell and of death." Rev. i. 18. And hence the voice John heard was to this amount, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power." Rev. xx. 6.

Without amplifying testimonies, which the scriptures of God would very fully furnish, were it not for extending the subject beyond the limits necessarily to be observed upon the present occasion; it is presumed, the few which have been brought forward, are sufficient in point to answer every purpose. And if so, the conclusion from what hath been adduced is obvious. As under the *first* particular, the Son of God in our nature, being made the burden bearer of the sins of his church, for ever removed them from her; and he subjected himself to the responsibility of the punishment due to sin, as if he himself had actually committed the whole; so under the *second* branch of the subject we have seen, that he hath answered the whole demand of law and justice; and fully sustained, in his own sacred Person, all the punishment to which the church was liable by the fall, and for her drank the cup of trembling to the very dregs, and wrung them all out; so that "there is no condemnation (there can be none) to them that are in Christ Jesus."

One point more remains to finish the subject, as was

proposed under the *third* particular, namely, Christ redeems his church from all her iniquity, and to bring her back to that original state of holiness and purity, which she had in him before all worlds; that he might “present her faultless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy.” And this is the finishing of the features and drapery of the church’s portrait.

Without running over a large tract of scriptures on this ground, it will be sufficient to observe, that this was one, among the many distinguishing features, by which Christ’s person and salvation was to be known. The Holy Ghost, by his servant the prophet Daniel, not only pointed to his person as the most holy, declared the very time of his appearing, and that in his advent and ministry the whole vision of prophecy would be sealed; in the finishing transgression; making an end of sins; making reconciliation for iniquity; but he was also to bring in “an everlasting righteousness.” Dan. ix. 24. Indeed the recovery of his church from sin, and doing away all the penal effects of it, implied no less. For as the original union of Christ and his church had not been (for in fact it could not be) destroyed by her Adam-fall transgression, when by the offering of himself once offered, he had put away sin: by regeneration, as the sure effect of his finished work, the Lord brought his church into a state of receiving from him all the fruits and consequences of his salvation. Hence it is we find our most glorious Christ, dwelling so much and so sweetly on this oneness and union between himself and his people, in his discourse with his Father, John xvii. throughout.

Having already enlarged our portrait, beyond the original intended dimensions, I must not, perhaps, trespass further on the patience of the reader. But otherwise, there is ample scope in the scriptures of eternal truth, to enlarge on this feature of the church’s righteousness in the Lord, as the blissful result of the whole:

indeed I feel it a painful restriction to withhold. For next to the contemplation of the everlasting love of Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons, to the church as it is in Christ, and the Person of him, by whom, and in whom, and for whom that love is shewn; nothing can be equally interesting to call up the attention of the Lord's chosen ones in our most glorious Christ, as the consideration—what the whole, and every individual of Christ's mystical body *once was*, when chosen holy in him before all worlds; what we *now are*, when gathered unto him by grace; and what *we shall shortly be*, when brought home to our first and original state of union with him, and in him, in glory for ever! But I add no more—unless subjoining the following hymn, in which I have endeavoured to express some of the more prominent features of the portrait. Perhaps the reader may have already seen it, as it is not unfrequently sung in churches. If so, however, I assure myself of his pardon.

WHEN first, at God's command,
 The church came up to view,
 In his eternal mind,^(a)
 Chosen in Christ and true;^(b)
 The Father gave her to his Son,^(c)
 And Christ betroth'd her for his own.^(d)

But when, in after day,
 She brake his holy word,^(e)
 And as a treach'rous wife,
 Departed from her Lord;^(f)
 He brought her back, tho' hell withstood,^(g)
 And wash'd her sins in his own blood.^(h)

And now renew'd by grace,
 And sav'd from hell and sin,⁽ⁱ⁾
 She learns, by daily proof,
 Her daily need of him;^(k)
 Taught by the Spirit to confess
 The Lord, her only RIGHTEOUSNESS.^(l)

(a) Psalm lxxxix. 19, 20. (b) Eph. i. 4. (c) John xvii. 6. (d) Hos. ii. 19.
 (e) Gen. iii. 6. (f) Jer. iii. 20. (g) Zech. iii. 1. (h) Rev. i. 5. (i) Titus iii. 5.
 (k) John xv. 5. (l) Jer. xxiii. 6.

Yea more, to crown the whole,
 And God's decrees to prove,
 Her marriage form'd ere time,
 Eternity can't move ;^(m)
 Her everlasting song is this,
 " Jesus is mine, and I am his."⁽ⁿ⁾

Yes ! we are one (she cries)
 'Midst all my lep'rous state,^(o)
 And no man ever yet
 Was known his flesh to hate ;^(p)
 And I'm his flesh, our oneness proves,
 In loving me, himself he loves.

Nor can he cease to love ;^(q)
 'Tis Jesu's precept this—
 " Ye husbands, love your wives ;"^(r)
 And will not Christ love his ?
 Shall others cherish and refresh,^(s)
 And Jesus hide from his own flesh ?

Oh no ! Christ loves his church,
 His glory 'tis to bless ;^(t)
 He cannot love her more,
 Nor will he love her less ;^(u)
 In his sight fair, cleans'd by his word,
 A bride adorned for her Lord.^(x)

^(m) Eph. iii. 11. ⁽ⁿ⁾ Song ii. 16. ^(o) John xvii. 21. ^(p) Eph. v. 28, 29.

^(q) Zeph. iii. 17. ^(r) Eph. v. 25. ^(s) Isaiah Iviii. 7. ^(t) 2 Cor. iii. 23.

^(u) Jer. xxxi. 3. ^(x) Song iv. 7.—Eph. v. 26.—Rev. xxi. 2.

THE
PORTRAIT
OF
JEREMIAH.

THE
PORTRAIT OF JEREMIAH,

CONSIDERED IN REFERENCE TO HIS ORDINATION AND MINISTRY,
COMPARED WITH THAT OF MODERN TIMES.

ONE of the most unanswerable proofs of the divinity of the holy scriptures, and which is at once appalling to the infidel, and comfortable to the believer, is, the unceasing and perpetual use intended from it, (and every day confirmed) in the church of the living God. That which equally suits all ages and generations of the Lord's people, through the whole time-state of the church, can have no other for its author but God himself. It forms no less a standing miracle of the Lord's gracious provision, in point of sustenance for the souls of his people, than the manna with which the Lord victualled the camp of Israel, day by day, for their bodies, during the whole of their forty years' wilderness state, until they came to Canaan. And it gives confirmation in the lives and experiences of the people of God, of the truth of that sweet scripture, which the Holy Ghost has spoken by his servant Peter, of the incorruptible "word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." 1 Pet. i. 23. Had any of those inspired servants of the Most High God ministered in the church

but yesterday, and the sacred writings left behind them supposed to have been sent forth at no earlier period, they could not have been more suited to the wants and circumstances of the Lord's people than they now are; all bearing with them the seal of the Spirit, that "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

Amidst the very many proofs in point, which might be brought forward to confirm this observation, there is one particularly striking, and which from its vast and momentous importance, seems to demand the most profound regard; namely, the scripture account of the ordination and exercise of the ministry. Here, in an eminent degree, is manifested the Lord's intention, in the use of his divine word. And as the Almighty Author of salvation, Jesus Christ, is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever; the ordination of his servants can have no departure from the sameness of institution which from the first dawn of grace in the church hath been shewn in the Lord's own appointment, and for the Lord's own glory. And if (as it cannot but be confessed) this be correct, it may be said, without any thing unkind or invidious in the observation, that since the days of the prophets and apostles some unhappy bias hath taken place to warp the mind from the scripture standard of ordination, as stated by God himself. Without attempting to establish any thing by way of *dictum*, I have thought, that the fairest and most candid method of ascertaining the fact itself, would be, to state what is taught by the unerring standard of scripture on this subject, and in a free, but unimposing manner, remark the very striking dissimilarity in the sacred order of ancient times contrasted to the present: and the instance of Jeremiah affords a

case in point. A comparative statement of his ordination and ministry with those of modern days, will set the subject at once in a clear point of view. And this I shall endeavour to accomplish in the plainest and most unvarnished manner; "NOT (as the apostle speaks) in craftiness, or handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." 2 Cor. v. 2.

And here, at the very opening of the subject, we find one feature of discrimination is the instance of Jeremiah, which forms the portrait of the whole character, and is that which gives life and energy to every other; namely, his call and ordination of the Lord. For thus we read concerning him, "then the word of the Lord (saith Jeremiah) came unto me, saying, before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee; and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations," Jer. i. 4, 5. Observe, all begins on the part of God. From him, as the first cause, unto whom is the final end.

It is not Jeremiah first speaking unto the Lord, but the Lord first speaking to Jeremiah. And observe further, what is contained in these words which the Lord speaks to him, namely, not only that the Lord knew him, before that the Lord formed him in the belly, which may be said, and indeed must be said of all men and of all creation; for "known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world," Acts xv. 18. But such a foreknowledge of the person the Lord had intended him to be, and the office the Lord intended him for, as though now first made known to Jeremiah, when called to the exercise of it, had been in the council, will, and decree of God, from all eternity. So that the ordination of the prophet to the ministry, was in fact commensurate to the purpose of his very being; and the Lord who calleth things which are not, as though they were, and declareth the end

from the beginning, as truly determined that Jeremiah should minister in his church, as that Jeremiah should be; yea, as the church herself, whom the Lord the Father "chose in Christ before the foundation of the world." Eph. i. 4.

Now let the reader pause, and ponder well over this one point of doctrine, before we proceed further. Upon the admission of this great and leading truth of God's holy word, (which to deny is to question the divine attributes of God's sovereignty and fore-knowledge) it must, and will follow, that the same must equally hold good in every age of the church. The real ordination for the ministry in the church of God, is of God; and as in the instance of Jeremiah, so in every other; the Lord that knew his people before he formed them in the womb, ordained their services as he ordained their being; and both alike originated in the will and purposes of Jehovah before the foundation of the world. I stay not at this time to draw any further observations. These will meet us more properly under another part, as we prosecute our subject. All I wish from what I have now brought before the reader, is to state the plain simple matter of fact, the ordination of the Lord's ministers is of the Lord. And as the Holy Ghost hath taught in relation to the church in general, so may the words be considered in reference to his ministers in particular. "The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord," Prov. xvi. 1. "Every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights; with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning," James i. 17.

But though I detain not the reader in this place to add any further observations from the view taken of the subject in relation to the ministry, I cannot forego the opportunity it affords me, of drawing a short remark from this fore-knowledge and fore-appointment of the

Lord, as it concerns the Lord's people. Probably these lines may fall under the eye of many, who though not in the ministry of God, are followers of God, as dear children. And I hold myself a constant debtor to all such, to say all and do all which the word of God enables me to do, for their encouragement and comfort.

To such among the Lord's regenerated ones, I would therefore take occasion, from what hath been here brought before them, to say, that the original and eternal purposes of God, which before Jeremiah came forth from the womb sanctified and ordained him to be the Lord's prophet, equally constitutes and appoints the Lord's people to be placed where they are in the several circumstances of life. That is a most precious scripture which God the Holy Ghost hath given his people by the apostle, to comfort them under all the exercises of life; and which every child of God should carry about with him to have recourse to upon all occasions. "But we are bound (saith Paul) to give thanks always 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. Here, therefore, we learn for the everlasting consolation of all the Lord's chosen ones, as we learn before from the example of Jeremiah for the Lord's ministers, that the Lord having chosen the persons of his people from everlasting, hath no less appointed for them every condition, and every want, as shall best subserve and accomplish all his purposes concerning them, during the whole time state of their dwelling here upon earth, until the Lord takes them all home to himself in glory. Hence the age of the church, they are in their several generations to be

brought forth in, when they are to be born, and where they are to be born, where live, and when die, with all and every incident connected with the whole; all and every minute circumstance is so arranged by infinite wisdom, founded also in infinite love, as no synod of angels daily convened, could add to, or take from, or promote yet more thereby the Lord's glory, or his people's final happiness.

May the Lord who hath thus graciously fore-ordained and fully provided for all his chosen, as graciously day by day enable them to live in the faithful assurance of his everlasting and unchanging love; and then will they realize and keep constant feast days in the spiritual enjoyment of that never-failing promise: "we know that all things work together for good to them that love God; to them who are the called according to his purpose." Rom. viii. 28.

It hath been shewn from the preceding observations, not only that the ordination and ministry of Jeremiah were both of the Lord, but that what in relation to the prophet took place in time, was the result of the fore-knowledge and fore-appointment of the Lord from all eternity. And the same must be, in the instance of every other. For as to the infinite mind of Jehovah, nothing can arise which was before unknown to him; so every minute circumstance respecting the being, or well being of the church in Christ, hath been arranged and ordered according to the counsel of his own will, with a precision which is so perfectly correct, as to admit of no improvement, neither capable of alteration. Hence, in respect to the interesting subject now under consideration, it must follow, that in every age of the church, all that are really and truly among the people ministers of the Lord's word, are such as from everlasting have been chosen by the Lord; to which none can be added, neither taken from.

As Jeremiah was, so are all the holy called now ; “ sanctified from the womb to be a prophet unto all nations.” Jer. i. 4.

Laying this down as a data established and confirmed in the scriptures of God, beyond all possibility of a denial, we next proceed to shew, and in the example of Jeremiah prove, that as the whole appointment to the ministry is of the Lord, so the whole preparation for the exercise of it is of the Lord. And the very striking testimony to this is set forth in Jeremiah’s instance. The prophet shrunk from the service. The man of God was abashed in the consciousness of his total inability : when the Lord first revealed the secret to him that he had from everlasting ordained him to the ministry, he cried out under a deep sense of his inability to the service, “ Ah ! Lord God ! behold, I cannot speak, for I am a child.” Jer. i. 6.

We see here the first and prominent feature by which all the ministers of the Lord’s word and ordinances in every age of the church have been known and distinguished. No sooner doth the Lord honour them, than the Lord gives them grace to humble themselves. No rushing to the ministry as the horsemen to the battle. No running unsent, uncalled, unanointed, but a shyness, a reluctancy, and a conscious sense of inability and unworthiness.

What a beautiful example the Holy Ghost hath given of this in the history of Moses ? When the visions of God began with him at the bush, and the Lord proposed to send him to the court of Pharaoh to bring out his people Israel from bondage, the man of God cried out under a deep sense of his nothingness and incompetency to such an office, “ Who am I that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt ? ” And yet, if human abilities could have qualified to the service, no man alive stood upon higher ground than Moses ; for

he had received his education in the university of the court of Pharaoh, and had taken his degree of every order, being, as is said of him, "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." Acts vii. 22. But Moses had now been brought by sovereign grace into a learning not taught in nature's school. He had seen at the bush such views of the Lord Jesus Christ, and thereby learnt the wonders of salvation, that, like another prophet under similar manifestations, "all his comeliness was turned into corruption." Dan. x. 8.

If by way of further confirmation, we would behold a contrast to this reluctance in those whom the Lord hath called to his service, we may see it most strikingly in those whom the Lord hath not. When Korah and his company arose to assume the office of the ministry, they did it upon the pretensions of holiness. "Ye take too much upon you," said they to Moses and Aaron, "seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them; wherefore lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?" Numb. xvi. 1—3. Alas! the very reverse of this was the truth. It was the Lord lifted Moses into his service, which he himself again and again would have declined. And what was the poor man's superiority or his profit? He might have said, as an apostle of later date did say and felt too. "I think," said Paul, for it is him to whom I refer, "that God hath set forth us, the apostles last, as it were appointed unto death; for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake; even unto this present hour, we both hunger and thirst; and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place, and labour working with our hands; being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat; we are made as the filth of the earth, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day." 1 Cor. iv. 9, &c. If the ministers of

the Lord in every age of the church were to be formed on this model, (and very sure it is among the Lord's faithful ones, more or less, there can be no other) the Korahs who in the confidence of their own holiness, assume the service of the sanctuary, would never be heard of, but when worldly profit, and worldly honour blaze to the view of carnal men, the pursuit will still be kept up from age to age, and the camp in Israel be acted over again in modern times, of these engulfed and earthed, like Korah and his company.

One feature more, which uniformly marks the Jeremiahs of all generations in the Lord's ministers, who like him have been sanctified from the womb for the Lord's service, is, that they not only feel reluctant when first called to the work, but continually through life, in all the after stages, require the quickenings of the Holy Ghost, to lead them on in the exercise. "I said," said the prophet, "I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name; but his word was in my heart as a burning fire, shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay." Jer. xx. 9. It is not merely the opposition which the servant of the Lord meets with from men of the world, which induceth such effects as the prophet here mentions. True indeed the Pashurs and the Hananiahs were sources of trial to him, as men of the same complexions are now to the faithful like him, nevertheless such opposition the Lord overrules for good. They give an edge to the weapons of warfare, and they minister in this way, as the Philistines did to Israel, when they "sharpened for them their share, and their coultter, their axe, and their mattock, against the day of battle." 1 Sam. xiii. 19, 20. But the chief source of discouragement the servant of God meets with to depress his spirit in the arduous work of the ministry, is the coldness and deadness of his own heart. A spiritual work requires a spiritual frame. And very blessed it is,

when like the beloved apostle, he that ministers in holy things can and doth invite the spiritual household to partake of that which he himself is spiritually eating. "That," said he, "which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life; that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you." 1 John i. 3. This spiritual enjoyment which the preacher hath himself, gives a life and encouragement to what he recommends to others; and as one coal is kindled by another coal when both are blown upon, so when the Holy Ghost hath breathed upon both minister and people, what comes warm from one heart will warm the other. But when things are out of tune, and the harp is hung upon the willow, there will be no promptness to sing the love song upon *Alamoth!* All faithful ministers of the Lord, like Jeremiah, not only feel a diffidence at the entering upon the Lord's service, but are continually exercised in the same through the whole of life, and watch for the souls of the people as they that must here give account; so that with the apostle, they can say to their people, "we were with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling: and our speech and our preaching was not with enticing words of men's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." 1 Cor. ii. 3—5.

In the prosecution of this subject, our next view of the prophet will bring us to his ordination. God the Holy Ghost hath shewn in the example of Jeremiah, that the setting apart for the Lord's ministry, is like the predestination of the church herself, even from everlasting for the Lord's glory; and we have also seen in the character of this prophet, that humbleness, diffidence, and a conscious sense of inability, to the Lord's service, are among the first, and most prominent features

of the Lord's servants. In attending to what is recorded of the ordination service of Jeremiah, we shall be led to discover, from whom all qualifications can alone come, and that the same Almighty God, who before he formed him in the womb marked him for his own, and sanctified him to his service, when he called him by his grace to his ministry, what he had set him apart to, then fitted him for.

The ordination service is but short, but it is very sweet. We cannot be sufficiently thankful to God the Holy Ghost, for so precious a portion preserved to us in his word; "then the Lord (saith Jeremiah) put forth his hand and touched my mouth; and the Lord said unto me, behold! I have put my words in thy mouth. See, I have this day set thee over the nations, and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.

I detain the reader to call his attention to similar cases in the old testament days, Jer. i. 9, 10. of the method the Lord the Holy Ghost was pleased to adopt in the consecration of his prophets. In this instance of Jeremiah, the Lord "put forth his hand and touched his mouth." In the ordination of Isaiah, the sign or symbol used, was that of "a live coal taken from the altar, and laid upon the prophet's mouth," Isa. vi. And when Ezekiel was set apart for the ministry, the Lord caused him to eat a roll which the Lord gave him, to intimate that what the Lord would cause the prophet to speak, "were the Lord's words, and not his own," Ezek. iii. 1—4. but however different the sign, the thing signified was one and the same. By taking a comparative statement of the whole together, and calling into our meditation, what the Lord hath taught of the same in other scriptures, we discover, that in the ordination of each, the whole persons of the Godhead were engaged. God the Father set apart from everlasting his chosen. All grace and gifts, are in the Person of

God the Son, in nature, from whom as the live coal taken from the altar, or the roll eaten by the prophet are taken; and God the Holy Ghost, the glorifier of the Lord Jesus, and by whose baptism and unction the whole ministry is ordained, Isa. vi. with Acts xxviii. 25.

But I should hope that without any intimation from me, the mind of the reader will be at once led away from the ordination of those prophets and every other, to behold the Lord God of the prophets in his call to the divine ministry in his church. Was there ever a sweeter note sung to the church, than what God the Holy Ghost by Paul sung in that lovely scripture, when speaking of no man taking the honour of God's ministry to himself, uncalled and unanointed of God, said, "so also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee! as he saith also in another place, thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedec," Heb. v. 4, 5, 6. And Oh! how blessed is it to see this call of God the Father and his anointing of God the Holy Ghost, so beautifully blended in the Person of our great High Priest! And how blessed to trace through both testaments, the Son of God in our nature, coming forth in this gracious character "to preach the gospel to the poor, and to heal the broken in heart," Isa. xlii. 1—7. and lxi. 1. and with Luke iv. 18, &c.

But to return to the ordination of Jeremiah. The solemn service opened, as we have seen, in acts of grace, and in qualifying the man for the ministry of the Lord; to this succeeded his mission. "See, (saith the Lord) I have this day set thee over the nations, and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant!" I beg the reader to observe, that there are here the two great branches, which more or less dis-

tinguish a faithful ministry in all ages of the church, namely, the rooting out heresy and the planting the truth; the detection of error, and the building up the Lord's people in their most holy faith. And the best comment upon these words of the Lord to the prophet, is given by the Lord himself by his servant the apostle. The doctrine is one and the same, only old testament words brought home to the church in new testament language. "For we are, saith Paul, (speaking of himself and his companions in the ministry) unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish. To the one we are a savour of death unto death, and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?" 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16. Observe, the Lord's servants when ordained by the Lord, are always a sweet savour of Christ. For although there is nothing in themselves savoury, being men of like passions with those among whom they minister; yet being regenerated, and made partakers of Christ, and being anointed to the service of the ministry, they carry in their message the Person and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore are a sweet savour of Christ; the church in her love song to her beloved declares his name to be, Song i. 3. Indeed there is, there must be, a savour of Christ, wherever his name, like the ointment of the temple, is poured forth. That blood and righteousness which hath perfumed all heaven, is an everlasting odour in the church, and comes up before God with unceasing fragrancy, "for a sweet-smelling savour," Ephes. v. 2. And I pray the reader not to overlook the particularity of the expression, when the apostle saith, "for we are unto God a sweet savour in Christ." Yes! it is to God, in his Trinity of Persons, that the church in Christ is what it is. The persons of the Lord's people, and both the persons and services of the Lord's ministers, be they ever so great or laborious, can have no acceptation before

the Lord but in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. "It is to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved," Ephes. i. 6. So that all is to the Lord, as all is from the Lord. And hence, they are still a sweet savour unto God of Christ, "in them that are saved, and in them that perish;" for their ministry is of Christ. And the justice of God is as truly manifested in the condemnation of all, unto whom God's dear Son becomes "a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence," as his mercy is in the salvation of all unto whom Christ is precious! the person of Christ, the savour of Christ, is everlastingly the same, "whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear." And therefore, the apostle might truly declare, there could be no change in the infinite greatness of Christ and his salvation, be the event as it might, in the exercise of their ministry. Still "unto God we are (said he) a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish. To the one the savour of death unto death, and to the other the savour of life unto life." The question of the apostle in the close, "and who is sufficient for these things?" find a blessed answer in the Lord's words to the prophet. "See, I have set thee this day to root out, and pull down, and to build, and to plant."

But let us attend further the ordination service of Jeremiah, amidst the great dignity of the prophetic office to which the Lord called his servant; the long appointment of it in the divine mind; and the suited qualifications which the Lord imparted to him for the accomplishment of the Lord's purpose; in the midst of this vast and apparently extensive work, in pulling down, and building up, over nations and kingdoms; we read that the prophet's mission reached no further, than to "all to whom the Lord should send him," and "to speak only whatsoever the Lord commanded him," Jerem. i. 7. This is a very striking part in the ordi-

nation service, and which all whom the Lord hath called to minister in holy things would do well to mark with a deep emphasis. And let it be further observed, that this command of the Holy Ghost was not limited to the times of Jeremiah; we find the same mandate in after ages, and among the appointment of Christ to his apostles, Matt. x. 5—14. And we have a remarkable instance or two, in point, in the case of Paul and Barnabas. These men were specially called forth by God the Holy Ghost, and we are told that their labours were blessed upon several occasions. But in the midst of these things they were forbidden to preach the word in Asia; and when they then essayed to go into Bithynia, the Spirit suffered them not, Acts xvi. 6, 7. But when Paul was at Troas, by a vision he was directed to go to Macedonia, and there his ministry was blessed at Philippi, the chief in several instances, Acts xvi. 8, 14, 25, &c. And we read also, that when Paul was at Corinth, the Lord Jesus himself by night spake to Paul to be bold, and not afraid, adding, “for I have much people in this city,” Acts xviii. 9, 10. Where the Lord hath much people, and when the Lord sends his servants among his people, there the word of the Lord will run, and the Lord be glorified. But when we behold, as in such remarkable instances as God the Holy Ghost hath been pleased to record and hand down to the church through so many intermediate ages, of his servants the apostles, forbidden to go into one place, and suffered not to enter into another; and those holy men waiting the Lord’s directions before they ventured (ordained as they were by the Holy Ghost), to go forth to the Lord’s service; it cannot but strike the mind with awe, to look on and behold in the present day of general profession, how very different the plan now observed to what distinguished the prophets and apostles of the Lord. If men like Jeremiah, sanctified from the womb to the Lord’s service, and

when called into action by the Lord shrink from the work with fear and dismay, trembling for themselves, and trembling for the ark of the Lord; what can we think of the presumption of those who run unsent, and hasten unordained of the Lord? Surely that is a trembling declaration, and enough to make the ears of every one who ministereth in holy things that heareth it tingle; "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran; I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied," Jer. xxiii. 21.

There is one part more to be considered in the ordination of Jeremiah, not indeed so limited as to belong only to him, for it suits every faithful servant of the Lord like him, and is in fact in the ministry an uniform badge of the profession; namely, the sure opposition of men, when their labours are honoured by the Lord. The ordination service is closed in these words, "thou therefore gird up thy loins and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee. Be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them; for behold I have this day made thee a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls against the whole land; against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land. And they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee, for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee," Jer. i. 17—19.

It is no small encouragement to faithful men to trace this feature of character, uniformly marking all the holy prophets and apostles in every age of the church. When the Lord Jesus sent forth the twelve, among other sharp and trying exercises which the Lord prepared them to expect, he dwelt upon this with peculiar strength of expression. "Behold! I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; but take no thought how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak; for it is not ye that

speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you," Matt. x. 5—20. So that if we take into one combined view, the character of the Lord's Jeremiahs in all ages of the church, however different they may be in degrees, they are all marked with the same family feature. Chosen as he was, before all time, a deep sense of their own nothingness keeps them humble. And however honoured of the Lord, they are sure to be opposed by men; yea, in proportion as the Lord gives usefulness to their labours, the reproaches of the false brethren will be more clamorous and violent.

The subject proposed from these observations, in a view of the ordination and ministry of Jeremiah, was, to make a comparative statement with the ministry of modern times. But after what hath been said, this may be better left to the reader than the writer. — Without saying any thing invidious or unkind, may it not be asked, whether some unhappy bias hath not taken place since the days of the prophet Jeremiah, and the present hour in the momentous concern of ordination? Can christian charity, with her kindest mantle on, believe that all the great mass of those who minister around us in the various denominations, both in the establishment and out of it, were sanctified for the Lord's service before they came forth from the womb? Are they the sent of the Lord, the ordained of the Lord, and do they bring with them their credentials as the prophet did, whose they are, and whom they serve, in the gospel of Christ?

I would not unnecessarily offend while on a subject of such magnitude—I would be faithful; but I venture to hope that none, who, from a sense of a work of God wrought upon their own souls, feel a desire to be useful as instruments in the Lord's hand to the souls of others, (and mere natural, unawakened, unregenerated men, I am not at all considering on the present occasion), I say that I hope none of this description, who

would be accepted in the Lord's church, but are first satisfied by divine teaching that they are accepted of the Lord. And all that are actuated by the same spirit with which Jeremiah was actuated, will assuredly feel more or less the prophet's disposition. When the Lord called him he felt a reluctancy to the service, and instead of hastening to the employment, he desired to be kept from it. And who, that really and truly knows the plague of his own heart, but must tremble at the very apprehension of unfaithfulness dealing with others?

And while I am upon this subject I cannot help observing, (though I rather fear every step I take will be but more displeasing), that modern times have made matters worse instead of better, in training for the ministry, as the world teaches by system arts and sciences. When in the golden days of reformation, and down to the time of nonconformity, the fathers in the church of Christ were eminent in their day and generation; never did the Lord's cause shine with equal light among the orthodox dissenters of this land, as when these untaught of men, but ordained of the Lord, spake among the people as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. How would the prophet, who when the Lord himself called him to the office and he declined the work, have stood amazed had he lived in our days, and beheld candidates for the ministry? And what a very different history would Jeremiah have furnished in the church, if, when the Lord called him to his service, he had made *Anathoth* an academy for acquiring human learning, that he might be the better qualified of proclaiming the Lord God of Israel, through an acquaintance with the writings of heathen authors.

The day is awful: the true Zion of God languisheth. The waters of the sanctuary in spiritual ordinances run low; and the word of God hath prepared the church to expect that they will be still lower. During those pe-

riods the Lord's witnesses prophecy in sackcloth. The "thousand, two hundred and threescore days," are not finished. And although some of the greatest and best taught men of God, which this, or any other nation, have produced since the days of the apostles, made and left behind them calculations of that event being about to take place, for more than a century since, yet we know, the prediction is not in the present hour fulfilled. Here, therefore, great men as they were, they erred; and thereby manifested, that though the Lord forewarned of the *event*, the *time* for the accomplishment remained with the Lord. Dan. xii. 8, 9. Acts i. 7. And we are taught to expect that the era will be ushered in with perilous times, 2 Tim. iii. 1, &c. Rev. ii. 2, 3. Rev. xiii. throughout.

In the mean time, the great and increasing consolation of the church, (indeed it is both a great and unceasing consolation!) is, "The Lord reigneth! clouds and darkness are round about him; righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne." Ps. xcvii. 1, 2. The Lord is in the midst of his Zion, and is carrying on all his purposes to his own glory. Painful as it is to behold the present low estate of the church, and still more to behold such a *Laodicean* spirit every where pervading the religious world, as it is called, talking of a state of prosperity and increase; while in *spiritual* things they are "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked;" the Zion of God cannot fail, neither the interests of the Lord's chosen ones in a single instance be lost. "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his." 2 Tim. ii. 19. Should the world run into confusion, and the earth be shaken at the centre, the purpose of God standeth the same. And this delightful assurance comes in upon every occasion, with full strength of faith, when God the Holy Ghost opens

and shews it to his people: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom, and which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear." Heb. xii. 28.



THE
PORTRAIT
OF
NEHEMIAH.

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PERHAPS in all the annals of mankind, few illustrious characters have appeared more meriting regard, considered in the relative situations of life, than that of Nehemiah. Under circumstances the most unpromising, and surrounded in a court of eastern splendour, where every thing of a serious aspect instead of countenance would meet reproach; we behold this *great* man, conspicuously distinguished as a *good* man, and shining with a pre-eminency of lustre, more for his virtues than his rank. His name, Nehemiah, a compound of *Nehem* and *iah*, signifies, *comfort in the Lord*. And whoever analyzeth his character, will discover that his name was not unaptly designated to his conduct. He was highly distinguished in his day and generation, and though an Israelite in an heathen palace, yet preserving his religion, as the faithful servant of the Lord, and as the friend to the Lord's people. Indeed it is rather matter of surprize, that his memoirs have not again and again called forth the admiration of the studious in biblical researches, and been recommended by them to the regard of all lovers of interesting biography. Every feature of his character appears to have been amiable; and we see in him, what few in the present day are

willing to allow, that religion and patriotism are compatible. Nehemiah blended with the most ardent zeal for the divine glory, a fervent affection for mankind: and in his person we behold combined, the man of godliness with the courtier and the gentleman.

In sketching some few of the more prominent and striking outlines of Nehemiah's history, it is proposed to bring them forward to view, without much regard to order, but simply as they appear in holy scripture. In doing which, the writer of this memoir desires to look, not through the inverted medium of partiality or prepossession, but to behold the man as he truly was, without colouring, in the unvarnished and undisguised narrative there given. And he would fain persuade himself, that at a period too remote to excite envy; and too much obliterated by the ravages of time, to awaken displeasure; the faithful record of the character, will rather gratify than offend—rather attract regard than give disgust. Such a life as that of Nehemiah, is the best calculated to shew, that a conduct of inflexible integrity towards men, can only be founded in the love of God; for what begins in grace cannot fail to give a corresponding loveliness in all the departments of nature. Had Nehemiah lived in those days, his zeal for the honour of God would have raised the hue and cry against him, as an enthusiast or a madman: for his principles of spiritual life were the same *then*, as all the true spiritual followers of the Lord are *now*. The mighty change wrought by the Lord, in awakening him to a sense of his Adam-fall transgression by *nature*, is that which, in every age of the church, must precede any and every work of *grace*. And where this hath not passed on the mind, it matters not what else glistens in a gilded appearance, whether professor or profane; for both are alike “dead in trespasses and sins.”

The history of Nehemiah opens with what forms the first and leading trait of his whole character; namely,

his *zeal for the honour of God*. This is related in a beautiful style of simplicity; not in so many words as a panegyric, but as incidentally arising out of the events brought before him, in accounts received from Jerusalem, while in the court of Persia. “It came to pass (said he) in the month of Chisleu, (that is, the ninth month, in the twentieth year, (so many having ran out from the church’s deliverance from the captivity in Babylon; see Neh. i. 1—4.) as I was in Shushan the palace, that Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah, and I asked them concerning the Jews which had escaped, that were left of the captivity there, and concerning Jerusalem. And they said unto me, the remnant that are left of the captivity there, in the province, are in great affliction and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire. And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days and fasted.”

In what a lovely point of view doth this opening of the history represent Nehemiah! He had not only escaped the Babylonish captivity, from whence he had been brought, probably in the suite of the Persian monarch, (see Dan. v. 30, 31.) but had been advanced to an eminency of rank in the Persian court. He held a station which gave him continual access to his sovereign; and a charge of the greatest consequence, in being cup-bearer to his majesty; so that all that the king drank, was delivered into his hand by Nehemiah. What confidence the monarch had in him, for the safety of his royal person, can best be estimated by these things. Yet we see, it was not all the enjoyments of the palace; neither the ease, and splendour, and affluence which surrounded this man of God, that could erase the love of his soul towards his beloved Jerusalem. I detain the reader to remark, how very blessedly, as well as graciously, the Lord the Holy Ghost explains

this, in his scriptures of truth, by tracing such *effects* up to the original *cause*. Let sceptics say what their vain imagination prompts them to say, but the fact stands undeniably and everlastingly the same, where it always stood; namely, that there is an affinity of kindred souls which links together in one, the whole election of grace to each other, in their union from everlasting with their spiritual head. And however unconscious in a multitude of instances the several members of this mystical body are, of this their high relationship to their glorious head, and with each other, not unfrequently it breaks out, in a way of demonstration, like musical instruments of the same key, corresponding to one another, and manifesting itself in an unison of spirit. And what, under this view of the subject, I would wish the reader more particularly to remark with me is this, namely, that this finer feeling of the soul will sometimes appear towards the object to whom this partiality is directed, as well *before*, as *after* "the day-spring from on high hath visited us." Moses was under the influence of it, while in the court of Pharaoh, and before the visions of God began at the bush, when in his zeal to the Hebrews, he smote the Egyptian, Exod. ii. 11, 12. And the soul of Ruth clave to Naomi, when her sister Orpah returned to her people, and to her gods: and though ignorant in herself at that time of any divine operation on her mind, determined that Naomi's people should be her people, and Naomi's God her God, Ruth i. 14—18. And, let me ask, wherefore should it be thought incredible by the world? Do not *natural* men feel predilections in nature, leading them to one object in nature rather than another? And shall not the almighty Author of spirits have access to, and operate upon the spirits he hath made, to induce similar feelings? and more especially, when this soul-refreshing subject is traced to its source, and in that grace union which every mem-

ber of Christ's mystical body hath with their glorious Head, and consequently with each other; they are proved to be "the body of Christ, (as the scripture states it) and members in particular." 1 Cor. xii. 27. The origin, therefore, is from everlasting, before all worlds; runs through and pervades the whole time-state of the church, while upon earth; and will continue with unabating affection when there are no worlds.

But let us not stop here. In this view of the subject, we are taught by scripture what it was that wrought by such a stimulus on the spirit of Nehemiah. We may, and do allow all that shall be desired on the ground of natural feeling, towards the distressed state of the Jews at Jerusalem; but this man of God felt more on spiritual considerations for the desolated condition of the church, in the dishonour done to God by "the walls of Jerusalem being broken down, and the gates burned with fire." Here was the sore part. It was the relation of this which made Nehemiah's cup of affliction run over. And like another Eli, who heard without apparently much emotion the sad tidings of the flight of Israel before the enemy, and also the death of his two sons; but when the messenger made mention that the ark of God was taken, all before to this was comparatively nothing; "Eli fell from off his seat, and his neck brake." 1 Sam. iv. 15—18. Holy men of old made Zion's sorrows the chief subject of all their elegies of lamentation. The greater part of Jeremiah's writings are directed to this one theme; so much so, that he is called the mournful prophet. And the captives of the Jews, while by the river Chebar, sung of nothing else but in their doleful accents as they sat down and wept, the running verse of their psalmody was of Zion;—"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning; if I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth! yea, if I prefer not

Jerusalem above my chief joy." Ps. cxxxvii. 1—6. Here was the closing account also which made Nehemiah sit down in solitude, and from the sad conclusion of Jerusalem's state, "in her walls being broken down, and her gates burned with fire." The man of God at once testified his soul distress, by mourning and fasting, and weeping certain days.

Our next view of Nehemiah, is, as is here stated; he presented himself before the mercy-seat, when he arose from the earth, and "prayed before the God of heaven." Here also, as in all the examples of the faithful gone before him, his first resource for the relief of Israel was by hastening to the God of Israel. Where shall the Lord's people seek grace but from the God of all grace? Prayer gives vent to the oppressed heart. And prayer engages God on our behalf. By this we call God to our aid, and God gives strength to our day. And Nehemiah adopted the one invariable plan of all the praying seed of Jacob, by reminding God of his covenant. "Thou saidst," said Jacob, on a memorable occasion of deep exercise, when dreading the anger of Esau, his brother, "I will surely do thee good. Now then, O Lord, deliver me I pray thee from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau!" Gen. xxxii. 7—12. We have the whole of Nehemiah's prayer upon this occasion recorded; as if God the Holy Ghost intended it for the instruction and comfort of the church to all generations. It contains a short, but a complete epitome of all the leading principles of our holy faith, and is the sum and substance of the gospel, of that which hath been, and through the whole time-state of the church must ever be, the gospel; namely, salvation only in the covenant by Christ. The same which was preached to Abraham, Gal. iii. 8. and as was preached to the church in the wilderness, Heb. iv. 2. And if the reader be under the unction of the Holy One, "by which," as the apostle teacheth, "we know all

things," 1 John ii. 20. he will discover from this prayer of Nehemiah, that more or less are included in it, all the great and leading points of the gospel. I lament that the limits to which I am necessarily confined in this little work, will not allow me to bring the whole before the reader, but I shall advert to so much as will abundantly confirm the doctrine.

Nehemiah begins his supplications to Jehovah under his covenant character; calleth him "the Lord God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and keep his commandments." Now in these expressions there is an exact conformity to the uniform language of all the Lord's people, from the first formation of the church. "The Lord, the Lord God, the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob." These names were in the first charter of grace; yea, the name God gave to himself from the beginning of the revelation of himself; "This," said the Lord, "is my name for ever, this is my memorial unto all generations." Exod iii. 15. Therefore, Nehemiah here grounds the basis of all he had to supplicate; first, pleads Israel's claim in the covenant, and then proceeds to state what his present petitions were, the success of which rested upon it; namely, "that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant which I pray before thee now day and night, for the children of Israel, thy servants." Here are the objects of his prayer; the persons and cause of Israel for whom he prayed. He was looking to the God of Israel, and the Israel of God were those for whom he prayed. His next step before the throne was, as hath marked the Lord's people in all ages; namely, a deep sense and acknowledgment of sin and transgression, which in the moment of asking for mercy, confessed a total undeserving of it. "We have sinned," said Nehemiah, "against thee, O Lord, both I and my father's house have sinned. We have dealt very corruptly." To

this succeeded, as hath been the custom of all the Lord's chosen, from the days of the patriarchs downward; namely, pleading the Lord's word and the Lord's covenant promises. "Remember, I beseech thee," said Nehemiah, "the word that thou commandest thy servant Moses, saying, if ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations; but if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments and do them, though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven; yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there." See Levit. xxvi. 40—42. Here was the grand argument. This was the anchor of hope. The people of God can never fail of success when they tell God what God hath first told them. When we lay hold of God's promises, we do to all intents and purposes lay hold of God himself. And as in these pleas there is nothing of the creature, but wholly the faithfulness of the Creator, we make this the sole standard of faith. And however mysterious and paradoxical it may appear to natural men, with those that are spiritual the fact is certain, that the boldest pleader in God's promises, is the humblest pleader; for he offers nothing of his own: and this is what Paul calls "having nothing, and yet possessing all things." 2 Cor. vi. 9, 10. And having thus stated at large the Lord's covenant engagements, and Israel's deep need of the fulfilment of them at this time from the very low estate to which the Israel of God was now brought down, Nehemiah closeth all by once again repeating who they were for whom he made supplication; even the Lord's own people. "Now these are thy servants," said Nehemiah, "and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand. Now, O Lord, I beseech thee, let thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy

name ; and prosper I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man."

If the reader be graciously taught, and is familiar with scripture, I venture to believe that he will conclude with me, that this whole prayer of Nehemiah is all over gospel, from beginning to ending. And the great stress of the argument the man of God makes use of, is by covenant promises from God, to remind God that the divine glory is more concerned for Israel's deliverance in the accomplishment than even Israel. For by making God what God truly is, the whole of the covenant, Isa. xlii. 6. Nehemiah gives the people himself over as God's own. As if he had said, what I am asking, Lord, I am asking for thine own. "Now these are thy servants, and thy people." Thy glory therefore in their salvation is the first great concern, though their happiness will arise out of it. These are blessed arguments ; and highly favoured are those of the Lord's faithful ones to whom the Lord gives grace to use them. Moses did so in a trying moment, and speeded in so doing, before the Lord. When Israel had fallen into idolatry, and the Lord threatened to destroy them, "Let me alone," said God to Moses, that I may consume them, and I will make of thee a great nation." And Moses said, "what will the Egyptians then say, but that for mischief the Lord brought Israel out, to slay them in the mountains?" Exod. xxxii. 7—14. And in like manner Joshua, when some of the people were smitten before their enemies, for their renewed transgression: "Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth before the ark of the Lord, and cried out, O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turn their backs before their enemies? and what wilt thou do, O Lord, unto thy great name?" As if he had said, it matters not what becomes of us, for we have merited evil ; but what wilt thou do, for the glory of thy great name, if Israel perish? Josh. vii. 1—9.

But it is time to pass on to the further contemplation of Nehemiah's history. We have beheld the man of God at prayer; we have heard him lodging his cause in the Lord's hand: and though so many centuries have run out, since this event took place, yet through the goodness of God the Holy Ghost, in preserving this man's prayer, and handing it down to the church through the intermediate ages to the present hour, we have, as if we had been admitted into the retirement of this great friend of Israel—we have heard how holy souls, when taught of God, converse with God in humble boldness at his throne. We have now to enquire after what followed in his history; we have to look at him according to the statement given in holy scripture, and behold him at court, standing before the king his master.

But for the better apprehension of the subject, it will not be unimportant to take a short account of the state of the world at that time. Nehemiah lived in that age of darkness, when the rulers of mankind were despots in almost all governments. As it was said of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, so might it have been said of this king of Persia, in whose court Nehemiah lived, and almost of every other, "All people, and nations, and languages trembled, and feared before him. Whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive, and whom he would he set up, and whom he would he put down." Dan. v. 19. And although at this period, Nehemiah was in favour at court; yet from the caprice of princes, there could be no human assurance of any continued sunshine. Such was Nehemiah's situation, when as we read in his memoirs, he prosecutes the narrative of his history.

"And it came to pass in the month Nisan, (which was four months from the month Chisleu) in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that wine was before him; and I took up the wine, and gave it unto the

king." Solomon hath observed, that "to every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven." Eccles. iii. 1. And we know "that there is a time to favour Zion when the set time is come." And it is graciously added in the same scripture, "when the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory. He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer." Psalm cii. 13—17. Probably Nehemiah, who had four months before laid the interests of Zion before the Most High God, and who no doubt knew this scripture, and had it in recollection, when he took up the wine, and gave it to the king, waited in anxious suspense for the Lord's appearing for his people. He goes on to relate what followed: "now I had not (said he) been before time sad in his presence." Perhaps it was always attended with danger, to be seen sad, or with a sullen countenance at such a time. And well was it for Nehemiah, that he had resource in an higher power. "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water he turneth it whithersoever he will." Prov. xxi 1. "Wherefore the king said unto me, why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick?" This is nothing else but sorrow of heart.

I pause here for a moment, the subject is too interesting to pass away hastily from. The sensible feeling this man of God had for the desolated state of the church, could not altogether be concealed. When the soul is sick and out of tune, music is not melody. The intimate union between our spirits and our bodies, compel at times a sympathy, perfectly irresistible. And when, as the king defined it, (perhaps led to it by the Lord, though he knew nothing of the Lord, Isai. xlv. 3, 4.) he called it sorrow of heart; he made a correct statement of the matter. The Lord's people in all ages of the church can best tell, what kind of sorrow of the heart that is, which gives a gloom to

the countenance. “ We are fearfully and wonderfully made.”

It appears by the history, that the king's notice of Nehemiah's countenance, and his observations upon it, had for the time great effect of distress on his mind; for he said, “ then I was very sore afraid, and said unto the king, let the king live for ever. Why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire? Then the king said unto me, for what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven!” Let not the reader overlook the very blessed instruction, couched under what is here said. The poor servant saith, that on the king's observations and demand, he was sore afraid. And he did all that his mind dictated for him to do, in making answer to the king. But his sheet anchor was in the Lord. “ So I prayed (said he) to the God of heaven.” He secretly looked up in prayer to the Lord, while his heart was agitated with conflicting passions before the king.— Such do the people of God upon a thousand occasions. Such are their exercises when having committed all their cares to God, they wait the issue of what the Lord shall appoint by man.

It is very blessed to look on and observe the issue of things. Nehemiah four months before had interested the Lord in behalf of Jerusalem. And the time of answer came. A prayer-hearing, and a prayer-answering God, was now come forth, to do even more than his servant had required. “ Then the king said unto me, for what dost thou make request? And I said unto the king, if it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it. And the king said unto me, (the queen also sitting by) for how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return? So it

pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time. Moreover I said unto the king, if it please the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river, that they may convey me over, till I come into Judah. And a letter unto Asaph, the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace, which appertained to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into. And the king granted me according to the good hand of my God upon me."

Here I pause to take breath; and not only to breathe over this relation, but with Nehemiah, to ponder well as he did, the good hand of God upon him. Let the reader look at the history from the beginning. What a deplorable account was brought to the court of Persia of the desolation of Jerusalem? what affliction overwhelmed the faithful servant of the Lord at the relation! what a state of mind was he in, when he poured out his heart unto God! what distressing apprehensions in the court of a despotic monarch had he, what the event might be. And as Israel had by transgressions, justly excited the Lord's displeasure, might not Nehemiah have feared, that the Lord might have left this people to a yet greater punishment! but see the issue. The king was disposed to do more than Nehemiah could, in the first moment of his request have conceived. And who, or what was it, that prompted him? Who doth not, or who will not, see the Lord's hand in this wonderful history?

Children of God! (for to you do I speak) let not such a relation of God's dealings with his people pass by you unnoticed. Of this whole history, as far as we have proceeded with these memoirs of Nehemiah, every circumstance carries with it a proclamation of that scripture: "this also cometh forth from the Lord of Hosts, who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in

working." Isa. xxviii. 29. Oh! did the people of God but know, and rightly value their interest at the court of heaven, how would they besiege the mercy-seat day and night with their petitions, and give the Lord no rest, "until he had established, and until he had made Jerusalem a praise in the earth." Isa. lxii. 7. Time hath been when the prayers of the Lord's people could stop the clouds of heaven that "it should not rain; and again open them as if under the controul of man." James v. 17. Joshua did but say, "sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou moon in the valley of Ajalon; and the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves of their enemies." Josh. x. 12. Nay it was but for David to say unto the Lord in a critical time of danger, when a counsellor of great eminence was giving advice for David's ruin; "Lord," (said he) "I pray thee turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness," and it was done. 2 Sam. xv. 31. The Lord hath said, as a universal encouragement to a dependance upon him in all dangers and difficulties of his people, "it shall come to pass, that before my people call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." Isa. lxv. 24. Yea to such a wonderful extent the Lord graciously carries this assurance of his readiness to help them, and to manifest himself for them, that he throweth the reins of government into their hands, and saith; "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the Holy One of Israel and his Maker, ask me of things to come, concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me." Isa. xlv. 11.

We left Nehemiah standing before the king, his master, having obtained his request, and found favour for the accomplishment of his wishes, to repair the walls of his beloved Jerusalem. Nothing is said in the history of what passed in his mind upon this occasion. Indeed it was not possible for a stander by to know his feelings.

But we may suppose, that the gracious influence which wrought in him in one and the same moment to lift an eye to heaven, while supplicating the monarch on the earth, gave him similar impressions when his boon was answered. What a wonderful provision the Lord hath formed in the spiritual faculties of his people for reserving an unremitting attention on himself to wait the issue of prayer, while, according to human appearances, the event looked for seems altogether to depend upon an arm of flesh! The psalmist, after long and beautiful recital of the divine watchfulness over his Israel, hath closed the statement in the same strain of acknowledgment, "whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord!" Psalm cvii. 43.

I pause here to remark (for it is a remark highly becoming gracious souls to have in view, when at any time they are pondering the conduct of the ungodly and profane) how the Lord operates upon the minds of such as know him not, to be useful to those who do: yea, and not unfrequently thereby to accomplish the very reverse of what they themselves intend. The king of Persia, like the other monarchs which succeeded each other in the government of the world, had but one object in design in all he said or did, namely, to aggrandize and greaten his kingdom. The giving permission to Nehemiah to build the walls of Jerusalem, was, in the first face of things, as if strengthening Persia, which then was under his own authority and tributary to him. He little dreamt, that the time would come when she that now sat in the dust should have an Almighty Sovereign, "whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions should serve and obey him." Dan. vii. 27. And the same or similar events are continually occurring in private life, which the Lord's people should treasure up in their memories. Scarce a day can pass in the common circumstances of a child of God, but if

his eyes are enlightened by spiritual perspective to behold a divine ordination in them, like the prophet's vision, he will discover One in the midst of the throne regulating all. Ezek. i. 26. And this attention to the Lord's government is, if possible, more needful for the Lord's chosen to mark under, what may at first sight seem frowning providences than in the sunshine of the prosperous. Cloudy dispensations only appear in our atmosphere, between the great luminary of the day and the earth: they who live above have no intervening medium to obstruct vision; but the Lord's people, from the weakness of spiritual sight, have proportioned weakness of faith. When the patriarch Jacob was called to the exercise of having his children detained from him, though this was in the Lord's arrangement for the salvation of the father and his whole household from famine; losing sight of God himself in these providences, his heart lost sight with it for awhile of all confidence. The poor father cried out, "Me have ye bereaved of my children! Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and will ye take Benjamin away? all these things are against me!" Gen. xlii. 36. But did Jacob in the after-stage of life think so, when the Lord brought him down to Egypt? It would be well for the Lord's tried family always to wait the upshot of things. Depend upon it, that promise hath never failed in a single instance, and never can, "we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Rom. viii. 28.

I cannot pass on to the prosecution of Nehemiah's memoirs, until that I have requested the reader to take with him another observation, very much connected with, and congenial to the former; namely, how the Lord the Holy Ghost, the Almighty Author of scripture, hath made records concerning the history of those kingdoms, which but for their interspersion here and there with the annals of the church, would never have

been known but in profane legends, and by far the greatest part of their memorials would have perished with them. What should we have heard of the Assyrian monarchy, unless from Sennacherib's blasphemous boasting made against the Lord God of Israel, and his ruin which soon after followed in the reign of Hezekiah? Isa. xxxvi. and xxxvii. And the Babylonish, which arose to greater splendour from the overthrow of Assyria, would never in history have reached the epoch of the present day, but for the captivity of the church under that tyranny, for the correction of the Lord's people. And where is this vast empire of Persia under which Nehemiah for awhile lived, which extended "to one hundred and seven and twenty provinces, from India even unto Ethiopia?" Esther i. 1. Where is Greece, and Rome, which arose in succession to subjugate and make miserable mankind? What is said of one is equally applicable to all, "howbeit he meant not so, neither did he think so, but it was in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few," Isa. x. 7. Humbling as it is to the pride of human nature, the Lord had but one object in view in the formation of the several empires of the earth, in putting down one, and raising up another, but as he made them subsidiary to the interests of Zion. And so far and no farther, than their movements were controlled to this purpose, their history is occasionally mingled with the history of the church. The charter of grace delivered to Zion ran in these words, "the gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory!" Isa. lxii. 2. And thus, from generation to generation, the several monarchs of the earth sprung up as mushrooms of the night, to minister and make way for his coming; who though the Lord from heaven would appear among the humblest and lowliest of men, Jesus Christ of Nazareth!

We now enter upon a new epoch in the life of Nehemiah. And though it is not noticed in that part

of his memoirs which we have reviewed, when he stood before the king, and found favour to do what his soul desired in building the walls of Jerusalem; yet in a subsequent part of his history we find his creation to the dignity of Tirshatha, and which most likely had taken place at that time, or before he left the palace of Shushan to go to Jerusalem. This Tirshatha, (that is, governor) gave Nehemiah a superiority of rank, which was well calculated to aid his exertions in the cause he had at heart. But we do not find any assumed consequence from this distinction Nehemiah had acquired. "Not (as Peter expressed it) lords over God's heritage, but as an example for the people to follow." It is very blessed to mark how grace induceth humility, for then the higher the child of God is advanced, the lower views he hath of himself. But how do all characters sink to nothing in comparison of him, who though "in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God, yet made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant." Hence we see him in the days of his flesh, and at a moment when he knew that all power was his in heaven and earth, stooping down to the lowest humiliation of menial servants, and washing the feet of poor fishermen. Oh! what a lesson to the proud ones of the earth! and yet more endearing. What a lovely sight to encourage and comfort the minds of his afflicted people! Never surely was the haughtiness of man more mortified. And never was there any thing more calculated to raise up the depressed spirits of the humble! And let me ask, when did the Son of God appear more exalted than when he made himself so low? Who in the contemplation could fear to approach him, when thus beholding him though rich, "yet for our sakes becoming poor, that we through his poverty might be rich?"

The scripture records have not entered into a detail

of what took place, in the setting forth of Nehemiah for his new government. We may figure to ourselves no small parade in his embassy, according to the etiquette of an eastern court, when leaving Shushan for Jerusalem. The king, his royal master, (he tell us) sent captains of the army and horsemen with him. And he tells us further, that "letters were given to him for the governors beyond the river, that they might convey him over, till he came to Judah: and a letter unto Asaph, the keeper of the king's forest, for timber to make beams for the gates of the palace, and for the wall, and for the house into which he should enter." But I pray the reader not to overlook how steadfastly Nehemiah kept his eye upon the Lord in all these things. He seems never to have lost sight, that the Lord God of Israel was the prime mover in this whole business. He thankfully acknowledged the bounty of his royal master; but he ascribed the glory all to the Lord. "The king (said he) granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me." This was, in his apprehension, the culminating point.

We read the history of Nehemiah to but little profit, if, like this man of God, we do not with him eye the Lord's sovereignty going before him, and guiding him through all. We behold the provision the Persian monarch had made him, in the cavalry he sent with him, and the order for his reception which was carried by him, to the governors of the several provinces he had to pass, before his arrival at Jerusalem. But if we read the narration *spiritually*, as well as historically, we shall behold, like the prophet's servant, somewhat more than these, in "the horses of fire, and the chariots of fire," which encompass the Lord's people round about, as a shield. 2 Kings vi. 16, 17. The patriarch Jacob had frequent manifestations of his being escorted by this heavenly army, in his eventful pilgrimage; and it should seem, somehow or other, in a visible manner.

For thus we read: "And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him; and when Jacob saw them, he said, this is God's host. And he called the name of that place Mahanaim," that is, two host of armies. Gen. xxxii. 1, 2. And wherefore should it be thought incredible, when, under the gospel dispensation, the demand is made in a way of question, which answers itself; "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" Heb. i. 14. Yes! the heirs of salvation, from their headship *in* Christ, and their union *with* Christ, have an inheritance above that of angels; for it is said of them, what hath never been said, neither can be said of angels, they are "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." Rom. viii. 17. And what a thought ariseth from hence, for the continual solace of every regenerated child of God! Angels, who by their nature are spiritual, minister in Christ's kingdom, and attend the Lord's chosen among men; and how their services are carried on, in what way or manner those services are conducted, though in their very nature unperceived; yet we may, and ought, to take encouragement in the assurance, that they extend to the most minute, as well as to the greatest of our circumstances. We read of the marvellous power exercised by a single angel of the Lord, at the command of the Lord, when a multitude were slain by him in one night of the enemies of his people, in the camp of the Assyrians. 2 Kings xix. 35. What may not a child of God hope for, that lives under an abiding sense of such an escort!

I must not indulge myself, however strong the propensity, in accompanying Nehemiah in imagination through his journey from Persia to Jerusalem. No doubt with such a frame of mind as the Lord had given him, and with the prospect he had in view when there, for the weal of Israel; many were the events the Tirshatha met with, as he passed through the several

provinces, and which might suggest much subject for improvement; but the limits of this portrait will not admit their introduction. I pass over the whole; and contemplate the Lord's servant as approaching the holy city, at that time in her desolation. The reader will call to mind what passed in the court of Persia, when Nehemiah made suit unto the king for this service, and the ground of his request; "that the city, the place of his fathers' sepulchres lay waste, and the gates thereof had been consumed with fire." Here was the state of things at that time with the church. It is not said whether the people had their feasts and ordinances, their new moons, and solemn assemblies; but as in former days, it might be said, "the mirth of tabrets had ceased, the noise of them that rejoice had ended; the joy of the harp ceased," Isa. xxiv. 8. The first view of Jerusalem, as the city arose before him—who shall enter into the feelings of Nehemiah, to pourtray the various agitations which filled his breast? The Persian monarch had no regard for these things; and had his servant sought permission to visit Jerusalem for the restoration of Judah's solemn feasts; like him of old, he would very probably have treated the petition with contempt and anger, and said, as he did, "Ye are idle, ye are idle; therefore ye say, let us go and do sacrifice to the Lord," Exodus v. 17. But, when Nehemiah touched that string of sorrow, to which all men by nature are alike liable, here the monarch and the subject felt the common vibration; and in the consciousness of death passing upon all men, the knell sounded in his ears.

But the unhumbled pride of the human heart, hath contrived in all ages, and in all generations, to soften the severity of this common lot, by forming for the rich ones of the earth costly mausoleums, in which to place the remains of their dead, that they might not mingle their ashes with the poor, in one general cemetery; or,

like felons at the gallows, have their bones unburied, in an undistinguished Golgotha, "that is to say, a place of a scull," Matt. xxvii. 33. Nehemiah touched the king's breast, when speaking of the sepulchres of his fathers laying waste; for this made the monarch take part in what concerned *his* fathers, and his own royal house. Hence his indulgence to his servant, to go to Jerusalem for such a purpose. Far higher views, however, if I mistake not, occupied the mind of Nehemiah. He possessed, in common with other men, all those tender feelings of sympathy which adorn our nature; and the graves of his ancestors, in beholding once more, after a long absence of many years, might excite the falling tear. But it was not nature, but grace, which prompted his heart to visit Jerusalem. Jerusalem was not only the city of his fathers, but the city of the living God. Here, in after ages, was to come the Mighty One that would redeem Israel from all her sins. Here would the Son of God openly tabernacle, in substance of our flesh; and here all the wonderful events included in redemption would be accomplished! Will it be questioned whether Nehemiah had such apprehensions? The answer is at hand. Is it not certain, that in ages yet further back, and more remote from the time of Nehemiah, the patriarchs lived and died in the faith of Christ? Did not Abraham see the day of the Lord afar off, "rejoiced, and was glad?" John viii. 56. Did not Jacob in the same prospect exclaim, "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord!" Gen. xlix. 18. And is it not said of Moses, that he "esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward." Heb. xi. 26. Was not the gospel preached in the wilderness? Heb. iv. 2. And could Nehemiah be ignorant of these things, or of the solemn services during that eventful period, when the people "drank of that rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ?" 1 Cor

x. 4. Let the reader call to mind the prayer of this son of Abraham, which I have noticed in the opening of this man's history; and let him determine for himself whether he was not "a child of promise, even as was Isaac," Gal. iv. 28. Yea, let him read what is said of Nehemiah, chap. xii. 46, 47. of his singing the psalm of David and Asaph, and then say, whether he sung not, as those did, of the incarnate Jehovah?

But I pursue these observations no further. Let us attend the Tirshatha, now arrived at Jerusalem, and entering on his new government. His own relation of it is at once simple and beautiful.—"So I came (said he) to Jerusalem, and was there three days. And I arose in the night, I, and some few men with me: neither told I any man what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem; neither was there any beast with me, save the beast that I rode upon. And I went out by night, by the gate of the valley, even before the dragon wall; and to the dung port, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem, which were broken down, and the gates thereof were consumed with fire. Then I went on to the gate of the fountain, and to the king's pool, but there was no place for the beast that was under me for to pass. Then went I up in the night by the brook, and viewed the wall; and turned back, and entered by the gate of the valley, and so returned. And the rulers knew not whither I went, or what I did; neither had I as yet told it to the Jews, nor to the priests, nor to the nobles, nor to the rulers, nor to the rest that did the work. Then said I unto them, ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire. Come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach. Then I told them of the hand of my God, which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, let us rise up and

build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work." Neh. ii. 11—18.

I know not with what frame of mind the reader hath passed through this statement of Nehemiah; to me I confess, it is very interesting. When, with an enlightened understanding, we read scripture spiritually, there is then a personal concern we take in all that relates to the church, and the people of God. What holy men of old felt, at the desolation or prosperity of the church, forms a part in our feelings. We can, and do, enter into similar apprehensions, and insensibly are led to pray for the prosperity of Zion. This is divinely expressed in one of the Psalms: "Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion; for the time to favour her, yea, the set time is come. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof," Psalm cii. 13, 14.

I can, and do also, enter into somewhat of Nehemiah's mind, that made his first visits to behold the dilapidated state of Jerusalem by night. We have before observed, that it is more than probable public ordinances had ceased, and therefore he could not present himself before the Lord God of Israel, in his opening his embassy, among the congregation of the people at large. Besides, Nehemiah's visit at Jerusalem was from the Lord, and therefore to the Lord he wished on his arrival first to unbosom himself, and alone. And who shall say what passed, in this night of communion, between the Lord and his soul, while he went round the unwall'd desolated ground of his beloved Jerusalem? And when the man of God had taken a distinct and leisurely survey of the ruins, then, and not before, he brake his mind to the rulers, and those in office of the people, inviting them to co-operation in building the walls, and taking away the reproach under which they lay, while they continued a derision to the nations: and, above all,

assuring them that the hand of God was first in this design ; for it was the Lord that had moved the king of Persia, his master, in this business.

I pause here again, to remark (though I would fain persuade myself, that without my remark, the reader, if spiritual, will outrun the observation) how evidently the hand of the Lord was seen, in the people, as well as Nehemiah, offering themselves willingly to this service. And who, that is taught of the Lord, can help connecting the zeal of the people at Jerusalem, with that of Nehemiah, when at Shushan, as originating from the same Almighty mover of all that is right, "who worketh in us, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure." Solomon, years before these transactions, had been inspired by the Holy Ghost, to teach the church this as a standing truth, when he said, "The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord," Prov. xvi. 1. And I not only pause to contemplate the predisposing cause, of the rising up of the people as one man, to the Lord's service, in building the walls of his Jerusalem ; but the earnestness with which they at once entered upon it. Here was again discovered the Lord's hand. Hezekiah, upon a memorable occasion of a like nature, made a beautiful and gracious observation, and the Holy Ghost hath left it upon record, for the church's perpetual instruction and comfort ; that the Lord's people are not unfrequently stirred up to the Lord's service, and that sometimes so instantaneous and unlooked for, that, as the spouse said in the Canticles, "or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadib," Song vi. 12. Hezekiah discovered this, "and rejoiced, yea, and all the people with him, that God had prepared the people ; for the thing was done suddenly," 2 Chron. xxix. 36. And I cannot find in my heart to dismiss the consideration of these things, without first desiring the reader to make a personal application to himself, and

to the church, in the present state of what is going on in life. We live in an awful day! The walls of our Jerusalem are broken down, and the true Zion of God is ploughed as a field. It will be well for all the true lovers of Zion, while besieging the mercy-seat with unceasing prayers day and night on her account, never to lose sight of what the Lord himself hath said to his Zion, "Behold! I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me," Isa. xlix. 16. The true Israel of God are safe, apostatize who may. Professors or profane, in this era of amalgamation, may pass unnoticed, to the eye of common observation; but here is seen the unalterable, unaccommodating standard—"The Lord knoweth them that are his!" 2 Tim. ii. 19. This is enough. That strong language of the Lord, by his servant Jeremiah, suits the present hour, as though it had been written purposely for it: "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran; I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord!" Jer. xxiii. 21--28.

It is time now to enter upon that part of Nehemiah's history, in which we behold him with the chosen people, entering upon their labours of building the wall. And here I admire the distinguished honour that God the Holy Ghost hath put upon those, whom the Lord wrought on their mind to engage in this work. I do not presume to say, that their names are written in the book of life; for "secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us, and to our children for ever," Deut. xxix. 29. But when we find such honourable testimony is given of them here, "true yoke-fellows," and buckled in the harness of labourers for the Lord's service; we cannot but hope, that they are of those numbered

among the saints of God, Phil. iv. 3. We have together a very full and circumstantial account of their distinct employments related in the third chapter; to this, therefore, I refer; in which the reader will observe, how to each class, as wise master-builders, the several departments were assigned. And in a subsequent chapter, the Tirshatha himself hath noticed somewhat of the ardour in which all, as with one consent, were unceasingly engaged for the accomplishment of the work; for he saith, "So we laboured in the work: and half of them held the spears, from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared. So neither I, nor my brethren, nor my servants, nor the men of the guard which followed me, none of us put off our clothes, saving that every one put them off for washing," chap. iv. 21—23. We must now leave the busy community at their diligent exertions, until we come to notice them at the finishing of the wall; in order to attend to several interesting circumstances, that, but for the Lord's watching over them for good, and prospering their labours, threatened to have not only impeded, but baffled their design altogether.

The close which the Lord Jesus made in his farewell sermon to his disciples, suited all ages of his people, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: in me ye shall have peace!" A sample of the world's hatred manifested itself in the history of Nehemiah, towards himself and his companions in strong colouring, the moment they began to build the walls of Jerusalem. "Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, what is this thing that ye do? will ye rebel against the king?" chap. ii. 19.

The subject opened to us in this short statement, short as it is, is very full of instruction, and affords much matter for improvement under the Lord's teaching. Let it be remembered, that these men were of

the spawn of the ancient foes of God's Israel. Nothing but the most deadly hatred and opposition could be looked for from this quarter. But their plan of operation against the people of God was the master-piece of hell, which nothing could defeat but the wisdom from heaven. They commenced their siege, however, in bringing before the entrenchment garrisoned by the Lord's presence, their smaller artillery. They opened their attack with laughter and scorn. And if the reader be well acquainted with the annals of the church, he cannot but know that this mode of contention, in those that fight against the Lord's people, hath the antiquity of ages. The son of the bond-woman played off this weapon of derision very dexterously upon the son of the free. We read, "that Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had borne to Abraham, mocking," Gen. xxi. 9. True it is, that the weapons of contempt cannot wound to any real danger. And did the child of God use grace upon such occasions, as to regard them not, they would lose all their force. Nevertheless in small matters, from the natural feeling we all have, while unavoidably mingling with mankind, to preserve their good opinion, there is nothing the human mind shrinks from with more earnestness than scorn. Every one here is like the sensitive plant, which droops on being touched. But the Horonite and his squad did not rest in merely throwing their squibs of laughter and derision among the Lord's little army; they brought forward their heavier ordnance for slaughter, and indirectly charged Nehemiah and his companions with an intention to rebel against the king! I pray the reader not to overlook this. Indeed, I beseech him to take particular notice of it. And if he will compare the statement here given, with the periods both before the days of Nehemiah, and since, down to the present hour; he will discover, that one uniform maxim hath marked the conduct of the haters of God

and his people, in accusing the most zealous servants of the Lord with disaffection to all human government. Elijah, Jeremiah, Daniel, and more or less all the old testament saints, were branded with this character. And the new testament followers of the Lord from age to age, have borne the same obloquy, and not unfrequently forfeited their lives under the unjust accusation. Paul was eminently stigmatized as “ a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among the people,” Acts xxiv. 5. Nay, what was the Lamb of God himself, in whose mouth there was no guile, but in the eyes of the multitude as “ one perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar.” And if there be a truly redeemed and regenerated child of God, which reads this statement, he must be a singular character indeed, if in his own history he is unconscious of the same reproach.

But the persecution did not rest here. Raillery and mockery in the instance of Nehemiah, backed by the charge of disaffection to the king’s government, were followed by more open assaults of malignity. The Sanballats of Nehemiah’s days did, as it is often done in our days, namely, they called in the Samaritans, a mongrel race, inimical to the true Israel of God, to oppose the Jerusalem builders; as the yea and nay gospellers endeavour to call in question the sure promises of God, “ which are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus.” Still however, being baffled and disappointed in those several attempts, and beholding the wall rising up and assuming some degree of heighth; their next design was to compel them by fear to give over their labours. I admire the simple, but sure plan, that Nehemiah and his companions adopted to repel the enemy. And I pause to observe, that if in the present hour the Lord’s people did the same, it would be the best and most effectual way to stop their approach.

Prayer is the truest armoury, and this Nehemiah put on. By prayer we refer the cause unto him that judgeth rightly. And by prayer we engage God to our aid. The proud insulting language of the Sanballats was, "what do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves?" Tobiah the Ammonite, who was by him when he said it, using the same mockery, replied, "even that (said he) which they build, if a fox go up he shall even break down their stone wall." Nehemiah in return made no answer to those scoffers, but carried their contumacy before the Lord. "Hear, O our God, (said he) for we are despised, and turn their reproach upon their own head, and give them for a prey in the land of captivity; and cover not their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out from before thee, for they have provoked thee to anger before the builders." Nehemiah was well taught when he offered this prayer, to make the builders' cause the Lord's cause; for though the discomfiture of their foes became their safety, yet Jerusalem was the Lord's Jerusalem and his glory, and her walls the Lord's walls.

Undaunted by all these repulses, the enemy would not give over; but shifting the ground of attack, they now sought to accomplish their purpose by insidious craft, and undermine by secret stratagem what they found could not be effected by open violence. They sent therefore an apparent friendly message unto the Tirshatha, saying, "come let us meet together in some one of the villages in the plain of Ono. But they thought (said Nehemiah) to do me mischief. And I sent messengers unto them (said he) saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease whilst I leave it and come down to you?" Oh! what a blessed thing it is to be under a wiser and better direction than our own. Had not the Lord watched over his servants for good, and been their

Wonderful Counsellor, the Tirshatha might have accepted these overtures of conciliation, glad to have been on terms of peace. And reader, let us learn from hence, that there can be nothing neutral in the spiritual warfare in which we are engaged. The iron and the clay cannot coalesce: the seed of the serpent cannot but hate and persecute the seed of the woman. Yea, even in ourselves, and in our own corrupt nature, the bias to evil is such, that we cannot be too jealous in watching over the tendencies of the unrenewed and carnal heart. The body is for ever imperatively inclining to whatever may damp the spiritual desires of the regenerated soul. Very blessed therefore it is, when prompted by infinite grace, we can and do say as Nehemiah did, to the messengers of the enemy, "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down." Why should the infinite concerns of eternity be lost sight of to attend the momentary things of time?

But Sanballat and his party had the object of their desires too much at heart to give it over. Four times the Tirshatha relates the invitation was repeated, and as often repelled. At length, a fifth time the servant of the Horonite came with his apparent friendly request, accompanied with an open letter, which gave information of a report, as he said, generally prevailing, namely, that Nehemiah was to be proclaimed king, and the Jews were going to rebel: that prophets were appointed to make proclamation of it, saying, "there is a king in Judah!" The latter therefore admonished Nehemiah to shut himself up into the temple for safety. The conspiracy had gained great accession in point of numbers, among the enemies of the Lord, and his people at Jerusalem: one Noadiah a pretended prophetess, had joined them: but the firmness of the Tirshatha through sovereign grace remained unshaken. To the letter he replied by answer, "should such a man (said Nehemiah)

as I flee? And who is there, that being as I am, would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in. And lo! I perceive (said he) that God had not sent him, but that he pronounced this prophecy against me; for Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him. 'Therefore was he hired that I should be afraid, and do so and sin; and that they might have matter for an evil report that they might reproach me. But Nehemiah's grand resource was in prayer. To the Lord he carried all, and with the Lord he left all. "My God (said he) think thou upon Tobiah and Sanballat according to these their works; and on the prophetess Noadiah, and the rest of the prophets, that would have put me to fear!" I cannot but admire the strength of faith the man of God manifested upon those multiplied exercises. And I admire and adore still more the infinite goodness of the Almighty Author and Giver of all faith, which animated his servant to the firmness he shewed to the Tobiahs, and all the other opposers of God's truth in that day. And it is very blessed to connect with it the full assurance of faith, that in all periods of the church, the same is imparted to the Lord's chosen in every time of need. The blessing of Asher, is the blessing of all that like Asher is made acceptable to his brethren; "thy shoes shall be iron and brass, and as thy days so shall thy strength be," Deut. xxxiii. 24, 25. And it is delightful to see in this history of Nehemiah, that amidst all the rage and opposition of men and devils, the building of the wall went on, of which we shall have occasion to speak in due order. But for the present, the reader's attention must be called off to another subject, which though it cannot be strictly termed an episode, being intimately connected with Nehemiah's history in his government; yet from not being in the embassy for which he came to Jerusalem, it might have been left out, but from the circumstances

belonging to it, which seems to have given him more distress than all the other events in the clamours of the Sanballats taken altogether.

It appears from the statement of this history, according to the sacred historian, that in the midst of those daring insults of the common enemy to the people of God without, a mutiny among the Jews appeared within, which required great prudence in the Tirshatha, and great grace from God to subdue. It is related with such beautiful pathos, according to the eastern manner, in the fifth chapter; that while I refer the reader there to gratify himself in the perusal of the whole, I shall have his thanks I am persuaded, in bringing before him in these memoirs of Nehemiah, some of the leading points. “And there was a great cry (saith Nehemiah) of the people, and of their wives, against their brethren the Jews. For there were that said, we, our sons, and our daughters, are many; therefore we take up corn for them that we may eat and live. Some also there were that said, we have mortgaged our lands, vineyards, and houses, that we might buy corn because of the dearth. There were also that said, we have borrowed money for the king’s tribute, and that upon our lands and vineyards. Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children: and lo, we bring into bondage our sons and our daughters, to be servants; and some of our daughters are brought into bondage already, neither is it in our power to redeem them, for other men have our lands and vineyards!” What a sad picture of oppression is here! And what added to it to give the finished colouring, it was not simply the lords of the country under the king, but brother against brother, among the Jews themselves!

I admire the magnanimity of mind, as well as the generosity which Nehemiah manifested upon this occasion. Fearlessly he rebuked the nobles and the rulers, and charged them with exacting usury every one of his

brother. He brought before them, to their recollection, how in times past the people of God had redeemed their brethren the Jews, which were sold unto the heathen. "And will ye," said he, "even sell your brethren? or shall they be sold unto us?" It appears that this animated expostulation, under the Lord's grace, had the desired effect; for it is said, "Then held they their peace, and found nothing to answer." But Nehemiah proceeded in his pointed discourse; "I likewise," said he, "and my brethren, and my servants, might exact of them money, and corn. I pray you," added Nehemiah, "let us leave off this usury. Restore I pray you to them, even this day, their lands, their vineyards, their olive-yards, and their houses; also the hundredth part of the money, and of the corn, and the wine, and the oil that ye exact of them. And what was the result of this discourse? Surely the hand of the Lord cannot but be seen in it. "Then said they, we will restore them, and will require nothing of them; so will we do as thou sayest. Then," said Nehemiah, "I called the priests, and took an oath of them, that they should do according to this promise. Also I shook my lap, and said, so God shake out every man from his house, and from his labour, that performeth not this promise; even thus be he shaken out and emptied. And all the congregation said Amen, and praised the Lord. And the people did according to this promise."

Having thus succeeded in the suppression of all usury, and quieted the minds of the people in the redress of their grievances, amongst those that had been oppressed, the noble heart of Nehemiah, in a modest and gracious manner, called upon them to observe that what he had so affectionately recommended to them; he had, from the day he first came among them, during the time he had been governor, faithfully done the same himself. "I, and my brethren," said he, "have not eaten the

bread of the governor ; but the former governors that had been before me were chargeable unto the people, and had taken of them bread and wine, beside forty shekels of silver ; yea, even their servants bare rule over the people, but so did not I because of the fear of God. Moreover," said Nehemiah, " there were at my table, an hundred and fifty of the Jews and rulers, beside those that came unto us from among the heathen that are about us. And that which was prepared for me daily, was one ox, and six choice sheep, also fowls were prepared for me, and once in ten days, store of all sorts of wine ; yet for all this, required not I the bread of the governor, because the bondage was heavy upon this people !"

Reader, pause as you look over the portrait of this man. Examine one by one the features of character here drawn in sacred scripture, and by the Holy Ghost himself ; observe his demeanour, artless, unassuming, and without any borrowed tints of colouring from the imagination, but all his statement is in the beautiful simplicity of a God-fearing man, and a lover of his people. The revenue to which by his government he was entitled, and which the former governors received, was forty shekels of silver, which, according to the standard of currency, was equal to about five pounds of our money ; and from the opulence and splendour of the Persian court, most probably this was the governor's daily allowance, beside a full table according to the magnificence of the east. But like another great servant of the Lord in after days, Nehemiah might have said as Paul said, (for it is of him I now speak) " I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel ; yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me," Acts xx. 33, 34. Nehemiah indeed, though like Paul, he laboured with his hands in the building of the wall, yet through the bounty of the Lord he had enough of

his own for himself and his fellow workmen, to provide the daily supply of necessary food. And yet there was at his table a numerous company whom he fed continually, *suis impensis!* Where shall we look through all the records of ancient or modern history for a *fac simile* of this wonderful Tirshatha? And what a contrast doth he form to the heroes of antiquity, whose chief exploits were to desolate the earth? Yea, what a contrast to the Sanballats and Tobiahs who opposed him. And where are they now? Scripture hath answered: "As a dream when one awaketh, so shalt thou, O Lord, make their image to vanish out of the city. But the Lord knoweth them that are his, and the righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance."

It was a distinguishing mercy marking Nehemiah and his fellows in the work, that notwithstanding the opposition of their foes, and the clamour which brake out at the same time in Jerusalem among the Jews, there was no obstruction that stopped its progress. In the words of holy triumph, the Tirshatha gave this account of its being completed. "So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty and two days." Marvellous expedition indeed! when it be considered what the builders had to contend with in all directions; and which is only explainable by contemplating the divine hand carrying them through all.

But I have to apologize to the reader, in drawing to such length the outlines of Nehemiah's history, and his earnestness in building the walls of Jerusalem, if from the history of these events, I have said any thing tempting him to overlook a subject of a much higher nature. Alas! I should have called his attention to very little purpose, to the memoirs of this man, if from the walls of Jerusalem, he is not led to look beyond this horizon, to what all natural fences shadowed; namely, in the Lord himself the substantial security,

and the only impregnable fortress of his people. It is among the most interesting of all spiritual instructions, to eye the Lord in his watchfulness of his church. In all ages Zion was full of complaints. "The Lord hath forsaken me, (said she) and my Lord hath forgotten me!" No, said God, "behold I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me." As if the Lord had said, yes, I know thy state, I behold thy broken down walls. But there is a set time to favour Zion. I am preparing for thee all that thou wilt need; and it shall come, when I have prepared thy heart to receive it. And this divine consolation the Lord had more largely expressed upon a similar occasion, when the Lord said, "thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be broken down, nor one of the stakes thereof that shall ever be removed; neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams, wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby. For the Lord is our judge. The Lord is our law-giver. The Lord is our king; he will save us." God had purposely distinguished his Jerusalem, as in herself defenceless, that not only the Lord's people themselves might always have in remembrance, where and in whom their only security lay; but that the nations around might know, that Zion's God was Zion's protector, and his fear might be upon them not to molest Zion. Hence when at the command of God, the Israelites, which were men, went from their respective homes thrice in the year, to appear before the Lord at Jerusalem, none of the surrounding nations ever ventured to invade their dwellings, or take from them their property. And who doth not see, that is taught of God, but that this state of Jerusalem, laying open to the incursions of foes on every side; no garrison frontiers by land, nor navigable river by sea, nothing

but the sacred stream of Jordan, and the brook Kidron; how apparent to the view of human observation, was the Lord's Jerusalem liable to be swallowed up by the host of nations around. But the whole is explained, when we hear the Lord saying, "Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls; for I saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her," Zech. ii. 4, 5.

But we must not stop here. As Jerusalem herself was but an adumbration of the heavenly Jerusalem, to which the spiritual church of Christ are said to come, when by regeneration they are brought into a capability of beholding spiritual objects through spiritual mediums; I cannot divest my mind from considering Nehemiah, and those whose hearts the Lord stirred up with him to build the wall, but as looking beyond the mere letter of the work, and contemplating him on whom as the foundation laid in Zion, the whole building of the spiritual church "fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." When we read the prayer of Nehemiah, as hath been in part already noticed in this memoir, and when added to this, we read the still longer prayer recorded in the ninth chapter, (to which I beg to refer the reader) and which contains the great outlines of the covenant of grace; I cannot disconnect the idea, but that this faithful Tirshatha, not only knew the God of his fathers, but was looking for redemption in Jerusalem. And if on the presumption, this was the case, what a lovely view doth it give, of these wall-building Israelites? How divinely encouraging and consolatory to the true Israel of God in all ages, to behold the Lord's witnesses here and there appearing through all periods of the church, of whom, when their monuments of faith they left behind them are decyphered by God the Holy Ghost, they that are spiritual can read in their history, what no natural man can receive or understand, that what the Lord Jesus delivered in testimony of Abraham, he graciously

meant might be applied to all others of the old testament saints; who like Abraham, beheld "the day of Christ afar off, rejoiced and was glad." And how it raiseth up subject of delight in contemplating the portrait of Nehemiah, to consider him while his hands were employed in piling up the stones of the earth, around the beloved city, his soul was acting faith upon him, on whom is built the heavenly Jerusalem. When the Holy Ghost unlocks the cabinet of his own divine scriptures, and gives us his own notes and comments upon the inspired writings of his servants, we can then see clearly that as the deliverance by Moses, in bringing out the Lord's people from Egypt, set forth an higher deliverance by the Lord Jesus Christ from sin, death and hell; so Nehemiah, building the wall of Jerusalem shadowed forth the heavenly Jerusalem, and his almighty work, on whom both the foundation and walls rest; and his people as lively stones in him, "are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

But I have trespassed on the indulgence of the reader. I proposed when I entered on this portrait, to sketch but some few of the more prominent features in a way of etching of this wonderful man; and I find on looking over what I have drawn, that it forms nearly a full length painting. In closing the whole therefore, I would only add to the drapery, what may be supposed ought not to be omitted, namely, that the finishing of the wall, while it rejoiced the Lord's people, put the enemy to the blush, and established the reputation of Nehemiah beyond all further attempts to malign. The wall took but fifty and two days in the building; and yet this great Tirshatha, continued twelve years in office. We find in his memoirs that he returned to Shushan, and again obtained leave from the king to go back to his government at Jerusalem, chap. xiii. 6, 7. His history, (as the book of Nehemiah relates, to

which I refer,) was filled in with usefulness; and such a man, with so much grace, could not have lived among the people of God a single day without being a blessing. Like the beneficent luminary of the firmament, his genial influences failed not to enlighten and warm all on whom he shone.

One view more by way of close. I would fain persuade myself that I do not err, in what I am going to observe, in the contemplation of Nehemiah; but if it be an error the Lord pardon it. As we know from an authority, not to be questioned, that the ministry of God the Holy Ghost, hath but one object, namely, to glorify the Lord Jesus; I venture to behold, in all the characters the blessed Spirit hath delineated of his chosen throughout the whole bible, more or less, somewhat that might lead the Lord's people to him; our most glorious Christ is the centre of their system. As stars of brighter or less splendour they shine all from him; all their life, and light, and lustre, are derived by their union with him. When we read therefore, "that holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost the conclusion is undeniable, they were led by his Almighty teachings to speak of him. And we cannot have an higher testimony, neither do we need an higher, in a life of faith, till we come to open vision, than that an unction from him who taught them to speak of Christ, accompanieth what we read of them, or hear from them, concerning Christ; that Christ who is our contemplation and delight was their's also. The Lord the Holy Ghost so spread the savour of Christ from the history of his servant that we have been looking at, as to confirm his own gracious design in the recording of it; that "seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses; we may lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith! Amen."

VISITS

TO AND

FROM JESUS,

UPON THE MOST INTERESTING OCCASIONS,

AND IN THE

MOST HALLOWED MOMENTS OF LIFE.

VISITS TO AND FROM JESUS.

INTRODUCTORY.

I HAVE often thought that the nearness and dearness of connection, into which the Son of God hath condescended to put himself to our nature, for the vast purposes of Jehovah's grace must have been intended to open peculiar sources of enjoyment to his people. Surely, (I have said to myself as I have pondered the subject) if the Lord Jesus, from the great love wherewith he hath loved us, hath come home to his church in an union so very tender and endearing, was it not that he might make himself known unto his people under all those several relations in which he stands connected with them? And is there not, in the very nature of union, the manhood with the Godhead, a special, peculiar, and personal provision made for all such purposes?

And I have said (as I have further ruminated the subject) wherefore, but for designs so gracious, is it so frequently intimated in scripture that the Lord will come and visit his people? Is it not Jesus himself which thus speaketh, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you; yet a little while and the world seeth me no more, but ye see me; because I live, ye shall live also," John xiv. 18, 19. And, on the other hand, what are all those earnest expressions of the church for the coming of Jesus which we every where

meet with in the word of God, but so many proofs in confirmation of the same? Do they not convey the sense the people of God possess in the assurances of Jesus' promises, that he stands at the door of their hearts and knocks for entrance, "that he may come in and sup with them, and they with him?" Rev. iii. 20. And are not these so many testimonies that Jesus doth and will make himself known to his people in a way and manner different to what he doth to the world? Nay, are not all Christ's redeemed ones supposed to be continually on the look out, like the prophet on his watch-tower, to wait and see when the Lord comes; and "when he comes what they shall answer him?" Habak. ii. 1.

And, in the further confirmation of a matter so very sweet and interesting, may it not also be remarked, that it is the Son of God, and him only, which hath united into one person God and man. For neither the person of the Father, nor the person of the Holy Ghost have taken into union our nature, or formed such an alliance with that nature, as hath the person of God the Son. And although the whole three persons in the Godhead have loved the church with equal love, and engaged in covenant engagements to the accomplishment of the whole purposes relating to the welfare of the church, with equal regard; and we are taught to ascribe equal glory and praise to the holy and undivided Three in One for their joint acts of grace towards the church, yet such is the personal union of the Son of God with our nature, that all access to the throne of grace is in him, and by him, and through him; "he is the way, and the truth, and the life;" all approaches now in grace, and all the manifestations hereafter in glory will be in him, and through him, and from him, "by whom are all things, and we by him!" 1 Cor. viii. 6.

And surely there is a certain somewhat in proof of these things, which every child of God when regene-

rated by the Holy Ghost feels in contemplating Christ, as Christ ; that is, God manifested in substance of our flesh. We find a greater confidence in approaching him ; we can and do go to him as one in our own nature ; one who knows our feelings by his own. And although in all our drawings nigh to the person of Christ, we would not, yea, we dare not lose sight of him as God, yet we feel a blessedness in connecting with that view, that he is also man. And from the union of both, it is we find that sweet and precious suitableness of character in our Lord Jesus Christ, which endears his person to our affection in a way and manner as none other can. Hence, in every approach, when grace is in lively exercise, the renewed soul finds a certain indescribable blessedness, and a "joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Moreover, the gracious and endearing offices Jesus hath entered into and engaged for his people, tend to increase those feelings the more. He is personally and peculiarly so, as none other can be, the head and husband, the high priest and surety of his body the church. I do not find any warrant in the word of God to look up either to the person of the Father or to the person of the Holy Ghost in those characters ; but I can and do (when grace enables me) look up to Jesus in every one of them, and similar ones in his person and office, and find a blessedness in them, inexpressibly sweet and refreshing. And is it not then from hence a just conclusion, that if the Son of God condescends to take into himself a portion of our nature, and reveals himself to his people in so personal a manner in that nature, is it not the intention that they shall know him in all, and enjoy him in all? If Jesus be not ashamed to call them brethren, shall they be ashamed to call him brother?

I know not whether the reader enters into the perfect apprehension of my meaning; I wish to be clearly understood in a matter of so much importance. Me-

thinks I would have no child of God uninformed herein. Let me state the subject yet a little further.

All our mercies are founded in the everlasting love of God in Christ. The very being of the church, and the well being of the church is in Christ. Christ himself, (that is, God and man in one person) is the one glorious object of delight, for the infinite mind of Jehovah, in his Trinity of Persons, to behold with unceasing complacency, from one eternity to another. I should not err if I were to say, from the authority of scripture, that this glorious person, Christ, was constituted and ordained for the express purpose, that Jehovah might behold himself, with all his perfections of Godhead, and delight in him for ever. This was the first design for which the Son of God took into union with himself manhood, and an object of infinitely higher moment than all things belonging to the church. The church was formed for Christ; and not Christ for the church. Gen. ii. 18. John xv. 16. In this one glorious person all glory centers. Hence Christ, as God and man in one, is said to be "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person!" Hence, also it is said, that "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;" and the church is complete in him. So that the personal glory of Christ, is the first, and last, and highest object in the divine mind.

From hence we go on to another grand point, namely, that as all our mercies are founded in the everlasting love of God in his Trinity of Persons, and are formed in Christ, come to us from Christ, and are enjoyed from our union with Christ; so all revelation can only be made through Christ; for there could have been no possibility of the smallest communion with God in his nature and essence, but in and through him. "No man hath seen God at any time! but the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he

hath declared him," John i. 18. that is, the Son of God assuming our nature, and in that nature forming a medium of communication, hath come forth from the invisibility of Jehovah to make known the mind and will of God. He is himself the visible Jehovah, God made visible through the medium of the manhood, according to that scripture, "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," that is, personally. Colos. ii. 9. Hence Christ, as God-man, is the *decur-sus et recursus, gratiarum*; that is, the channel of all communication: for all streams of mercy flow from God, and all returns of praise flow to God in and through him.

While, then, all blessings are unceasingly dispensing to the church, here in grace, and above in glory, in and through the Lord Jesus Christ; surely it must form one of the highest sources of enjoyment, as well as give the finishing relish to the whole, to eye him from whom they are received, and through whom they come. That union of nature Christ hath with his church, and through whom, be the mercy what it may, it comes to his church, cannot fail to give a double sweetness to it. We receive it personally from Jesus. He is one in our own nature. And the mercy is so peculiarly his to impart, as none but Jesus can impart; so especially the act of his, as God and man to give, as he only who is possessed of both natures can give. So that when at any time the Lord Jesus is making known these love-tokens to any of his people, they may know them, and receive them, and enjoy them as his. The gift is the joint act of both natures in one person. It is the divine love manifested through the medium of human nature, and human love rendered infinitely great and blessed from its union with the divine. His Godhead gives a divine property to all that he bestows; and his manhood, an human quality, so as to assimilate

in some measure the blessings he imparts to the nature of those to whom he imparts them; and by both, all become so peculiarly his, and so personally communicable only by himself, as no other could be competent to perform. And while all and every one of them bring with them the fullest love-tokens whose they are, and from whom they come, they manifest no less the pleasure of Jesus in bestowing them on his people, who are "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones."

If I have been happy enough to explain myself on this most interesting subject, and in agreement to divine truth, I need not attempt by any form of words, to observe further the great blessedness which must be for ever opening to the souls of the Lord's people who live in the constant enjoyment of it. Surely to know the Lord Jesus in this personal apprehension of him, cannot fail of becoming in itself a source of unspeakable delight. And when that knowledge is brought into daily, yea, sometimes hourly enjoyment, nothing this side heaven can be equally blessed. This is what John calls fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ," 1 John i. 3.

It is under the conviction of these things that I have ventured to intrude one labour more of mine, in this little work, upon the church of Christ. Hastening fast as I now am to the close of life, these intrusions will soon be over. I see enough to lament in the imperfections of many of those writings of mine gone before, and more especially in my earlier productions, and which I pray the Lord to pardon. The present volume is, I hope, the result of a more ripened judgment. And though conscious as I am that many *errata* will be found in it, yet I rather wished to send it forth as it is, than not send it at all. If the Lord, the gracious Head of his church, shall deign to smile upon it, so as to make it in the smallest degree useful to one of his little ones

which believe in him, and to make the savour of his name precious by it, I shall find abundant cause to bless him for his mercy.

I beg, however, it may be perfectly understood, (though I should hardly think it necessary to make the observation) that the very idea of visits to and from Jesus, must be supposed to imply the knowledge of and acquaintance with Jesus. For even in the common circumstances of life, men do not visit those to whom they are unknown, and with whom they are unacquainted. Unbidden, uninvited visitors, and more especially if their sentiments and manners differ from our own, can expect no welcome; yea, there could be no pleasure in such society. To whom Jesus is unknown, he cannot be beloved. And where there is no love, there will be no real fellowship. It is the world's ignorance of him, which is the cause of all the world's sorrow. But where there is a oneness of heart and affection between Jesus and the soul, if what he loves we love, and what he hates we hate; if his Father be our Father, and his people our people; this sameness of mind will carry with it a sameness of affection, and we shall take part in all that belongs to him. The language of our hearts will go forth in words like those of Ruth to Naomi, when she said, "intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee, for whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me," Ruth i. 16, 17.

And as the church now below will shortly join the church which is above, and in the mean time the interests, connections, and rights of both, are one and the same; all one in him, and all by him, who is the glorious head of his whole body the church; it must form a very blessed part of church communion, to keep

up and maintain, by every possible means the Lord affords, an intercourse while here upon earth with the great objects of heaven. Ere long we hope eternally to dwell with the blessed society of that happy country. Shortly we shall see the King in his beauty, face to face, and know even as we are known. And what so sweet as now by anticipation to realize by faith, what then will be manifested in open vision? Visits to and from Jesus will blessedly tend to make familiar the knowledge of Jesus. And when death comes and takes away every intervening object to the sight of Jesus, our disembodied spirits will then behold him, with whom by faith we have been daily accustomed to converse, and a fulness of joy will break in upon the soul. It was blessedly said by an old disciple of this kind, when dying, "I shall change my place (said he) but not my company." And we have it upon record of one still higher taught, who in the near prospect of Jesus in glory, cried out, "as for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness, I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness," Ps. xvii. 15.

I will detain the reader no longer by way of introduction, than only to add a prayer to Him, the welfare of whose church (if I know any thing of my own heart) I desire above all things to seek; that his blessing may go before and follow after this humble work, and cause the sweet savour of Jesus' name from its ministry, to be spread in the church upon earth, as the Lord's presence becomes the everlasting perfume of the whole church in heaven. Precious, precious Lord Jesus! I would say, realize in the daily, hourly visits of thy grace, all the sweet love-tokens of thy favour to thy people. Cause thereby in my poor soul, and in the souls of all thy redeemed, an increasing acquaintance with thee, and an increasing desire after thee. And let the daily visits of my Lord upon earth make me long for the hour when my God will come to take me home to the

everlasting enjoyment of himself in heaven. And oh! when the chariot wheels of Jesus are heard approaching, and that well known voice, though never so sweetly and loudly heard before, shall be heard once more through all the chambers of my soul, "the master is come, and calleth for thee!" Oh! then for faith's last act in the strength of the Lord, to go forth in the disembodied spirit to meet "the Lord in the air, and so for ever to be with the Lord." Surely, saith Jesus, I come quickly! Amen, may my soul answer, even so come Lord Jesus!

A MORNING VISIT FROM JESUS.

It was in a moment of sweet spiritual enjoyment, when grace was in lively exercise, that the church exclaimed,—“it is the voice of my beloved! behold he cometh.”

How is the voice of Jesus discernible? There must be a certain somewhat by which it is known from every other. Jesus saith, “my sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me!” John x. 27. Indeed, the love calls of Jesus cannot be mistaken. When a prince condescends to visit any of his poor subjects, the thing is soon known by the train of servants which he brings with him. And when the Lord Jesus comes to the habitations of his redeemed ones, the graces which follow him soon manifest Jehovah-shammah, the Lord is there, Ezek. xlviii. 35.

Let the reader ascertain this point by his own standard. He that knows the Lord can be no stranger to the visits of the Lord. Sometimes he comes in a word of power: and then how easily discoverable is his presence? He opens our heart as he opened the heart of Lydia, to attend to the things spoken, Acts xvi. 14. “I shall never forget thy precepts,” said one of old.

Wherefore? "Because, said he, with them thou hast quickened me," Ps. cxix. 93. Sometimes he comes in a word of consolation. And what refreshments do the Lord's people then find, bearing them up under heavy pressures? What one saint of God once said, every saint of God can always say, "in the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul," Ps. xciv. 19. It must be a matter clearly ascertainable when Jesus comes to make known his love, and the manifestations of his favour, by the fragrancy of his person; for while he gives forth his grace, he quickens our souls to the enjoyment of him; and while the King sitteth at his table, the spikenard of faith will send forth the smell thereof, Song i. 12. There will always be a corresponding affection of the soul towards the bountiful Giver of renewed mercies: his love quickens ours. The Holy Ghost works a meetness in the heart, from the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Hence in whatever form Jesus manifests himself, whether in ordinances or providences; whether in the word, or without the word; the Lord comes in a way and manner not to be mistaken. He makes such a blessed discovery of himself, that like the beloved disciple at the sea of Tiberias, the soul cries out, "it is the Lord!" John xxi. 1, 7. And sometimes in the discovery the soul is melted and lays low in the dust before him. And sometimes we are lifted up as in the mount of transfiguration, being brought into the very suburbs of heaven! Doth my reader know any thing of these soul transactions?

I am well aware that it is the Lord himself which is the speaker in that memorable scripture, when as Jehovah's servant in the redemption work for his church, during the time state of her being, he said, "he wakeneth morning by morning, he waketh mine ear to hear as the learned." And what follows in the succeeding verse could be spoken by no other. See

Isaiah l. 4, 5, 6. But sure I am, that since I knew the Lord, I have found the sweetness and blessedness of those words as if personally my own. And wherefore should it not be so, when it be considered the interest the church takes in all that belongs to her Lord, from her oneness and union with him? "All things are your's, the Holy Ghost hath said, if ye are Christ's," 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23.

I am no stranger to the day-dawn visits of Jesus. Many a morning before the world is up have I found cause to say, "he wakeneth morning by morning." Nay, I think I should not err were I to add, that sometimes, and not unfrequently, the manifestations of my Lord's presence have been so striking in the first moments of recollection, as if called from sleep for the express purpose of communion. Was it not thus with the church of old? Song v. 2. And may it not be so with the church now?

And wherefore should it be thought incredible? Did not the Lord Jesus when upon earth teach his people to expect visits from him after he was returned to heaven? Did he not almost in the moment of his departure, when in his last conference with his disciples, and as he stood upon the threshold of the invisible world, did he not say, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you?" And again, in the very moment of his ascension, as if the promise should be always kept alive in his church and among his people, were not his last words, "Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world?" John xiv. 18. Matt. xxviii. 20. And what are we to conclude from these repeated assurances, but that Jesus doth "water his church every moment," and that "he keepeth her night and day lest any hurt her?" Isaiah xxvii. 2, 3. Shall not the Amen, the faithful witness, be true to his promise? Will he not confirm his word unto his ser-

vants, "wherein he hath caused them to hope?" Ps. cxix. 49.

Besides, is the thing in itself improbable? Can the performance of it be attended with any difficulty to the Almighty Promiser? "If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it be also marvellous in mine eyes, saith the Lord of Hosts?" Zech. viii. 6. Shall not he who hath made our spiritual senses what they are, have access to the spirits which he hath made at all times, and upon all occasions, and make such communications of himself as he shall please; so as to make the highly favoured objects of his bounty sensible of that presence by his love, and communicate happiness to them by that favour?

May not the Lord Jesus by his word, by his providences, by the fulfilment of his promises in a remarkable way and manner; yea, without the medium of either, if it seemeth good in his sight, afford such manifestations of himself as shall be sufficient to carry conviction to the heart of his redeemed, that it is Jesus who is thus gracious; while none but the objects of his love in those visits are at all conscious of such spiritual transactions? May not the head and husband of his people do all these things, and infinitely more, and yet accomplish the whole in such a way and manner, as shall cause no disturbance to their animal frame, or discompose the mind from the nature of the mercy? Are there any difficulties in the plan to thwart the Lord in his operations? Nay, are we not taught to expect the accomplishment of covenant blessings by a process unusual, and altogether different from the Lord's dealings with the world? John xiv. 22. "Therefore (saith the Lord) my people shall know my name; therefore they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak, behold it is I!" Isa. lii. 6. How

sweetly hath the church of old expressed her apprehension of the Lord's visits? "My beloved, (said she) behold! he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the windows, shewing himself through the lattice!" Song ii. 9. And were the old testament saints made sensible of such visits from the Lord, and continually refreshed by them; and can it be supposed that new testament believers know them not? Where then in this case, would be the blessedness of Jesus coming openly into our world, being made flesh and tabernacling among us? How should the church enter into the enjoyment of these disciples who beheld his glory, "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth?" John i. 14. Precious Head and Husband of thy church and people! Do I not know to thy praise and my joy, somewhat of those love-visits of my Lord? Hast thou not often made my heart to burn within me, when thou hast been talking with me by the way, opening to my apprehension the scriptures, and making thyself known unto me "in breaking of bread and of prayer?" Luke xxiv. 30—32. What! though mine eyes have been holden as those disciples in their way to Emmaus were, so as not immediately to know thee, yet have I not upon numberless occasions of the kind, been as conscious of thy presence as if I had seen thee? Have not my thoughts outrun the night-watches, that I might meditate on thy word? And oft before the dawn of day, hath not my soul made me or ever I was aware, "like the chariot of Aminadab?" Song vi. 12.

And shall an infidel tempt me to call these things in question? Will he tell me that these are only the effects of imagination? What! can it be the effect of the imagination, when my soul hath been often nourished and upheld by the spiritual strength imparted upon those occasions, that, like the prophet, I have gone many a day in spiritual strength from such divine

support, as he did in bodily sustenance in the wilderness? 1 Kings xix. 8. Is it indeed possible for the imagination to make things real which have no existence? Can it render that substantially blessed which never had being? And wherefore should the subject be questionable? Is it necessary upon every occasion in common life, that in order to prove real existence objects must be seen? If so, how is it, that after a refreshing shower of rain in the close of a warm day of sunshine, the fragrancy of the plants regale our senses with more than ordinary strength; and yet the cause, though known, doth not appear? The sun's warmth after the shower's falling, volatilize the odours of the flower, we know to be the cause; but the vapour is not discernible, though the whole atmosphere is impregnated with its sweetness.

Let the subject be considered in another point of view, and judge by analogy. Is it not one of the plainest revelations of scripture, that "angels are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who are the heirs of salvation?" Heb. i. 14. And are we not as positively assured, that evil spirits tempt mankind to sin? 1 Pet. v. 8. But in both instances our apprehensions are perfectly unconscious of the presence of either, but from their effects. Doth any man, however, call in question their reality, because they are not bodily discoverable?

The word of God which declares their existence, doth as graciously assign the cause of their invisibility. Spiritual objects can only be seen by spiritual apprehension. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned," 1 Cor. ii. 14. If it became necessary for spiritual beings to make themselves visible, as hath, perhaps, sometimes been the case, this may have been done, as is supposed, by the assumption of tangible substance, in a body like our own, and which

by the condensation of the air may render the object visible. And it is possible that many of the appearances which we read of under the old testament dispensation concerning supernatural beings were of this kind. But without this medium, or somewhat like it of making visible, spiritual objects cannot be discernible, unless to spiritual objects like themselves. Nevertheless, though unseen, the reality of their presence cannot be doubted. Effects prove causes. And sceptical up to all the possibilities of unbelief, must be that man that would call in question their existence or agency, merely because they become not the object of bodily sight.

I pause for the moment to remark, what a wonderful effect must take place in the circumstances of every individual of mankind at death? In that moment the spirit no longer cased in flesh, goes forth from the body. Immediately is opened to his view the spiritual objects of the invisible world. What an awful sight to him that dies in his sins? John viii. 21—24. How glorious a prospect, and what unspeakable felicity is unfolded to him that dies in the Lord? Rev. xiv. 13.

But to return. How often have the hallowed moments of the morning, and before the world's tide had broken in upon me, been made blessed by the visits of the Lord Jesus? Conscious that no eye saw me but his, and that no ear could know what passed between my Lord and his poor pensioner, I have found freedom to unbosom myself to him, and to tell him what I could not have communicated to the nearest and dearest earthly friend. And as these seasons of conversation have been often formed without any mediums, either of the word of God or of the ordinances of God; so have they induced an acquaintance which no books can teach, and which none but the Holy Ghost could bring about to lead the soul into a personal knowledge and

enjoyment of Jesus. And what is this but a confirmation of scripture, which in every part declares the oneness and union between Christ and his people? Here is found proof of a relationship, which leaves at an infinite distance every other. Here we enter into a real heartfelt enjoyment of that precious assurance given by the Holy Ghost, that "we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones," Eph. v. 30.

I think I may truly say, that I know, and can, and do appreciate, all the affinities of nature, with all the charities of life, as high as any man. But there is a certain somewhat in our relationship to Jesus, which beggars every other. Here is a connection of another kind. This is an union indeed, a oneness of nature; and one in which the death of the body makes no separation. The brittleness of all other ties (to say nothing worse of them) renders the whole less valuable, than what we are apt to rate them. And if it were not rather foreign to my present purpose, I think I might without much difficulty shew, that our attachments in nature here below, are only truly formed, when formed in grace. We can only be said to love the persons of our friends, neither do we in truth love them any further, than as we love them in Jesus. But I wave in this place all observations on this subject. I blush not, however, to say, that as far as relates to myself in my connections below, I would pray for grace to form my standard of earthly affection to earthly alliance, by the standard of Levi: "who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children." And God the Holy Ghost assigns the reason. "Because they have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant," Deut. xxxiii. 9. Precious Lord Jesus! the relations of thy people in the other world, will be as thine were in this; "whosoever

shall have done the will of our Father which is in heaven, the same will be our brother, and sister, and mother," John vi. 28, 29. Matt. xii. 50.

And wherefore doth Jesus vouchsafe these visits to his people, but to work in them, now, an acquaintance with his person, that hereafter they may be the better prepared to enjoy him in glory. The very end of our being is this: to know and to enjoy the person of Christ. This is a much higher object than any thing relating to our own glory. God in his Trinity of Persons, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, ordained Christ as Christ, (that is, God and man in one person) for the unceasing love and delight of the church; more than for any other purpose of their own felicity. For as the man, God's fellow, is the everlasting object of God's love and delight; so the very being and ordination of the church, in the highest possible attainments of happiness in heaven is, (as Jesus when on earth said himself) to be with Jesus, and to behold the glory given to him as God and Man mediator, Zech. xiii. 7. Isa. xlii. 1. John xvii. 24. Hence our very being, and well being, and our eternity of being, in the first and ultimate design of it, is to the knowledge and love of God in Christ. And all the visits of Jesus is to bring his redeemed more and more into an acquaintance with his person here, until he brings them all home to the everlasting enjoyment of his presence in glory. Hence those gracious words, "Father, I will, that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father! the world hath not known thee; but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me: and I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them!" John xvii. 24, 25, 26.

Come then, my honoured Lord, and day by day grant me the renewed visits of thy love. Draw back the curtains of my heart, and bid my soul good morrow! Be thou, "as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth; even a morning without clouds," 2 Sam. xxiii. 4. And in fresh discoveries of thyself, keep my soul alive, in the consciousness and enjoyment of thy divine presence, until that blessed morning dawn, which have no night, "whose sun shall no more go down, neither the moon withdraw herself; but the Lord himself shall be my everlasting light, and my God my glory!" Isa. lx. 19, 20.

AN EVENING VISIT TO JESUS.

There is a certain somewhat in the stillness of the evening, which seems to invite the renewed soul to communion with the Lord. The child of God, in union with Jesus, cannot but feel a longing for some fresh communication from Jesus. And it is on this account that ordinances, in the close of the day, have a peculiar blessedness in them. Indeed, the imagination can hardly form to itself a sight more lovely than that of the Lord's people, (and especially among the labouring part of them), meeting together after the toils of the day, to lay down all their worldly concerns at the door of the Lord's house, and entering in, to seek the Lord's face, in the Lord's strength, in sweet communion. An old testament saint hath blessedly expressed the sense of this, when he said, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that I will seek after; even that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple," Ps. xxvii. 4. But it is not the privilege of many of the Lord's people, daily to go up to the house of the Lord, and much less to dwell

there. It is their mercy, when an evening in the week is afforded them, for visiting the Lord in the beauty of his holiness. And, though it be but fragments of the day, in a toilsome and laborious life; yet it is blessed to gather those fragments of time, when, from the pressing wants of the body, no more can be gathered, and to consecrate them to the Lord.

But where public ordinances are not attainable, private visits to Jesus are. Yea, the one doth not supersede the necessity of the other; both mutually help and promote each other; and the most busy life may find a small portion of time for a visit to Jesus. He whose unwearied exercises through the day, admitted of no remission from his public ministry, sought the hours of the night, for the enjoyment of personal communion with his Father. We read that, when Jesus "had sent the multitude away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray; and continued all night in prayer to God." Precious example! however to be unequalled by his people.

But both public and private ordinances, and private visits to Jesus, unless accompanied with the sweet savour of Jesus, are alike unprofitable. And shall I be forgiven when I say from whence that leanness and poverty of soul, which, for the most part marks the features of the present day of the church, but to the want of this unction of the Spirit? Whence, amidst a greater fulness of the means of grace, than perhaps ever was known since the reformation, there is a less end of attainment? Is it not because we rest satisfied with having the form of godliness, but are destitute of the power thereof? How shall that man, even though quickened into the new and spiritual life, go otherwise than in leanness of soul, who feed not, day by day, on the bread of life? Can outward services supply the want of inward personal communion? and is it not too sad a truth, that many, yea, very many, and

even of those who belong to the Lord, go to visit Jesus in ordinances, as the disciples did at the sepulchre, and find it all true what is said of Jesus, as these did, "but Him they see not," Luke xxiv. 24.

It was very blessedly said by one of the Lord's people, that 'he found it good to give both hand and heart anew to Jesus every night and morning.' And very sure it is, that the oftener this is done, the more acquainted we shall be. He that is most with Jesus, will be most like Jesus: shyness and distance will be induced by absence: the longer we stay away from court, the less inclination we shall find to go there. And if the pardon office be unvisited by us in the morning, it must be Jesu's grace, not our seeking, if we hear the love calls of Jesus in the evening. But if, on the contrary, the Holy Ghost calls up the soul to communion, so that we can and do say, with one of old, "evening, and morning, and at noon-day will I pray, O Lord! and thou shalt hear my voice;" this will be to keep up an holy intimacy of continual refreshment. Every day and every night visit will prepare the soul for our last visit on earth, till Jesus comes to take home the soul, to be with him for ever in heaven; and the soul accustomed to meet Jesus *now*, will rejoice to meet Jesus *then*. There will be no shrinking back, as carnal men shrink back from death, because they know not the Lord; but long affection formed in life, will give a blessedness in death. And when the moment comes, and He whom we have long known, long loved, and long enjoyed, in the spiritual visits of grace, will then open to our ravished view, in the manifestation of his glory; and then the language of our heart will be similar to the church of old, and we shall say, "Lo! this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us. This is the Lord! we have waited for him; we will be glad, and rejoice in his salvation." Isaiah xxv. 9.

What saith the reader to these things? Doth he

know enough of the Lord Jesus, in a personal apprehension of Him, to form the same conclusion? Yes! "if so be he hath tasted (as the apostle expresseth it) that the Lord is gracious." Then, like him, it will follow, "to whom coming," 1 Pet. ii. 3, 4. Coming implies freedom, acquaintance, familiarity; and coming to Jesus doth not mean one single act of faith, but many; yea, continual acts of faith, and in the most lively exercise. The Holy Ghost hath very sweetly expressed this when he saith, that our being justified by faith, and having peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, "we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God," Rom. v. 12. If there be a corresponding affection of the reader's heart with mine, on this subject, from the same source of grace and mercy, then will he enter into an apprehension of my meaning; and, like musical instruments, whose strings are tuned in the same key, the renewed chords of our heart will be in unison together, and vibrate to each other in the same harmony of sound. I wish to provoke the reader to this, in directing his attention to the subject, until that we both feel the constraining influence of that call to the church, and say, "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together!" Psalm xxxiv. 3.

But I am now going in the visit of the evening to Jesus; how, and in what preparation of heart shall I go to Jesus? nay, there can be but one way, namely, in himself; for he hath said, "I am the way," John xiv. 6. And it is indeed a very blessed and an approved way, when he who first quickened the soul *in* Jesus, leads the soul *to* Jesus: there can be no acting faith *upon* Christ, but *from* Christ. The life of the soul, like the life of the body, is preserved, and maintained, and kept in health from the same source, and by renewed communications from what first gave life; for, as the body by respiration is upheld, so the soul hath her spi-

ritual renewings day by day. He who saith, "I will water her every moment, lest any hurt her, no less gives breath every moment, to preserve life in the soul, lest she languish and die. Isaiah xxvii. 3. There is a beautiful analogy between nature and grace in this particular: spiritual life, like animal life, is from communications. As the life of the body, when received, is preserved by the continual supplies of air and food, so the life of the soul when quickened in Christ, lives upon Christ, who is both the spirit of life, and the bread of life; and, as Jesus himself hath said, "he that eateth me, even he shall live by me," John vi. 37. Hence we read concerning the church of old, "They did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ." 1 Cor. x. 3, 4.

Is the reader conscious of these things? then will he be aware, that the only preparation for a visit *to* Jesus, must first come *from* Jesus. "Draw me, (said the church) we will run after thee! The King hath brought me into his chambers," Song i. 4. It is truly blessed to watch and observe the gracious influences of the Spirit, in these leadings to the Lord. First, the Holy Ghost awakens a sense of want in the soul, in desires *after* Jesus; then, directs to the view *of* Jesus: next, displays the fulness and suitability *in* Jesus; then, convinceth the heart of the love and grace to be expected *from* Jesus; and, lastly, leads to an open communication *with* Jesus. So that, while the Holy Ghost directs the goings forth of the soul *after* Jesus, he is bringing home all suited supplies *from* Jesus; "and of his fulness do we all receive, and grace for grace."

I am well aware, that such views are not in the creed of many modern professors; the person of Christ, and his finished salvation, are not made what God hath made them, the Alpha and Omega of all blessedness to

the church. The great mass of the people, yea, even of some among them from whom better things might have been expected, are looking for comfort more from some supposed work wrought *in* them, than from that complete work wrought out by the Lord Jesus *for* them. Their calculation of the grace in which they stand, is founded in what they *feel*, and not in what Christ *is*. Instead of living upon Christ, and resting upon Christ, as the sole cause of acceptance, they form the standard of their daily joy in what they call their experiences. Hence, like the tide, as this riseth or falleth, so do their affections ebb or flow with it. It was the mercy of God to the old testament saints, that their life in God was subject to no such changes; as they lived, so they died, in believing views of Christ, and in the enjoyment of that everlasting covenant, "ordered in all things and sure." And it is the mercy of God to new testament believers, that their record, which we have handed down to us, is to this assurance by the Holy Ghost. For, had their faith been founded upon the modern principles of experiences, instead of being to the church in all ages, what they now are, "a cloud of witnesses" to the truth as it is in Jesus, they would have been no other than as so many "pillars of salt," as was the wife of Lot.

I am very willing to grant every thing that need be granted, in a secondary and subordinate sense, as *effects* arising from the *cause*, to the inward testimonies of the renewed life. They are, indeed, precious fruits of the Spirit, when the Lord the Holy Ghost giveth them to us richly to enjoy. It is blessed, yea, very blessed, when, like the church of old, we sit down in the garden of God, under Christ's shadow, "with great delight, and his fruit is sweet to our taste." The child of God, in such seasons, hath renewed manifestations of the Spirit's witness to his spirit, of his child-like character, and "sets to his seal that God is true." But, while

these enjoyments are valuable as effects, they cease to be so if at any time we make use of them as the *cause*, or partly cause; it is to esteem them more than *fruits*, if we make them *part saviours*; and this we certainly do, however unintentional it may be, when we put them in the place of Christ, or when we join them *with* Christ, or feel more confidence therefrom in going to Christ. It is the sole honour of Christ, (and a mighty honour it is, of which the Lord cannot but be jealous) that Christ is the one, and only one cause of all blessedness to his people. "It hath pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." Hence the church derives all *from* Christ, and centers all *in* Christ. "All my springs (said one of old) are in thee." But, if I look to Jesus through mediums and experiences, making what I feel so many mediators for access, and find confidence more or less as I feel comfort in those things, nothing can be more evident, than that I am looking to Jesus but in part; I am making the *fruit* of faith part saviour with the great *object* of faith; and, by so much, I pervert the very graces of the Holy Ghost, which are given to lead the child of God empty and bare to Christ, in using them, as in some supposed provision for acceptance *with* Christ; and thus I rob Jesus of his glory, and my soul of her happiness.

I hope that I explain myself on this most interesting point: it may not be considered by some, (indeed, in the present day of the church, experience proves that it is not) as important as it really is. But the closer the subject is attended to, the more it ariseth in magnitude to the proof of its necessity. Let me add an observation or two more upon it.

The glorious work which the Son of God, in our nature, hath wrought, in "putting away sin by the sacrifice of himself, was, and is solely his own act. It is expressly said, that "of the people there was none with him"—"His own arm brought salvation unto him."

Hence, like grace, which, in its own nature and essence, is among the incommunicable attributes of God, this work of the Lord Christ is in itself incommunicable. But the effects of grace, like the effects of any other perfection of God are communicable; and such are the effects of Christ's sacrifice and righteousness to his people. The work is solely his—the blessed consequences are our's! And God the Holy Ghost, as if to state and settle this important point, hath in a short, but most decided manner, shewn the church the vast differences between *cause* and *effect*: He calls the one "the grace of God," and the other, "the gift by grace." "If (saith the Lord) through the offence of one, many be dead, much more *the grace of God*, and *the gift by grace*, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many," Romans v. 15. Here the matter is most plainly defined. *The grace of God*, as manifested in the death of Christ for salvation, was and is his incommunicable act, and the sole *cause* of it. *The gift by grace* is the *effect* coming to his people; and this, when given, is our's. Hence, therefore, our joy, our confidence, when rightly placed, ariseth not from the *effect*, but in the *cause*. Not from any supposed work wrought on our minds thereby, for these are but testimonies of the work, and not the work itself: our joy, our assurance, is *in the Lord*. And to this purport is that sweet prayer the Lord put into the mind of the apostle to offer for the church, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, (not in feeling) that ye may abound in hope, (not experiences) through the power of the Holy Ghost," Rom. xv. 13. "Christ is the hope of Israel, and the Saviour thereof! In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory." Jer. xiv. 8. Isa. xlv. 25.

Precious Lord Jesus! I am come to thee in my present visit, as empty and as poor as ever. My first

act of faith, and my last act of hope, are, and will be to the close of life, just the same. Yea, Lord, I am only learning more and more my nothingness. Indeed, indeed, thou dear Lord! I delight so to do; for by it I discover, more and more, thy fulness, suitableness, and all-sufficiency. And do I not hereby also learn that this is the cause from whence, my life being hid in thee, the life of grace is not extinguished? Surely Satan without, and corruption within, would long since have choked the incorruptible seed, but for thy quickening and renewing influences! Oh! what springs of grace must be for ever flowing from my Lord, to keep alive the tender bud! Now do I see, and feel, the blessedness of that scripture, "they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine." And wherefore, but because my Lord saith, "from me is thy fruit found?" Hosea xiv. 7, 8. Oh! how doth the very thought refresh my soul! Truly, Lord, it is blessed to come to thee—blessed to visit thee—blessed to receive of thee—blessed to live upon thee! And will not my God get glory by me, when my emptiness and want give occasion for the Lord to fill in his grace in me? Shall I not love his name in thus getting grace from him, while Jesus gets glory by me? Shall not the glory be his, while all the benefit is mine? Yes! yes! my person, my life, my safety, my happiness, my present peace, my everlasting joy; all, all, are in thee, and from thee, and by thee! "All my springs are in thee." Do any ask, where are my evening visits? to whom is my morning song directed? Tell them Jesus is the first, and the last, the Alpha and Omega of all my thoughts, affection, and desires. "In the morning, and evening, and at noon-day will I pray, and thou shalt hear my voice. Thou art my hiding-place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance! Selah." Psalm xxxii. 7.

DAILY VISITS TO THE PARDON OFFICE OF JESUS.

I have often thought, when passing by some of the public offices about the inns of court, and beholding the multitude waiting without at the gate, what a profitable lesson the child of God might gather from hence. How are those places thronged with petitioners! what eagerness and solicitude are pictured in every face! How long and unweariedly will they wait, from day to day, and still hope, amidst numberless disappointments; sometimes even frowns, and not unfrequently absolute refusals; yet, nevertheless, they hang on, and hold out, while the smallest probability remains that they shall at length get the smile of some great man in office! And of the few, the very few which succeed, compared to the great majority of applications which fail; to what doth their success tend? and who shall form the arithmetic of the disappointed? Who shall tell us of the secret groans, yea, curses, not loud, but deep, of the slighted at those levees, which attend, perhaps, the greater part of their life at this worldly chace, and are constantly thrown out into the back ground of disappointment!

Precious Lord Jesus! how opposed to all such courts of earthly pageantry is thy pardon office of heavenly condescension! Interest, intrigue, and power, are too often the necessary qualifications to obtain the favour of men; but to be friendless, poor, and miserable, under the deepest sense of undeservings, become the truest recommendations with my God! It is a fruitless attempt for a poor stranger to go to an earthly court, or to seek the favour of some great man in office, without an introduction: but the most forlorn state of nature needs no other recommendation to the heavenly court, than their sense of want; yea, the Lord is said to be "nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and will

save such as be of an humble spirit!" The high and mighty of this world carry themselves proudly towards those that are seeking any favours from them; and very often long silence, and a time of much suspense, go before their grants, even when, perhaps, from the first they intended them. But with "the High and Lofty One, who inhabiteth eternity, and whose name is Holy," his gracious manner of receiving petitioners at his throne, is the reverse; he saith himself, "It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear," Isaiah lxxv. 24. Men cannot go before princes and the great ones of the earth at all times; but for the most part they are appointed, and the hours for receiving and answering suits are limited. But it is not so with Him who is "Prince of the kings of the earth"—access to him is for ever; Jesus is always upon the throne, and his ear always open to the cries of his people; yea, it is sweetly said of him, that "he waits to be gracious," Isaiah xxx. 18. And the way not only to his throne, but to his heart, like the gates of that blessed city spoken of in scripture, stands everlastingly open, and is never shut, "day or night." Rev. xxi. 25.

Such then, being the vast superiority of an heavenly court to an earthly, it should seem to require no higher recommendation, to induce every poor distressed creature to go there, than what ariseth out of a conscious sense of his own need, and the assured welcome he will find. One might expect to see the pardon office of Jesus thronged with petitioners, and all hastening to a throne, whose very object is to give out mercy. And so it is, indeed, by every one who is brought acquainted with the plague of his own heart, and hath the smallest apprehensions of the immense compassions of Jesus; for the mercies there dispensing are in the daily, yea, the hourly necessities both of saint and sinner. The child of God renewed by grace, requires continually renewed acts of that grace, without which his best spiritual state

doth soon languish; and hence the Lord, speaking of his church, under the similitude of a vineyard, saith, "I will water it every moment," Isaiah xxvii. 2. And well is it for his redeemed that he doth; for though our souls do not always feel the momentary need, neither are we conscious, in ten thousand times ten thousand instances, of Christ's watering; yet, were it not that our "inward man is renewed day by day" by the Lord, our body of sin meeting with the temptations of Satan, and the world at large, would make sad waste in the church of God!

It was not without an eye to this, in the constant necessities of God's children, the apostle prayed for the church, that "grace, mercy, and peace might be multiplied," 1 Pet. i. 2. Jude 2. And certain it is, that grace, which is the fountain of all mercies in God's heart, is multiplied by the effect of it, in mercy and peace in our's: for as we multiply our offences, the acts of divine grace are multiplied in giving pardons. And while every truly regenerated child of God finds cause to be often looking back, and contemplating with holy joy that blessed hour when, from God the Holy Ghost quickening him to a new life in Christ, he was "forgiven all trespasses," Col. ii. 13. so doth he daily discover, in the circumstances of renewed errors in his walk of life, to be no less looking for the multiplications of grace in renewed pardons to renewed offences. Oh! how very precious in this view is the pardon office of the Lord Jesus!

Reader! have you duly considered these things? Hath the Lord the Spirit brought you into a daily acquaintance with the plague of your own heart? Hath he made you completely out of love with yourself, and all your own attainments? Yea, hath the Lord so fully done this, as sometimes to make it appear to your view as if there were growing imperfections in you? These are very humbling, but very profitable lessons of God's

teaching. It is by these, and in the higher department of Christ's school, that the Lord teacheth his people to profit, Isaiah xlviii. 16, 17. Ezek. xvi. 63. Moreover, while the Holy Ghost is thus bringing down every high look, and emptying our souls from vessel to vessel, he is hereby preparing for the exalting the Lord Jesus to our view, and for bringing him home to our hearts, and to form him there "the hope of glory." Doth my reader enter into an apprehension of these things? then will he apprehend also the blessedness of the mercy-seat and pardon office of the Lord Jesus, and the high privilege of going there. The Holy Ghost will have opened to his understanding the sweetness and graciousness of his own scripture: "Seeing that we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Hebrews iv. 14—16.

In whatever point of view we consider the pardon office of the Lord Jesus Christ, in every way, and by every argument, it is endeared to our affection. The very name of it—a *throne of grace*, carries with it every thing of blessedness. And as the first and great design for which it is appointed, is to open and keep open a constant communication between God and his church, through the mediation of Christ; so the Lord the Spirit, leading forth his people in those enditings of the heart in prayer, by which their requests are made known, and God the Father answering in mercy their petitions in the Son's name, most graciously shew the divine harmony in the administration.

But what I would particularly keep in view, as one of the most endearing circumstances of the mercy-seat,

is the character of Him who presides there. The Holy Ghost in the most affectionate manner teacheth the church that it is Christ, in his Mediator office; and as if the Lord the Spirit would impress this point in the strongest possible manner, on the minds of the people, he describes him as "the Lamb in the midst of the throne," Rev. vii. 17. thereby alluding to the glory of his personal nature, as God and man, and to the dignity of his office, as the centre of all sovereignty and power; both are sweet views, and when blended become unitedly great and blessed. The infinite glories of his person, and the infinite merits of his blood and righteousness, are very properly set forth under the character of a throne, from whence every thing of royalty comes forth; and the Lord Jesus being in the midst of it implies, that it is accessible in every direction.

But amidst the numberless glories of Christ's person, and the possession of all divine attributes which Christ hath to endear his mercy seat to all his people; there is one feature of character belonging to the Son of God in our nature, which comes home in such a warmth of affection to our tenderest feelings, as tends to make every other yet abundantly more blessed and gracious, namely, that his appointment to the office of our high priest was, that from his own feelings he might enter into the feelings of his people. It is this sweet feature of character that gives the finishing loveliness to the whole. And although the Son of God could not have been suited for the office of high priest had he not been God, (for all the divine perfections are necessary to furnish the never ending mercies he hath to impart) yet would not the divine nature alone, without being united to the human, have allowed that sympathy of heart which an high priest required, that "he might have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way, for that he himself is compassed with infirmity." He must feel, as well as know, what are

the exercises, and what will suit the cases of those he relieves. He must have a personal apprehension what support that is which will give succour to the tempted. And hence it is blessedly said of Jesus, "for in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted," Heb. ii. 18.

On this account, therefore, it becomes the most powerful encouragement to a child of God, under any depression of sorrow, heart straitenings, and infirmity of soul, to go to the mercy seat of Jesus, from the consideration that he is going to one of his own nature. That the Son of God knoweth what our frame is by his own. That it was on this very account he was made high priest, neither could he have been a suitable high priest without it. That neither was he sworn into this office for the greatness of his knowledge, or the mightiness of his power alone. These perfections were indeed essential to the office, neither could he have done without them. But these were not all. He was made high priest because he is Man as well as God, and therefore the immense compassions of his heart are suited to the immense necessities of his people. Very sweetly, and very blessedly, one of his servants was taught by the Holy Ghost to say all this, and much more to the church of him, when he said, "like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him, for he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust," Ps. ciii. 13, 14.

And is the pardon office of Jesus so constituted? Is the Lord who presides there so qualified, so suited to the wants of his people; so gracious that there needs no recommendation to his favour; so compassionate as to make all the cases of his people his own; and so tender as to enter by a fellow feeling into all their concerns? Then my soul, do thou constantly go, yea, invite all that know the plague of their own heart to go; and let us all go, for very sure it is, all his re-

deemed must succeed, for never will he send any empty away! but "the poor and the needy shall give praise to his name."

Let my daily, hourly visits, to the pardon office of my Lord, be always under these impressions; I go to receive, not to give; I go empty to be filled; and, like the beggar that goeth out of the morning to seek his daily alms, that literally hath nothing, so may God the Holy Ghost lead me, stripped of every thing of my own, to the highway of ordinances, and to the mercy-seat of Jesus, "to receive out of his fulness, and grace for grace."

And if my God will have, as he must have, all the glory of his bounties in bestowing them, not only without an eye to merit in the receiver, but in direct opposition to all the sins and unworthiness of his people; surely I am in every way suited for this princely clemency to get glory by me. Jesus shall have the whole praise, for he richly deserves it; and I am content to be nothing, yea, worse than nothing, so that the Lord my God becomes the more blessed to my view. And will he not be more blessed to my view, and come home ten thousand times more endeared to my heart, when, from that height of glory and power to which he is now exalted, he stoops down to enquire after and to relieve all my sins and sorrows, as he once washed the feet of poor fishermen, at a time when he knew that "the Father had given all things into his hands?" John xiii. 3. Yes! thou dear Lord, in all my visits to thy throne, and all thy visits to my soul; sure I am, thou needest nothing from thy redeemed to make the meeting blessed. The empty walls, and the broken hearts of sinners, are best suited for his residence, "in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." So then, when my heart is most depressed, and every thing in myself, within and without, and all around, are most discouraging, then, Lord, let me hear thy voice

in that sweet scripture of thine, which will raise my soul above all her sorrows, “ thus saith the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy ; I dwell in the high and holy place ; with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones,” Isa. lvii. 15.

I have aimed to express somewhat of the encouragement this gracious view, which the pardon office of Jesus holds forth to the Lord’s people, in the following hymn :—

Haste, sinner, haste ! flee to the throne,^(a)
 Seek the Redeemer’s face ;^(b)
 Jesus is there to bless his own,^(c)
 And waits to give out grace.^(d)

Tell him a brother seeks his love,^(e)
 A brother’s claims make known ;^(f)
 And Jesus the name will not disprove,^(g)
 Nor will those claims disown.^(h)

He knows thee well, he knows thy case,⁽ⁱ⁾
 And what thy sorrows be ;^(k)
 Midst thousands which surround the place,^(l)
 Jesus will look on thee.^(m)

Tell him, that in that gracious part,⁽ⁿ⁾
 Why Jesus as he knew,
 Was made High Priest, because his heart^(o)
 Might large compassion shew.

Tell him he knows what sorrows are,^(p)
 He felt of human fears :
 When he himself deep suff’rings bore,
 And pour’d forth cries and tears.^(q)

(a) Gen. xix. 22. (b) Ps. xxvii. 8. (c) Rev. vii. 17. (d) Isa. xxx. 18. (e) Prov. xviii. 24. (f) Lev. xxv. 25. (g) Heb. ii. 11, 17. (h) Heb. iv. 15, 16. (i) John i. 48. (k) Isa. lxiii. 9. (l) Heb. iv. 13. (m) Ps. xxxiv. 15, 17. (n) Heb. v. 2, 5. (o) Deut. xv. 7, 8. (p) Heb. v. 7, 8. (q) Luke xxii. 44.

Tell him all this, nor cease thy cry,
 Until he mercy shew ;^(r)
 Thousands have found it, so have I,^(s)
 And thou shalt find it too.

Jesus ! to thee thy brethren bow,^(t)
 Lord, manifest thy love ;
 Is not to thee, thy church below,^(a)
 As dear as thine above ?

—◆—

A MIDNIGHT VISIT FROM JESUS.

It was midnight! the clock from a neighbouring church struck twelve. How often at this hour have I lain awake to count, one by one, the numbers from the deep-toned iron note of St. Paul's bell? And though the thought, for ought I know, may be singular, yet it hath struck me, and not unfrequently, that the measurement of time doth not relate to the living only, but the dead shall have their hours counted out to them. The living indeed at the midnight hour, are for the most part supposed to be at rest, and unconscious of the lapse of time; and though the dead under the dome of that building hear not the sound, yet the measurement to them and to all is the same. Every hour, yea, every moment, becomes an answer to that earnest question of the dead sleeping in Jesus, whose souls are said to be under the altar in heaven; "how long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" Rev. vi. 9, 10. And no less to the hopeless dead the passing hour proclaims that so much of time is past, and by so much that tremendous day is coming on, when the oath the angel once swore shall take place and be fulfilled, when with uplifted hand to heaven he was seen standing upon the

(^r) Luke xviii. 7, 8. (^s) Rev. vii. 9, 14. (^t) Gen. xlix. 8. (^u) John xiii. 1.

sea, and upon the earth, and swore, "that there shall be time no longer," Rev. x. 6.

What a train of the most solemn thoughts the vast idea awakens in the mind! How inconceivably great the difference between the blessed dead which die in the Lord, and those whom the apostle calls "twice dead and plucked up by the roots," and on whom the second death hath full power! Rev. xiv. 13. 1 Thess. iv. 15. Jude 12. Rev. xx. 6.

And who shall count the number which every midnight hour marks down in the world's bill of mortality, both of the happy and of the hopeless dead? who shall marshal the troops, which, from the peninsula of time, are momentarily going off, and entering upon the eternal continent? What voice, in equal note, shall describe the first shout of joy in the redeemed, or the first shriek of horror in the unregenerate, on the discovery of their everlasting and unalterable state; when, in the moment of death they find themselves in the other world, and before the forsaken body is cold in this?

The midnight hour is a blessed hour to the Lord's people, when made so by the Lord's presence, and they are conscious of it. Sweet is that voice when heard by the ear of faith, and can be answered by holy joy, "Behold the bridegroom cometh! go ye out to meet him!" It is blessed, yea, very blessed, to meet him in ordinances, in providences, in the public haunts of his temple, in the private seasons of retirement. To meet him daily, hourly, in all the walks of life; to meet him also in the midnight watches, in the visits of his grace; yea, to meet him in the hour of death. All meetings of the Lord become blessed to the regenerated children of God, made one with Jesus, by the quickening, soul-renewing influences of the Holy Ghost. And who but Jesus would the redeemed desire first to meet, when entering into the world of spirits, and hastening to join the kindred multitude before the throne of God and the

Lamb? And surely Jesus will be the first to meet and bless his own, when from the confines of time they step into eternity! John xiv. 3.

The midnight hour is truly a blessed hour, if it were only for the occupation of thoughts like these. I love for my own part to give indulgence to them. Methinks there is somewhat very refreshing to the spirit when meditating on eternal things: we appear to be walking as on the borders of the invisible world. We converse by faith with the glorious object with whom we are very shortly to dwell. When, in such moments, the soul raised up by the Holy Ghost to the lively apprehension of the presence of Jesus, is going forth in acts of faith, and love, and desire upon his person; there is somewhat, which though I cannot describe, yet sure I am, every child of God when renewed in the spirit of his mind, and conscious of his union with Christ, cannot but feel. And the blessedness of such interviews surpass every other enjoyment this side heaven.

At such seasons the body, though sleepless, is not suffered to interrupt the soul's communion: earthly concerns for a while cease their clamour. Jesus is calling forth the soul in the sweet exercise of faith, and love, and joy, upon the person of her Lord, that the highly favoured object of his grace may receive his self-invited visit. And when this is the case, no hour can be more suited than the midnight hour for the enjoyment of such a guest. There is nothing from within or from without, to break in and interrupt the blissful meeting. The world, as far as relates to a man's own heart, is gone to rest. And the servant here, (as the man of Uz remarked upon another occasion, Job iii. 19.) is as free as his master. When therefore the Holy Ghost calls up the soul to the conscious apprehension of the visit of Jesus, every thing is in correspondence to make it blessed. Jesus brings all the provisions with him for the banquet. He himself indeed is the whole

substance of the feast. He spreads the table : he becomes the spiritual repast. We truly feed upon his righteousness with joy and peace in the Holy Ghost ; we sup with him, and he with us. Rom. xv. 13. Rev. iii. 20.

Will it be said that such seasons are solemn ? The answer is, no doubt they are, yea, very solemn ; but sweet withal. And what seasons are not solemn in which Jesus and his redeemed commune together ? Even in the Lord's tenderest mercies, there must be an holy solemnity mingled with our joy. While Jesus is looking on his redeemed with the smiles of his love, and his people are conscious of it, surely, the soul will be more melted under the sense of undeservings. And the lower Jesus comes down to the infirmities of his people, the lower will they all lay in the dust before God. What a lovely example of this kind hath the Holy Ghost recorded in the instance of Ezra. At a time when Israel had been multiplying transgressions, the Lord was multiplying mercies. The sense of the Lord's goodness coming in a season so striking, overwhelmed like a tide the feelings of Ezra, and brake his very heart. And the man of God, in token of what passed within, rent his mantle, and fell on his knees, and spread out his hands to the Lord, crying out,—“ O my God ! I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God, for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens !” Ezra ix. 5—9. Shame and blushing of face, are sweet tokens of the Lord's grace in the heart ; while the soul is humbled under the deepest sense of unworthiness. And such, more or less, will be in every instance to the Lord's people, when to the aboundings of sin there is discoverable grace yet more abounding. Rom. v. 21. Nevertheless, such seasons are blessed, yea, very blessed. The heart, though humbled, is made glad. And the child of God, though laying low

in the dust before God, conscious of self-worthlessness, feels increasing strength in that grace which is in Christ Jesus.

And it should be remarked further, that those visits of Jesus, whether at midnight, or midday, are blessedly preparing the redeemed for Jesu's last visit, when he will come according to his promise, to take them home to himself, that "where he is, there they shall be also," John xiv. 3. By means of them, our spirits are familiarized to the presence of the Lord; and after many repeated visits, the final one we look forward to as a thing of course. And surely, the Lord's manifestations of himself, through the whole pilgrimage of life, from the first day dawn of grace, until grace comes to be consummated in glory, are not only preparatory to this great event, but as so many strengthening means, to this greatest of all interviews with Jesus. All ordinances, providences, exercises, are directed to the accomplishment of this purpose. In them Jesus converseth with the souls of his redeemed, and they with him; and the oftener they are repeated, the more intimate and familiar they become, so as to take off all shyness, and make the Lord Jesus what every thing he hath done for us, and every relation he stands into us, ought to do, to bring him home to our affections, as the nearest, and dearest, and most intimate of all friends and acquaintances.

It was thus of old, the saints, under the old testament dispensation, walked with God. In the believing views they had of the person of Christ, and their firm dependence upon the salvation of Christ, they had their conversation in this world, before their translation to the other. And the Holy Ghost hath recorded the triumphs of their faith, that before their translation, they "had this testimony, that they pleased God," Heb. xi. 5. And agreeably to this, we read concerning them, that when going out of time into eternity, they

sung their love songs to the praise of divine faithfulness. They waited the Lord's coming, in the full assurance of faith. And as the hour approached, they recounted to themselves, and to those around them, the many precious seasons of their past communion with the Lord, as so many pledges and earnestings of what they were looking to receive when the Lord should come to take them home. Hence Jacob when a dying, sat up on the bed, and related to his sons, of the Lord's first appearance to him at Luz; and how the Lord had fed him all his life long; and of the angel that redeemed him from all evil, Gen. xlviii. 2—16. Hence Moses, in his last hours dwelt with rapture on the Lord's first revelation to him at the bush. So that the children of Isaac might learn in his testimony, what consolations a living hour opened to a dying hour, from the assured testimonies of God, Deut. xxxiii. 16. To the same amount Joshua's last moments were dedicated, when going as he said he was, the way of all the earth; the people might learn in his history, that not one thing had failed, of all the great things the Lord had promised, and would assuredly fulfil all his purposes concerning his people," Joshua xxiii. 14.

And are not the same assurances, in the interest of the saints under the new testament dispensation? Doth not the Lord Jesus, from the first manifestations of grace, through all the after stages of his love to his people, intend the establishment of their minds in the same faith once delivered to the saints? And doth not the Lord, as much in the present time, as in the days of old, visit his redeemed, make himself known to them, in ordinances, by promises, with providences, so as to make manifest his affection to them, and call forth their affection to him; and in every way, and by every means, make sure that glorious charter; "I will say, it is my people; and they shall say, the Lord is my God!" Zech. xiii. 9.

And will it not undeniably follow, that all these love visits of our Lord, while sweetening life by the way, are intended to soften death in the end; yea, to induce an holy longing for, and as the apostle calls it, "hastening to the coming of the day of God?" 2 Pet. iii. 12. Surely the last visit will be the best visit; for the believing soul having been gathering up, from time to time, the numberless sweet testimonies of divine love, finally brings the whole into one view, and when the Lord at length comes, in confidence like the dying patriarch, the soul goes forth to meet him, crying out in words like his: "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord!" Gen. xlv. 18.

I blush to think, with what vehement longings of soul, those holy men of old who lived, and talked at this rate, and died, as they had lived so triumphant, manifested the steadfastness of their faith. Who can read the account given of them in scripture, but must take shame in the comparison with ourselves, when we behold them at the call of God, leaving friends and home, and all that was dear to them in nature, and going forth in faith, "not knowing whither they went." I blush if possible still more to behold, with what confidence, men of no religion have braved, and do brave the dangers of the deep, and trusting in the properties of a mere stone, venture out of sight of land, in quest of unknown countries; the very existence of which, in many instances, they are unconscious; or if existing, when discovered can yield them nothing of permanent good. I blush, I say, at the relation of such things, while I behold many of God's dear children, in whose hearts a saving change by grace hath been wrought, and yet shrinking at the prospect of death, though assured, both by the word and oath of a faithful covenant God in Christ, that their departure must be blessed.

And from whence this defect, but from the weakness of faith, arising from the want of personal acquaintance

and communion with the Lord? If the love calls of Jesus be not regarded, his visits not watched for; and if there be no goings forth of the soul upon the person, blood, and righteousness of the Lord Jesus; is it to be wondered at, that when our correspondence be so slender, our confidence in Him should be slender also? What though habits of grace be formed in the soul, yet if there be no exercise of grace in personal communion with the Lord from day to day, what enjoyment can there be in believing?

Will the reader suffer me to ask, what correspondence there is in his view with this statement? It is to be apprehended, by what appears in the world, that there is great leanness of soul, in the midst of plentiful ordinances, in the present day of the church. The apprehension of faith, is for the most part, considered the whole of faith. And here men rest. And what follows, in what is called a life of exercise, passed between hope and fear, as is formed from what is going on in the mind, is not only made the whole substance of godliness, but all beyond it is concluded to be wrong? But this is not to be established in grace. And it is truly astonishing, how any who profess to be taught of God the Holy Ghost can rest satisfied in such attainments.

The church at Ephesus was sound in the faith, and could and did oppose the heresies of the day. So the Lord Jesus bore them testimony. Yet the Lord charged them with having left their first love, Rev. ii. 1—4. Love they still had, for they were truly called, as their history shews. But coldness had crept in. Self, and not the Lord Jesus, formed the standard of their desires.

And such is it but too common with the church in the present day. Men calculate their state by their experiences. They think more of what their views are than of what Christ is. Effects are made causes, and

the fruit of faith is made more than the great object of faith.

Precious Lord Jesus! be it my portion to live wholly upon thee. Oh! may I have grace to make, in my esteem, as my Christ, what the scripture of God teach me thou art in Jehovah's esteem. And since I plainly see that thou art enough to fill and satisfy God's vast thoughts, and God's vast love; oh! let me have grace that I may mingle nothing with my views of Jesus to satisfy and fill mine also. And let thy midnight and midday visits, yea, seven times a day, and seventy times seven, keep my soul constantly alive to wait thy coming. And, oh! for communion with my Lord, and such rich personal knowledge and enjoyment of my Lord, as shall cause me to live down all comfort from creature attainments, by living up to the sweet enjoyment of union with Jesus, and dependence upon Jesus. Shortly my Lord will take me home to himself; and the midnight of death will be followed with the opening of that everlasting morning of eternal life, where the full manifestation of my Lord, will arise upon my soul, to continue for ever! Amen.



VISIT TO JESUS, ON THE ENQUIRY CONCERNING ELECTION.

I was agreeably pleased the other day in beholding a party of my grand-children at a plate of fruit. Every one of them, I perceived as I looked on, was gathering one by one, the object of his choice. Neither did this election cease with them, until the whole, except the refuse, had been taken. How unconscious (said I to myself, as I marked their conduct) are these children of the censure which they are passing on the world. They are, every one of them, actually engaged in preaching and practising that very doctrine of election,

which all carnal and unenlightened minds are so much offended at in God.

But as I ruminated on the subject further, I began to discover that these children of mine, Gen. xlvi. 5. were not the only preachers and practisers of election. It appears from the history of mankind, that the whole earth is continually engaged in the same pursuit. Perhaps there is not an individual of the human race, however diversified by nation or climate, but what day by day is thus occupied. And yet strange to say, not a son or daughter of Adam, as long as they remain in the unrenewed state of an unregenerate mind, but what revolt at the doctrine; and while they are thus gratifying themselves in their own choice of things, take offence at the exercise of this freedom in God!

I have elsewhere observed (in my Poor Man's Commentary) on this subject somewhat particularly, that from the wayward capricious temper of the little child, to the petulancy and ill-humour of the man of grey hairs, how fully to be seen is the conduct which they manifest in all their pursuits and desires, in the object of their approbation or dislike, their predilections or hatreds. They have their choice or aversion as it respects their company, their food, their dress, their pursuits, their conversations. At their table, if through the Lord's bounty they have ample circumstances, they will spread abundance, and will choose here or there, reject or take, as their fancy shall direct. And this, not unfrequently, without either rule or reason; without either wisdom or good sense; nay, sometimes to their sorrow, when from indiscretion they have made a wrong choice, and induced sickness and pain. And should any one upon those occasions venture to call their judgment or their right in question, what resentments have sometimes followed? Is this preaching and practising election, or is it not? But when the Judge

of all the earth proclaimeth his holy will and pleasure, on this point, and saith; "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy;" up riseth the proud, unhumiliated heart of man, in boilings of the most fiery wrath, and the scum of bitterness runs over the pot of his malignity in deadly displeasure, against the justice of the decree. So then, according to this inverted order of things, man insists upon a right of freedom which he denies God; and the creature claims a sovereignty, which he would withhold from the Creator! Reader, ponder well this statement of things, and mark its correctness. There is but one Being in the universe, who is capable of choosing rightly; and whose election or reprobation cannot but be founded in unerring wisdom, and yet this Holy One, according to man's decision, shall be the only one precluded from this privilege! Can there be a more glaring and palpable proof of the desperately wicked state of the human heart.

I found my heart very powerfully led out to the contemplation of this subject. And according to my usual custom, when at any time more than ordinarily engaged in the study of divine things, I love to consult the Wonderful Counsellor! There is somewhat always relieving to the mind, when, under exercises of any kind, the child of God can unbosom himself to Him. It is always profitable to spread our concerns before the Lord. His throne of grace is everlastingly open. He himself is always there. He waits to be gracious. And his people need no introduction, as at earthly courts, when God the Spirit leads out the soul upon the person of Jesus. According to Christ's own words: he may "go in and out, and find pasture." Under these impressions I hastened in my visit to the Lord. He saith himself, "I am the Lord thy God, which

teacheth thee to profit; which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go," Isa. xlvi. 17.

It struck me then while before the Lord, and it strikes me now again in the same forcible manner, that God by this very process, in causing every human being to do that daily themselves, which they are so much displeas'd at in Him, hath taken the most effectual means to demonstrate his own glory and man's presumption. For while, from the first dawn of reason in childhood, in which the mind can act, to the latest hour of old age, if all practise themselves what they dare to condemn in Him, doth not every one of them thereby sign the mittimus of his own sentence? Surely that solemn scripture is awfully fulfilled, in which the Lord hath said, "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant!" Luke xix. 22.

Nay more, the Lord's decision on this matter becomes the more glaring and pointed; because it should seem, as if it was only in this instance concerning election, that the Lord makes mankind to pass judgment upon themselves. It is God's sovereignty which is struck at, by this rebellion of man. Hence, therefore, that sovereignty takes this very method to assert and justify his right by an appeal to what they call their's. There are no other of the attributes of God which the unrenewed nature of man presumes to quarrel with and to arraign, but this of his sovereignty; and this only, when exercised in election. Well then, for the full conviction of the sinner on his own ground, and to silence and confound him for ever, under the condemnation of his own heart, the Lord creates him into an office, of which he himself is not at the time conscious, and makes him his own judge. In the very constitution of his nature he is so formed, with dispositions of liking and disliking, of approbation and disgust, that in the exercise of the sovereignty of his

own mind, (and those exercises are at the same time so constructed, that no laws of God or man can controul them) he is everlastingly electing or rejecting, choosing or refusing as his will directs. In this process of the human frame, the Lord forms a mode of trial which ariseth out of the very constitution of man. Each is his own judge. He shall be tried by his own peers. His own elections or rejections are, in his esteem, his own rightful lords. These are his nobility of inheritance; his right, his just claim. These shall judge him. So then, here is a court he cannot dare impeach. Here are jurors he cannot challenge, for he himself hath impannelled them. Here is a sentence he must abide by; for it is passed by himself, and in the court of his own conscience. And as that sentence, in every instance, claims the right of election in man, what an unanswerable determination doth it bring with it to the right of election in God? And let the reader now say what shall arise, at the retribution of all things, to prevent the everlasting condemnation of every man on his own ground, who, while demanding the freedom of choice in himself, dares to contend the point with God?

Yes, indeed there is a way, and a wonderful way it is, by which that sentence may be, and by which indeed that sentence hath been in innumerable instances rescinded; namely, when by an act of grace from that very sovereignty men have called in question, the Lord hath taken occasion to magnify the riches of his love; and by the exercise of that power, against which they had so daringly murmured, they themselves have been brought over to bless God for that very election manifested towards them, which they had before taken such offence at being shewn to others. Did God intend such a process for purposes so blessed? Did the Lord adopt this method, among all the stores of his grace, to assert and maintain the justice of his own claim

against the reproaches of men; who, while they would deny him his right, so imprudently and unjustly claim what they think their own? And is this the manner of men, O Lord God! Oh the wonderful ways of a wonder-working God!

But here I pause. Indeed I can go no farther, until that I have first fallen down to the dust of the earth, before the sovereign majesty of my God, under the deepest sense of self-abasement and abhorrence! How long, and how daringly violent did I myself oppose this glorious truth; which now, through thy grace subduing my rebellion, and teaching my soul its blessedness, is become my greatest joy and delight! Lord! thou knowest well with what bitterness of a fallen nature I contended against the sovereignty of thy grace, in thy free-will election; while, in the very moment, audaciously insisting upon my own power, in a free-will ability of serving thee! Oh! what mercy hath been shewn me, in the recovery of my soul from a delusion so awful!

And how many are there of God's dear children at this present moment, under the same mistaken views as I once was? They themselves, the unconscious partakers of God's electing grace, while in judgment contending against it! What a deception the human heart is to itself, while in an unrenewed state of nature? Yea, what darkness and corruption still lurk there, even after the Lord hath called us by grace? Should these lines meet the eye of any of the latter description, and should the grace shewn to me, be shewn them, very sure I am that whenever the Lord rescues them from the error of their mind, they will stand amazed as I still do, in the recollection of former rebellion. And with me, they will be at a loss which to admire most, the Lord's forbearance, or our presumption.

On the doctrine of election, there is one very striking consideration, which, since the Lord wrought upon

my mind to the belief of it, hath operated upon me, at all times, most forcibly: I mean the whole persons of the Godhead have uniformly preached it, and are everlastingly preaching it to the church.

God the Father in his choice of Christ, as the Head and Husband of his people, calls upon the church to receive him, and to accept him as his chosen. "Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth!" Isa. xlii. 1. And it is worthy our highest remark, in confirmation of this leading truth, that Christ was expected by the people under this character of God's chosen. For when the enemies of Christ rejected him as the Messiah, they still, in the same moment, acknowledged that Christ when come, would come as the chosen of God. See Luke xxiii. 35. And as God by election chose Christ; so the church, in every individual member, is spoken of as the same. For speaking to the church, the Lord saith, "Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me, above all people," Exod. xix. 5. See also Deut. xxxii. 9. Isa. xliii. 21. Mal. iii. 17, 18. Eph. i. 4.

God the Son, in like manner hath been and still is, by the ministry of his word and teaching, the great preacher in his church of the doctrine of election. Indeed, what are all the heads of his sermons, in the days of his flesh, but so many sweet and gracious expressions, in proof how much his soul delighted in his Father's choice of him, and the church in him? Who can read the thanks which Jesus gave the Father upon numberless occasions of this sort, for his distinguishing grace to his people, without being led to see that the very heart of Jesus was wrapped up in holy joy, in the view of God's electing love. His whole soul seemed to be going forth with delight that the Father had hid his mysteries in grace, "from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes," Matt. xi. 25, 26. Nay, what was it that called forth the bitterness and

wrath of the Jewish synagogue against the person of Jesus, but for preaching this doctrine? It is said that they heard the Lord, not only with temper but delight, while in his sermon he spake in general terms, that he came to heal the sick, and preach the gospel to the poor; “all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.” But when this divine preacher, “who spake as never man spake,” directed his discourse to the special and personal acts of election, and instanced the doctrine in the case of Naaman the Syrian, and the widow of Zidon, the whole congregation “were filled with wrath,” Luke iv. 16—30.

And no less God the Holy Ghost, hath all along, from the first founding of the church, been uniformly preaching, and still is preaching by the ministry of his word, and the influences of his grace, the doctrine of election. Indeed, the sovereignty of that act of the Lord the Spirit, in setting apart Israel by ordinances, and in those ordinances signifying the special grace in Christ, (see Heb. ix. 8.) thereby proving to the church, that the whole was his own personal appointment, becomes an everlasting testimony to this great truth. He it was, who all along ordained services, consecrated ministers, appointed their stations, sent the gospel to one city, and forbade the preaching of it in another; confirmed the testimony of his sent servants, and shewed his marked disapprobation to those who ran unsent; Jerem. i. throughout; Jerem. xxviii. throughout; Acts xiii. 2, 4.—xvi. 6, 7.—xviii. 9, 10. 1 Thes. i. 4, 5. Hence the whole persons of the Godhead have all preached, and are unceasingly preaching the doctrine of election to the church.

If I might venture, in a parenthesis, to make a short observation in this place, I would say, if it be so, as I venture to think I have fully shewn, that the glorious persons in the Godhead have thus preached, and do

preach election; can that ministry be sent of God, or founded on the divine pattern, or in the end owned of God, which preacheth it not? Is the doctrine so esteemed in God's sight, and shall it be disesteemed in our's? Have all the persons of the Godhead deemed it essential to the health and welfare of souls; and will any who profess to minister to the health and welfare of souls in preaching, venture to think otherwise; keep it back, yea, deny it? Let the reader pause over these solemn questions, for they are very solemn: then advance one step further.

Did the Son of God make this one doctrine the very bottom of all others in his gifts to men, when he declared, that the object for which all power was given unto him over all flesh was, that he should give eternal life "to as many as the Father had given him!" John xvii. 2. And are there any who profess to be moved by the Holy Ghost, to take upon them the office of ministers in the church, that disbelieve this truth themselves, and would teach others to disbelieve it also? Oh! the blindness and ignorance of the unhumbled heart of man in an unregenerate state! What an awful condition must that man be in, who thus lightly esteems the sovereignty of God! What a still more awful state must that man be in, who comes forward with unblushing confidence to preach or write against it, who must have subscribed to it before he could have first entered the ministry, and now takes pains to publish his shame, in openly denying what he then subscribed! Such a man, of whatever rank or station he may move in among men, must be beheld in the greatest abomination in the sight of God.

But to return to the view of the doctrine itself. The preaching this leading truth by the Lord himself in his Trinity of Persons, not only gives the most absolute decision to its importance, but is in the place of a thousand arguments to manifest its imperative claim,

that it should be preached in all the churches. And indeed, under the sanction of that high authority, it strikes my mind moreover, that such is the nature of it in its own principles, that but for God's choice of the church, and the preservation of the church in that choice, the church itself would have wanted support, neither could have had an adequate support to have rested upon, either for the time state upon earth, or the eternal state in heaven. As this view of the subject may not be very generally considered, I will thank the reader for the indulgence, while I state it a little more particularly.

When God was pleased to go forth in acts of creation, and called into being our nature in the person of the first earthly man Adam, we are taught in scripture, that he was created holy before God, Gen. i. 27. And indeed, coming out of the hands of an infinitely wise and holy Creator, he could not be otherwise than holy. But then it should be remembered, that holy as his nature then was by creation, it was an holiness liable to change, from the very mutability of his nature; for consistent with the creatureship of man, he could be no other than a changeable creature; because, unchangeableness belongs only to God. It is one of his distinguishing attributes. Hence, therefore, it must follow, that this very changeableness of man's nature, made him liable to fall; and fall he did, as scripture relates soon after his creation.

Now it is plain, from the scriptures of truth, that God had great purposes in view in the creation of man. His fall led to some vast designs in the scheme of grace. To carry on those designs, and to accomplish those great purposes, which from everlasting had occupied the mind of God towards his church; besides this *created* holiness which God had formed man in, he had, by election grace, given him another, and by far an infinitely greater holiness, in an *union* holiness in Christ; which, from being Christ's holiness, and to be enjoyed

only *in* Christ, and from an union *with* Christ, became subject to no change from man's mutable nature; and being placed in safer hands than his own, was liable neither to loss or alteration. This doctrine is blessedly taught the church, in many places in the word of God; but in none more plain and gracious, than in that sweet scripture, in which God is said to have "chosen the church in Christ, before the foundation of the world, that it should be holy and without blame before him in love." Eph. i. 4. See also Rom. viii. 29, 30. Hence, therefore, though by the fall the whole race of men, (and consequently the whole church included) lost all their *created* holiness, yet the church, from her everlasting union with Christ, her head in election, had remaining an *holiness* in Christ, which no sin in them could touch, nor Satan destroy. Being in Christ himself, as the head of his body, the church, the members had it only derived from him: and thus it was placed beyond their own power to lose, or devils to take away. The mutability of their nature could have no effect in this instance. Their election in Christ formed a security of preservation in Christ. All safety being found *in* Him, and *from* Him, and *by* Him; and who is therefore, and on this very account, commanded to be called the "Lord our righteousness;" and being both in himself, and to all his people, "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever!" Jerem. xxiii. 6. Heb. xiii. 8.

It is in my esteem a very high proof this, of the great blessedness of election; and whatever other mercies besides this, may be included in it, I do not presume to say; but thus far, through grace, we discern that our security in holiness is founded on it. We have holiness only in Christ. He is our holiness, yea, all our holiness; and well is it for the church it is so: for, by virtue of it, both our holiness and our happiness are placed beyond the reach of Satan, and all danger from our own mutability.

And although it is not immediately connected with

our present subject to consider, yet it may be observed, that the preservation of angels, and therefore called elect angels, ariseth from a similar cause. For their nature, however higher than our nature in the scale of intellect it may be, yet, being creatures as ourselves, they necessarily are liable to change, and fall, as well as man; yea, and not only might change and fall, but certainly would do both, unless upheld by a power superior to their own. There can be indeed nothing in creatures, simply as creatures, which could preserve from it: for, of the highest order of created beings, it is said, "behold! he putteth no trust in his servants, and his angels he chargeth with folly;" that is, with weakness. Job iv. 18. Hence we read of some that fell, and of whom it is said, "that they kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation." Jude 6. And we read also of *others*, which are called *elect angels*, 1 Tim. v. 21; that is, preserved from falling by election grace; being kept from the mutability of their own will, in their own nature, by the sovereignty of God's will in electing and preserving grace.

But it should be observed at the same time, according to the scripture statement, that *elect angels* and *elect men*, differ very materially in the nature of that grace manifested to them. Elect angels are made so, by the sovereignty of God's power in dominion over them. Elect men, from grace *union* with Christ. Elect angels are said "to excel in strength, to do God's commandments, and to hearken to the voice of his word." Psalm ciii. 20. The church elect in Christ, is chosen in Christ, "to be holy and without blame before God in love." The *former* are kept by *dominion*; the latter by *union*. Angels are upheld by divine strength; the church is upheld by oneness with her Lord. The one is made faithful as a servant; the other is interested as a wife. Hence the difference is incalculably great, and the blessedness and security in proportion also. While God is

pleased to preserve the elect angels in that holiness he hath created them in and upholds them in, they cannot fall. But should it please him to withhold the arm of his power, the mutability of their nature would soon appear. I am not supposing such an event probable; for, on the contrary, there is full authority from scripture, to conclude the thing impossible. But I am simply stating a supposable case, by way of drawing the line of distinction between the election of angels and the election of men. The blessedness of the church, in her election in Christ, makes her everlastingly secure, in that her union with Christ brings up after it an interest in all that belongs to Christ. And as Jesus hath said, so the fact is undeniable; "because I live, ye shall live also." John xiv. 19. And the Holy Ghost, by one of his servants, hath sweetly borne testimony to the same, when directing the epistle of Jude to the church, he saith, "to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called." Jude 1. Here is a full constellation of the whole doctrine, brought together into one point of view, which shines with complete lustre, like the pleiades of the heavenly bodies, in the electing love of the Father, the preserving grace in the Son, and the effectual call of renewing mercy in the Holy Ghost.

What a subject is opened to the church, in the contemplation of God's sovereignty in this one branch of it! What vast blessings are folded up in God's election! And yet, how little studied, how little known, how little regarded by the church of God! This river of divine love hath been running from all eternity. Before the present state of the church, its mighty course lay hidden and concealed. At creation it arose above ground, and in all those vast events in the person and offices of Christ in redemption, it hath manifested itself in all its sovereign properties, and the "streams thereof make glad the city of God." To this one

source we owe all our mercies. Chosen in Christ, given to Christ, made holy in Christ, preserved in Christ, and called in Christ; and all "to the praise of the glory of his grace, who hath made us accepted in the beloved." Ephes. i. 3, 7. Hence, from one eternity to another, the church of God hath been, now is, and everlastingly must be blessed in Christ, from an union with Christ. She now stands, during her present being, as upon the isthmus of time. The eternity past, and to come, surrounds her as an immense, immeasurable continent. The spot she occupies, is but as a grain of sand to the globe. He that placed her upon it, will shortly return to take her unto himself, that "where he is, there she may be also." John xiv. 1, 3.

And as the church upon earth oweth all her safety and all her happiness to her union with Christ, in having been chosen in Christ; so very sure it is, that her everlasting safety and happiness in heaven, can arise out of no other principles. All creatures, as creatures, cannot but be subjects of change. To preserve one uniform, steady, and fixed sameness, can only be found in what is in itself unchangeable. And that the church hath in Christ, her union with him, brings with it an interest in all that belongs to him. Here are derived all "things that pertain to life and godliness;" for "he is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

For let it be supposed, for the sake of supposition, (as was before remarked in the case of elect angels) that there could be a possibility of this union with Christ at any period, however remote, to cease; (blessed be God, such an idea is not supposable but in the imagination, the thing itself being impossible;) but if the electing love of God could be withdrawn, there would be nothing left to preserve the church, either in holiness or happiness, either in purity or glory. For the church hath no holiness or comeliness in herself. All is *in* Christ, and *from* Christ. Her purity, her righteous-

ness, her glory, all are derived from him. Like the planet of the night, whose brightness depends upon reflections from the sun; so the church shines but from Christ. And upon the bare supposition, that God's electing love should be suspended, and the union in Christ to cease; nothing could preserve the church, even in heaven itself, from a fall like that of the fallen angels. Yea, darkness and horror would succeed, as those we read of under the fifth vial, "who are said to have gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven." Rev. xvi. 10, 11.

Pause, reader, over the marvellous subject of God's sovereignty in election. What imagination of the human mind is competent to take in a thousandth part of the events connected with it? How shall any man form conceptions concerning the eternal purposes of God in the design of it? And more especially, what views shall that man have of discriminating grace, who, by the new birth of God the Spirit, knows himself to be a partaker of the unspeakable gift in Christ? Indeed, indeed, what a train of thought must that one view alone awaken in the soul, that nothing can arise through all the countless ages of eternity, to do away the cause and effect of those eternal and unchangeable purposes, given to the church in Christ, before the foundation of the world? Yea, eternity itself must end, and the immutability of God's counsel come to nought, before the church shall lose her union with Christ, or her everlasting holiness and glory in Christ.

And, although the carnal, the graceless, and the ungodly, in this, and every other Christ-despising generation, are so desperately displeased, at the exercise of God's sovereignty in election; yet, however unconscious of it, they are more indebted to it than they are aware.

The apostles Peter and Jude, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, have shewn the wickedness and folly of those men, under the strong expression of hav-

ing "denied the Lord that bought them." 2 Pet. ii. 1. Jude 4. For most certain it is, that the Lord Jesus hath bought the world, and all things in it: both the persons of the ungodly, and the preservation of the world itself, until his redeemed, his chosen, are safely gathered out of it. Thousands there are, which belong to Christ, which are yet to be born in nature, before they can be new born in grace. Hence, therefore, the world must stand; and the ungodly in it which do not belong to Christ in covenant relationship, but yet, from whom, in the generation of nature, Christ's seed in grace shall spring, must continue; and, therefore, when such despise Christ, and deny Christ, they may be said to deny the Lord that bought them. And to this purport Christ speaketh in the words of prophecy. "The earth, and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved; I bear up the pillars of it." Psalm lxxv. 3. "He upholds all things by the word of his power." Heb. i. 3. "By him all things consist:" that is, "all things are suspended and kept together by his power." Col. i. 17.

What a precious thought is this to the child of God? What an awful consideration to the Christ-despising generation! Hence it must undeniably follow, that, but for God's forbearance, until all the members of Christ's body are called home, the world would not have remained to the present hour; but, the world itself, with all the Christless inhabitants thereof, would have been swept away with the besom of destruction.

And very sure it is, that when that great event is accomplished, and the last elect child of God is brought home and housed in glory, then will the desolations of the earth take place. The same day Noah entered into the ark, the foundations of the great deep were broken up, and the world was destroyed by water. No sooner had Lot entered Zoar, than Sodom and Gomorrah were burnt with fire. And, as in these cases, so in the present, the Lord spares the ungodly for his people's

sake. The Lord saith now to his people, as he did then to Lot, "I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither." Gen. xix. 21, 24.

If sinners of the present hour had a consciousness of these things, their treatment of God's people would not be what it now too often is; neither would they manifest to the sovereignty of God's election that contempt they now do; but would find cause to say, with them of old, "except the Lord of Hosts had left to us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah." Isaiah i. 9.

JESUS VISITING HIS SICK ONES.

Faith has for its object the person of Christ. Every thing belonging to Christ, and from Christ, in his offices, characters, and relations is blessed: but Christ himself is infinitely more blessed than the whole; precisely in the same manner and degree as *cause* is before *effect*. Hence the church, when contemplating the person of the Lord, cried out, "Thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey!" Psalm lxxvi. 4. All creation is Christ's; and, consequently, the whole must be less glorious than himself. Yea, all things were not only created *by* him, but *for* him, and *by him* all things consist, Coloss. i. 16, 17. All redemption is Christ's; for he was the sole agent in the accomplishment of the work: and, consequently, redemption is less in greatness than the Redeemer. Indeed creation, redemption, yea, all the departments in nature, providence, grace, and glory, in respect to Christ's mediatorial character, are all brought forward for the manifestative glory of Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in the face of Jesus Christ. The church, with all her blessedness, was formed for Christ; and as the planet of the night derives all influence from the sun, so the

church from Christ, who is her God and her glory. The church was made for Christ, and not Christ for the church. It was graciously said, concerning the Adam-nature of our being, that it was not good "the man should be alone," Gen. ii. 18. but this had a still higher view, in the contemplation of the God and man in one Christ Jesus, that he should not be alone. The church was chosen in Christ, to be a partner with him, and to partake with him, in the glories of the everlasting world; that, in the ages to come, God might shew "the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us, through Christ Jesus." Eph. ii. 7.

But while faith hath thus for its object the person of Christ, in which contemplation the whole of Christ's mediation is included, (as the greater includes the less) what a soul-reviving subject in addition is further opened to our view, when we contemplate, with Christ's person, our union with Christ. There can be no views in time, no, nor in eternity itself, which can go beyond the contemplation and enjoyment of our union with Christ, and communion with God in Christ. A time will come, when sins, which are now for ever forgiven, will be for ever forgotten. (See Isaiah xliii. 25. Jer. xxxi. 34.) All the evils, and miseries, and sorrows of the present fallen state, will be lost in the recollection, from the whole of our nature being swallowed up in the contemplation and enjoyment of God in Christ. We shall no more remember the evils contracted here by sin, than the child, when arriving to the perfection of manhood, calls to remembrance the having, when an infant, fallen into the mire, and having been cleansed by the affection of the parent. The glory reflected upon the church in that blissful state, from the person of God in Christ, will put out all other considerations, as the glory of the sun obscures all other lights; and our union with Christ in that perfect state of being, will throw at an infinite distance every lesser concern. The Lord Jesus himself

will be the heaven of heavens to our souls; yea, he will far surpass all heaven, and all glory together.

Hence then, to advance yet further from those blessed views, *first*, of the person of Christ, and *secondly*, of our union with Christ, there ariseth a *third* consideration to finish the subject, namely, the interest Christ hath in all his people, and his people in him. And very blessedly hath God the Holy Ghost taught the church this doctrine, when declaring Christ to be the head, and his people the members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. So that from the very law of nature, it is appointed, that there should be no schism in the body; but that as “the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you; nor again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you; all the members shall have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.” And whence doth the Holy Ghost direct this whole discourse, but in direct reference to Christ and his church? for he saith, “now are ye the body of Christ, and members in particular.” 1 Cor. xii. throughout.

Supposing then, (for this is the object I have all along had in view in this statement) that any of Christ’s members are in sickness; will not that sickness call forth in a more immediate manner, the manifestations of Jesus’s love? Nay, will it not, from that union there is between Christ and his members, induce a fellow feeling, a participation with that member? Can the foot be crushed, and the head unconscious? Was it said of Jesus in the days of his flesh, that “himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses?” and shall such things be less said of him in the day of his power? If he bore our sins *then*, can he be inattentive to our sorrows *now*?

The apostle Paul, in his usual manner, and unequalled strength of argument, hath shewn that it is impossible

for the Lord Jesus Christ to be regardless of the misery of his people. He takes up the double figure, both of the marriage state, and the still nearer union of Christ and his members as a body, to demonstrate the total impossibility of any indifferency in Christ, as an husband to his wife, or as an head to the members. "So men (saith he) ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife, loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth it and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church," Eph. v. 28, 29. Supposing that a wife of mine fall into poverty or meanness; still she is my wife, and the Lord God of Israel saith, that "he hateth putting away," Mal. ii. 14—16. Or suppose that a limb of mine be full of sores and uncleanness; still it is mine, and cannot cease to be precious to me. (As I remember once a poor woman said, concerning her ulcered leg, whom the surgeon had advised to have it amputated.) Nothing can dissolve the union, or make indifferent from infirmity.

Let us make application of this doctrine to the case of Christ and his church. Let it be supposed, as is universally known, that the members of Christ's mystical body are leprous and unclean; will this estrange the Lord's affection from them? Will any venture to propose to Jesus, to separate his members from him, because of disease?—will Jesus listen to the proposal? Is it not a truth, that our misery calls forth the greater manifestation of Christ's mercy? Do not our very sicknesses and sores, which sometimes become offensive to our tenderest earthly friends, yea, and not unfrequently to ourselves also; do they not incline the heart of Jesus to commiserate our situation the more, and to cause him to come the nearer to us? So that when, from our loathsomeness and infirmities, our nearest connections in nature draw off from us, Jesus, the brother born for adversity, and who sticketh closer than a brother,

cometh nearer to us! And although he cannot love his people more, or less, yet will the manifestations of that love be proportioned as his people stand in need of them. It is a sweet feature of character of Jesus, that "having loved his own which are in the world, he loveth them to the end," John xiii. 1.

Yea, not only in the changes made by sickness and disease, no alteration takes place in the Lord's mind towards his people; but even death itself lessens not the love of Jesus to their persons and to their state. For when our comeliness is turned into corruption, and the fondest husband or the tenderest parent would say of us, as Abraham did of his beloved Sarah, "let me bury my dead out of my sight:" it is not so with Jesus; his members are as dear to him in death as in life. Jesus in effect, if not in words, saith to every one of them when going down to the grave, as he once said to the patriarch, when going down into Egypt, "fear not, Jacob, I will go with thee," Gen. xlv. 3, 4. And no goldsmith watcheth over the particles of his gold dust with as much carefulness, as Jesus doth the ashes of his people; indeed, they are part of himself. And hence the Holy Ghost hath written the monumental inscription for every one of them, when he gave that sweet scripture, "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints," Psalm cxvi. 15.

From these views it will not be difficult for a child of God to apprehend, how especially and peculiarly to be expected is the presence of the Lord Jesus, to refresh and comfort in the sick rooms and dying chambers of his redeemed. I have said, indeed, in the opening of those observations, that it is of Jesus *visiting his sick ones*; but the presence of the Lord is more than *visits*. He himself speaks of "dwelling with them," John xiv. 23. and it must be so; for he that waters his church "every moment," must be present every moment to do so. And if he that waters his church every moment,

keeps her also, as he saith he doth, "night and day," lest any hurt her; he must be everlastingly at home with his redeemed to perform these offices. Jesus sits up with his sick ones: it is he which administers all their consolations, by whatever hand beside he is pleased to make the medium. "He makes all their bed in their sickness;" but who shall say to what extent, in how many ways, and by what various methods the Lord herein performs all his pleasure? Indeed the highly favoured objects of his love, can have themselves but little consciousness of the gracious plans of the Lord towards them, by which he is for ever manifesting himself to them, otherwise than he doth to the world.

It is on this account, and from a just apprehension how privileged the chambers of the Lord's sick ones are by the Lord's presence, that many gracious souls have always delighted to tender their services, to act as nurses to faithful ministers, and other eminent servants of the Lord, when going out of time into eternity. They have thought, and rightly thought, that much of the savour of Christ's presence would be with them in those seasons; and they have borne witness to the dying testimonies of such holy men, and found their words pondrous and weighty, like the *michtams*, the golden sayings of David, and coming from the same quickenings of the Holy Ghost. I myself have seen, upon numberless occasions of the kind, the triumphs of faith in Christ.

And there is reason to expect such seasons must be peculiarly refreshing. The presence of the Lord being eminently with them, cannot but induce eminent apprehensions of his favour. And not unfrequently is it found, that the faithful in Christ Jesus, when drawing nigh the borders of the invisible world, have found their souls so refreshed with the approaching views of it, as to tell to those around the blessed foretastes they then enjoyed. No doubt Jesus, who remembers his own

dying time, and how his soul was then affected, feels for their's. And as by the spirit of prophecy, when looking forward to the passage, he said of himself, "thou wilt shew me the path of life," Psalm xvi. 11. so graciously doth he point their spirits to the same. Hence those blessed promises: "But now, thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel! fear not, for I have redeemed thee: I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee." And the Lord adds the further testimony, when he saith, "since thou wast precious in my sight thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee; therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life;" or, as the margin renders it, for thy *person*, Isaiah xliii. 1, 4.

But while I thus speak, I beg not to be misunderstood. These bright manifestations, which sometimes the Lord refresheth his dying saints with, and whereby they become refreshing also to the standers by, are not always in the experience of God's people, neither are they always necessary. Many a child of God hath the love-tokens of Jesus, unknown and unnoticed by others: and many are supported with strong faith in Christ in their last moments, whose infirmities of body without, will not suffer them to say what passeth within, between Jesus and their spirits. He truly dies in Christ, who dies trusting in Christ, as well as he who dies triumphing in Christ. Nevertheless, it is truly blessed to the lookers on, as well as to the soul to whom this blessing is imparted, when in the hour of departing nature the spirit goeth forth in holy joy, like the ascending prophet, and we cry out, as was then done, "my father! my father! the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof," 2 Kings ii. 12.

Will the reader desire to go further, and enquire how

Jesus's presence shall be known upon those occasions, and how we are to ascertain the reality of it? This cannot be the province of any man to answer; neither can this subject need any further investigation, than as in a multitude of other instances we are compelled to do, in proving causes by effects. When some more than ordinary seasons of refreshing are discoverable in the sick and dying chambers of the Lord's people; when the saints of God, or those around, find the words of grace come in a word of power; when the heart is softened, the affections warmed, the mind spiritualized, and the whole soul going forth in desires after Christ, and communion with Christ; surely there can be no question but that the Lord is present, in his sanctifying, comforting, and refreshing manifestations, in the fulfilment of his promise, where two or three are met in his name, and that to bless them.

But though it belongs not to the province of man to explain the mode of operation, whereby the Lord Jesus imparts such portions of grace, as his love and wisdom seeth fit for his redeemed, upon these and all other occasions of need; yet the word of God is our guide to lead us in our conclusion, as to the fact itself. Most certain it is, that the human nature of Jesus, in his glorified state, hath the same affections, and in the same degree of exercise towards his body the church, as when upon earth. Not that these affections are now accompanied with any frailty of human feeling, as in the days of his flesh, for this would be unsuitable to his glory; but they are in substance the same, and equally active in exercise towards his people; for so saith the Holy Ghost, in the relation of his priestly office: he that is passed into the heavens, as our great High Priest, "is touched with the feeling of our infirmities." The Lord doth not say that he *was*, as of a thing passed; but as a thing *now*,—he *is* touched. And the

argument the Lord condescends to draw from thence, is most blessedly added, that "we may find grace to help in time of need," Heb. iv. 14—16.

It were unnecessary to enlarge. As the return of the Son of God to heaven, hath neither lessened his affection, or his power to carry that affection into exercise towards his people, the conclusion is obvious; his members are too near his heart, and too intimately united to his person, to be for a moment overlooked or unvisited. His Godhead furnisheth every possible means for the accomplishment of his love towards them, and his human nature gives a fellow feeling, as well as a medium for communication; and both united together, render him the suited head of his body the church, the "fulness which filleth all in all."

And what a subject doth the whole open for bringing forth endless glory to God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, when the whole is discovered as centered in the person, and accomplished in the offices, characters, and relations, of the Lord Jesus Christ? No doubt but that other ends, and higher objects are proposed, in the assumption of our nature by God's dear Son, (the Son of his love, as he is called, Coloss. i. 13.) than the salvation of his people. God and man in one person is said to be an object of eternal delight for the unceasing contemplation of Jehovah, Isa. xlii. 1. Matt. iii. 17. And most certain it is, that without this union of the Godhead and manhood in the person of Christ, creation itself could have had no foundation; nothing to hang it upon or keep it together, for it is God the Holy Ghost's testimony concerning Christ, that "by him all things consist." And he "upholds all things by the word of his power," Coloss. i. 17. Heb. i. 3. And equally certain it is, that by this act of condescension in the Son of God, in the taking our nature into union with himself, he hath manifested forth the glories of the Godhead in such a way and manner, as never could

have been known without it. So that on all these accounts, as well perhaps as others with which we are not acquainted, there may be, and no doubt there are, causes for which the Son of God became incarnate, beside the immediate purpose of our redemption.

But in the relation we bear to Jesus in our nature, and the everlasting relation in which we stand in him through grace, we find sufficient cause for holy joy, and for the most heartfelt conviction that he takes part in all that concerns us during the whole time state here on earth, as hereafter in glory. Yes! yes! thou dear Lord! thou art with them always even unto the end of the world. In sickness to sooth them, in trouble to help them, in temptations to succour them, in all seasons to be their portion, and to administer the suited grace to them in every time of need. Blessed for ever be the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for Jesus Christ, and for all blessings in Christ. Surely every child of God may truly say with the apostle, "for all things are your's, whether the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are your's, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's," 1 Cor. iii. 21—23.

ON THE SUBJECT OF SANCTIFICATION.

So many and various have been, and still are, the sentiments of men, yea, and of gracious men too, on the subject of sanctification, that it is plain their different views cannot all have been learnt in the same school, and under the same divine teacher. And yet nothing ought to satisfy a child of God upon a point of such infinite importance, short of his teaching, "which teacheth to profit, and leadeth by the way we should go," Isa. xlvi. 17. and liv. 13.

For my part, so angry have been some of my mother's children (as the spouse in the Canticles calls them, Song

i. 6.) with me, for what I have advanced on the subject in my Poor Man's Commentary, that I fear, without an act of grace from the Lord prompts them to regard me with more tenderness, I shall not soon be forgiven by them.

What a relief it is to my soul on all such occasions, (and I feel the blessedness of it in the moment of writing) that the Lord seeth not as man seeth. If Jesus smiles it matters not who frowns. And what an holy calm follows the strife of tongues, when ceasing from man we are enabled to draw nigh unto the Lord! The church had found the sweetness of this frame when she said, "until the day break, and the shadows flee away; I will get me to the mountains of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense," Song iv. 6. And until the everlasting day which hath no night break in upon my soul, to dispel all the shades of our imperfect knowledge in the present twilight of existence, I will get me to the Lord Jesus himself, the myrrh and frankincense of whose one offering in the holy mountain, hath "perfected for ever them that are sanctified," Heb. x. 14.

Say, dear Lord! (for to thee alone do I bring the enquiry) is not sanctification the sole gift of God in the love-tokens of his grace, and wholly unconnected with, and independent of, man's merit? Is not the first manifestation of it, and all the other vouchsafements of it from the Lord? Yea, doth not the sovereign act itself in every instance of it to thy people, result from the joint love and favour of the whole Three Persons in the Godhead? Are not thy people "chosen and sanctified by God the Father?" Jude 1. Are they not also "sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all?" Heb. x. 10. And no less "chosen to salvation through the sanctification of the Spirit?" 2 Thess. ii. 13. And hence, as those acts of grace are the equal acts of Father, Son, and Spirit, towards every individual of Christ's mystical body, while the equality

of the act itself (which none but God can perform) manifests the equal Person of each in the nature and essence of the Godhead; doth not the act itself at the same time no less manifest its fulness and completeness also. Yea, are not thy people called upon in every exercise of faith and love, to go forth in equal acts of adoration and praise to the Holy Three in One, as the united source of such blessedness?

Surely it is from hence that, under the gracious teachings of the Lord, I find somewhat for my soul to lean upon, when at any time I am led to contemplate the personal love of the Father, Son, or Spirit. Hence I can, and do, look up to God the Father with thanksgiving and praise, for that personal act of his grace shewn to me and to all the elect church, in having chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world. Hence, also, I look up with equal acknowledgments to God the Son for his personal love in having both married the church from everlasting, and having redeemed her in time from all the dreadful consequences of the Adam-fall transgression. And no less do I bless God the Holy Ghost for his personal love in the unction of both head and members of Christ's mystical body before the world, and in quickening and regenerating the church in the present time-state of her warfare, when dead in trespasses and sins. And as all these are so many distinct acts which plainly define the Person of each by whom they are wrought, while all originating from the counsel, will, and pleasure of Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons; so do they as fully prove, from the infinite perfections of him by whom accomplished, that they are complete acts which can receive no addition or improvement from man. But if I am to believe that the work of God the Holy Ghost, in quickening and regenerating the church is not a finished work, as are the acts of the other Persons of the Godhead, that sanctification is progressive and depending on man's im-

provement; the beautiful order in the covenant of grace is hereby broken, and the great event of salvation left to a peradventure whether it shall or shall not be accomplished.

Moreover, those scriptures can have no certain acceptance where such sovereign works of grace are alike spoken of, as the free gift of God to the persons of believers, if, while one is to be considered as complete, another is left unfinished. The Holy Ghost by Paul thus blessedly comforts the church. "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God," 1 Cor. vi. 11. Surely the church of God is authorized by this precious scripture to consider the being washed, sanctified, and justified, as alike done, and equally the privilege of the Lord's people; and that they are as much interested in the one as in the other. But if while the being washed and justified are to be accepted by the church as perfect acts to which nothing can be added by man, sanctification, though declared under the same expressions, is to be accepted differently, and the completeness of it depends upon a progressive improvement in the creature, the sense of this scripture is enervated, and the blessedness of its consolation by so much done away.

So again the Holy Ghost by the same apostle, tells the church that Christ is made of God to his people, "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." And he adds the cause, namely, "that he that glorieth may glory in the Lord," 1 Cor. i. 30, 31. But if Christ be not made of God to his people as fully and completely sanctification, as wisdom, righteousness and redemption, what a sad chasm in the midst of so blessed a scripture would be here. And still more, in this case, the church would not have to glory in the Lord for those mercies as one complete whole; for a man's own progressive sanctification is to form a part in the work,

and thus the creature is to divide the glory with the infinite Creator. And is this indeed the sense of this glorious scripture?

Once more. The Holy Ghost by Peter, speaking to the church, when by regeneration she hath attained like precious faith with the apostles, informs the people that there was given unto them, "all things which pertain to life and godliness, being made partakers of the divine nature," 2 Peter i. 1—4. But on the supposition that among the all things which pertain to life and godliness, given to the church, sanctification is not included; but this must be the result of a man's own merit, in a progressive improvement: what participation is this of the divine nature, where so essential a part is wanting?

I would fain spread these things before my Lord; I dare not accept any other decision but his. On a subject so incalculably important, it is necessary to cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of? If I know any thing of my own heart, I have no one object in view, when trying the question by the divine standard, but the divine glory. If the event were to prove the reverse of what I have learnt to accept it, and I have to learn that the grace of God depends for improvement in a progressive sanctification on man; I bless God, I still stand upon even ground with the advocates of this doctrine. And then I may, like Peter, when in the dispute among the brethren, on the subject of circumcision, he expressed his well-grounded hope of equal acceptance before God, with those from whom he differed; so would I say with him, "We believe," said he, "through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved, even as they," Acts xv. 1—11.

And do thou, dearest Lord, say, 'is not the new birth at regeneration wholly spiritual?' Yea, did not Jesus himself teach as much, when in that gracious

scripture of his, the Lord said, "that which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit." John iii. 6. Are not thy people to apprehend, by this plain and familiar illustration, that when, by the quickening influence of God the Holy Ghost at the new birth, the Spirit is brought forth into a new and spiritual life; the body remains unrenewed, and, as much as before, the object and subject of sin and death? And doth not God the Holy Ghost most plainly testify the same, when telling the church, "if Christ be in you, the body is dead, because of sin; but the Spirit is life, because of righteousness." Rom. viii. 10. Can a body, dead, because of sin, perform one act of spiritual life; much less while unrenewed; he going on in a state of progressive sanctification? A child of God *may*, and through grace *will*, sometimes restrain the swellings of sin from breaking out into deeds of actual transgression; for so the Holy Ghost saith, "if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Rom. viii. 13. But if the body, as it is said, be dead, because of sin, how is it possible to do a single act of righteousness? And who that is conscious of this, will talk of progressive sanctification?

Moreover, it should seem, from what is said in holy scripture, that the very exercises, which a truly regenerated child of God is called to, arise wholly from the opposition, which a body of unrenewed nature, in flesh and blood is continually making to a life of grace. The Holy Ghost himself hath said by Paul, that "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. Thou knowest, Lord, and through thy grace teaching me, I have been led, in some degree, to know also, since a life of grace began in my soul, that I have had ever since, continual conflicts in myself, from these opposite principles. Yea, it seems to me at times, as if there

were in me growing imperfections. Say, dearest Lord, could this be the case, if my body of sin were in part renewed? Could that part renewed, any longer harass and distress my soul? Nay, if it were but in the smallest degree renewed, and that renewed part progressively sanctified; would it any longer be liable to corruption? And hath either of these exemptions taken place in the history of the church, even in a single instance? Can one, even one, be produced, in any age, from the beginning of the world to the present hour?

Let men say what they may, I know too well the plague of my own heart, to take confidence in any supposed holiness in a body virtually all sin. The language of the man of Uz is mine, and answers in every point to what he confessed. And though God himself bore witness to Job, that he was in a justified state before God; yet the self-aborrence of his own mind no less manifested what he knew passed within, (compare Job i. 8. with xlii. 5, 6.) "If I justify myself, said he, mine own mouth shall condemn me. If I say I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse. Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul, I would despise my life," Job ix. 20, 21. Had this servant of God any idea of progressive sanctification?

Nay, my Lord, independent of what passeth in the day, in those chambers of imagery within me, were I to be judged for what takes place in the watches of the night, in my sleeping hours; even in those things which some may deem involuntary, and perhaps venial; yet even here I find it good to confess guilt before God. I know not what the advocates of inherent holiness and progressive sanctification may think of this statement. It is possible that they may assert, that no responsibility is attached to any supposed or real criminality in sleep. And, indeed, I am not anxious to go into the enquiry, whether it be so or not. It is simply

of the facts themselves for which I contend. Sure I am, that in a multitude of instances, while my body (in that part of it which is made up of bones, and flesh, and blood) takes rest in sleep, there is another part of me, a thinking faculty, which doth not sleep, and which is not unfrequently most busily engaged, in thoughts, and words, and actions. And, indeed, at times so engaged in evil, as I should blush to communicate to the nearest and dearest earthly friend I have. It becomes an important question, with such as insist upon inherent holiness, to answer, from whence doth such things arise? I stay not to determine the point as to my responsibility for them. Let that part of the subject be set aside. But it should seem to be a self-evident truth, that if evil was not within, such circumstances of evil could not be produced. They are the words of my Lord which saith,—“ Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnesses, blasphemies.”

Precious Lord Jesus, how can I, with such views of indwelling corruption, take confidence from any supposed inherent holiness? Should I not tremble at the very thought of thine inspection, if my acceptance before thee depended upon the least atom of worth in me? If thy word, which holy scripture declares to be “ quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow; if this be a discerner of thoughts and intents of the heart, how naked and open must be every thing to thy knowledge, with whom we have to do? Heb. iv. 12, 13. And should my Lord, as an almighty spiritual anatomist, cut down to the back bone of my frame, and throw open at one view the whole inward structure: shouldst thou, great God, make bear the privy chamber of my heart, the depth of which, and the workings of which, I myself cannot explore; but where all my “ secret sins

are in the light of thy countenance"—Lord! how should I stand before thee, in the discoveries thou wouldst make, "whose eyes are as a flame of fire? And can I, can any man, in the consciousness of such things, be led to advocate the cause of inherent holiness? The question rings through all the chambers of the conscience, and the walls of the heart reverberate the solemn sound, and echoes to the inquiry, "How shall any man be just before God? How can he be clean that is born of a woman." Job xxv. 4.

When I look back to the days of old; when I consider the years of many generations; when I read the groans and self-reproaches of the greatest servants of the Most High God, not in the days of their unregeneracy, but many of them years after a saving work of grace had been wrought in their hearts, I ask myself the question, did these men indeed feel what they have said; and, under such impressions, could any one have made them believe the doctrine of inherent holiness, and progressive sanctification? Nay, hath God the Holy Ghost, in the history of those faithful followers of the Lord, given a single instance in all the bible of such an one? Hath the Holy Ghost testified to Noah of such an improvement in his heart, in those different views given of him before and after the flood? Gen. vi. 8—21. Was Lot in a state of progressive sanctification, whose "righteous soul was vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked," when in Sodom, but who afterwards fell into such an offence at Zoar? Gen. xix. with 2 Peter ii. 7, 8. Was Abraham advancing in self-holiness, whose faith was so illustrious at Moriah, and towards the close of life took unto him concubines? Gen. xxii. with xxv. 6. Do the lives of Moses, Aaron, David, Jeremiah, Peter and Paul, furnish proofs of a progression in sanctity, and not rather, on the contrary, most decided testimonies to the re-

verse? See Numb. xx. 10. Exod. xxxii. 21. 2 Sam. vii. compared with chapter xi. Jer. i. with xx. 14, &c. Matt. xvi. 17, with xxvi. 69, &c. Rom. vii. 18, &c.

Gracious Lord Jesus! I desire to lay low in the dust before thy Divine Majesty, under a conscious sense, that I find nothing progressive of holiness in my body, which is virtually all sin; for in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing! Yes, blessed Lord! let me go softly all my days under a deep sense of it, learning more and more my own nothingness, that I may therefrom, under God the Holy Ghost, know how to value, more and more, thy fulness, suitableness, and all-sufficiency. And if the daily workings of my heart do but endear my Lord the more to me, I am content to be indeed nothing, yea, worse than nothing, so that Jesus be glorified.

A little while, and I shall drop this body of sin, and with it all its corruptions. Every day hastens on the last day. And when my last day on earth comes, my body will sleep in Jesus, until He shall come to take it to himself, that "where He is, there may I be also." Yes, yes, thou precious Lord Jesus! when thou shalt take home my spirit, to join the assembly of "the spirits of just men made perfect," before thy throne, then will my flesh rest in hope, until that joyful morning, when "this corruptible shall put on incorruption; and this mortal shall put on immortality." And then, that which is sown in weakness, will be raised in power; and that which is sown a natural body, will be raised a spiritual body. Yes! for my God, my Saviour Jesus himself, shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God. And then will my Lord change my vile body, "that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself." Amen.

UNDER BEREAVING PROVIDENCES.

I had heard of a bereaving providence in the neighbourhood: death had entered in at the window, and taken away the desire of the eyes with a stroke. It is blessed, yea, very blessed, when our sorrows lead the heart to God, instead of leading from God. Perhaps there is not an higher proof of grace in the soul, than when our afflictions, be they what they may, induce such blessed effects. First, to eye the hand of the Lord with the providence. And, secondly, to approve of the hand of the Lord in the providence. We have two illustrious examples in the old testament dispensation of both these, and which are enough to make many new testament believers blush, under the consciousness of their weaker faith. Eli, when receiving the awful message from the Lord, concerning the destruction of his house, and the death of his two sons in one day, bowed down with submission, saying, "it is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." 1 Sam. iii. 18. And Job, when stripped of every comfort, but the comfort of a covenant God in Christ, had the same views of divine love as before, and cried out, "naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither; the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Job i. 21.

"It is better to go to the house of mourning," Solomon saith, "than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men, and the living will lay it to his heart." Eccles. vii. 2. And no regenerated child of God, but must join issue with the wise man in the sentiment. I resolved, therefore, on receiving the report of death in the neighbourhood, to visit the survivors. Perhaps, I said, they may go with me to Jesus. If Jesus makes (as I am sure he doth, and will make) the case of every member of his mystical body his own,

we shall speed at court, and the very tears of sorrow will be formed by Him, more grateful than the spiced wine of the pomegranate.

I forbore, however, until the first paroxysms of grief had in some degree subsided. Sorrow is not forbidden to the Lord's people, under bereavements by death. Nay, we are expected to mingle our tears in the stream of the deeply exercised, and weep with them that weep. "Only," saith Paul, "I would not have you sorrow as others which have no hope." Jesus himself "wept at the grave of Lazarus." John xi. 35. And when grace is in the heart, and the soul rejoiceth in hope, while nature gives vent to the separation made by death in those we love; the tear standing in the eye, is more lovely than the richest pearl the world ever saw.

It is an high privilege with the Lord's people, to have access to the Lord's presence, at all times, and upon all occasions. I found it so, in going to Jesus, under the present circumstances; and, therefore, had no sooner entered this house of mourning, than I proposed to the survivors an immediate attendance at the footstool of the Lord. And it is astonishing, what blessed effects are derived from a plan of this kind. We know, indeed, that the Lord graciously enters into all the concerns of his people, for he not only bears their sins, but carries their sorrows; yet, the conversion of the deepest mourning into holy joy—and while the countenance is sad, the heart is gladdened—this only is to be found, from the sweet communications of Jesus.

Mourners in Zion, even gracious mourners, are too apt, in such overwhelming seasons as death makes in an house, to overlook those soul-refreshing consolations which arise out of death, and which, in fact, can be obtained only by death. Never, surely, would the Holy Ghost have left upon record, as he hath, so decided a testimony to its blessedness, had the matter been in the smallest degree doubtful. "Precious in the

sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." Psalm cxvi. 15. And if precious in the Lord's sight, how otherwise than precious ought it to be in our's? Let the faithful in Christ Jesus run over but the outlines of the cause of this preciousness, and calculate the mighty gain the disembodied spirit of every child of God finds in death; and he will discover motives of thankfulness instead of mourning; that the one for whom he mourns, hath thereby joined the great assembly of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven, and is for ever before the throne of God, to serve him in his temple night and day.

He is freed at once from all the sorrows, head-aches, and heart-aches of the dying state here below. He is no longer exposed to the indwelling of sin, which unceasingly, while in the body, interrupts all the holy desires of the renewed soul. He is got for ever beyond the reach of the temptations of Satan; and hath nothing more to fear from "the lion's den, and from the mountains of the leopards." Song iv. 8. Happy state of the blessed in heaven! And in relation to the body that sleeps in Jesus, until the glorious morning when the dead in Christ shall rise. And as the covenant rots not in the grave, the ashes of the saints are as secure of the everlasting happiness and glory to which they shall be raised, as the spirits of just men made perfect are in heaven. Hence the Lord proclaimed himself the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, many ages after their bodies were gathered to their fathers, and had seen corruption. And as the Lord Jesus graciously explained all this, and confirmed it by his own precious words: "God is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: for all live to him." Exod. iii. 6. with Luke xx. 37, 38. So we find the Holy Ghost, by his servant Paul, taught the church, that both death and life were the same in respect to the safety of the Lord's people. "For," saith he, "none of us liveth

to himself; and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end, Christ both died, and rose, and revived; that he might be Lord both of dead and living." Romans xiv. 7, 8, 9.

Such being the blessed effects of visits to Jesus under bereavements by death, it were much to be wished that the Lord's people, in all exercises of this kind, would go to Jesus, and spread all that they feel, and all that they desire, before his presence. If a voice from heaven proclaimed those blessed that die in the Lord, shall not those that are living in the Lord, find the blessedness of it also? And can they do otherwise than die in the Lord, who live in the Lord? There are many of God's dear children, in whom a work of sovereign grace hath passed, and are truly in union with Christ, and communion with God, who have trusted Jesus with their souls, but yet shrink at the prospect of death in trusting Jesus with their bodies? How is this? From whence but a weakness in faith can it proceed?

It is a subject of great regret, that any child of God, (who is conscious of a work of grace having passed on him) should add to the natural and unavoidable anxieties of life, the least concern on a point with which in reality he hath nothing to do. We are as passive, or at least, ought to be as passive in respect to our new birth entrance into glory, as we are in our new birth entrance into grace. And yet, how many precious souls there are, of whose everlasting safety in Christ there can be no question, who nevertheless are much concerned on these points—respecting their death, and the manner of their death, of their entrance into the world of spirits, of their bodies being committed to the grave, and many other circumstances of a like nature, with which they add to the present evil in the apprehension of what is to come. Alas! that a regene-

rated child of God should have so little faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Let the ungodly and Christless world think of these things; but let not the redeemed of the Lord. Death to a child of God is but sleep. The Holy Ghost terms it sleeping in Jesus, 1 Thes. iv. 14. And hence one of the old testament saints calls the passage to it but the shadow of death; not the substance, but the shadow. For the body of death was destroyed by Christ at his death; so that nothing remains of it but the mere shade. And the moment of death, for the most part to the Lord's people, is no more than the moment of sleep. For as a man in perfect health of body, when retiring to rest night by night, is unconscious at what instant his sleep begins, so the child of God in perfect health of soul; from union with Christ, when retiring into the arms of Jesus in the sleep of death, is unconscious of the dropping of the body, until his disembodied spirit finds himself in the open vision of the Lord Jesus.

Some indeed there are to whom the Lord, for wise and gracious purposes, is pleased to give strength in a dying hour, to rehearse to others around the righteous acts of the Lord. And no doubt, such blessed departures have proved refreshing to thousands in different ages of the church. Thus the patriarch Jacob; the Lord strengthened him to sit up in his bed, when dying, while he sung his love song to his children, of "the God which had fed him all his life long; and the angel which redeemed his soul from death." And multitudes like him, have seen themselves as sitting in heavenly places in Christ, when going out of life; and have enjoyed by anticipation, the blessedness of it in their own souls, and related to others around them of the Lord's dealings with them, before "the silver cord hath been loosened and the golden bowl broken," Eccles. xii. 6. But these prelibations to glory, as they are not essential, so are they not among the promises.

The one all-sufficient, and all-effectual security, is the presence of the Lord Jesus; and this is in the portion of all, and this is enough. "Fear not, I am with thee; I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine." This, like a golden thread, runs through all the promises, and binds together in one the whole charter of grace, Isa. xliii. Rev. i. And here, all the redeemed of the Lord are alike interested, and all alike safe, whether they be babes in Christ, young men or fathers in God. The child of God, when regenerated is brought into all the privileges of the covenant. He is never more one time than another the object of the Father's love, the Son's grace, and the Spirit's fellowship. Hence, whether great or small; of much or little knowledge; at death all are alike received into the arms of the Lord Jesus, and all enter with him into the joy of their Lord.

For my own part I find it profitable to go often to the Lord Jesus on this, as well as every other occasion. Death as well as life, is the inventory of the believer's treasure. "All are your's, (saith the apostle) whether life or death, or things present, or things to come; all are your's, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's," 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23. Hence therefore being his, I cheerfully leave all with him; and feel no one concern in any one event, perfectly secured in the assurance of the Lord, that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to his purpose," Rom. viii. 28. So that where I am to die, and when I am to die, and how I am to die; these are not my concerns, but Jesus—die where, and when, and how I may, it must be by his appointment; yea, it is already fixed, and sure I am, I shall "die in the Lord." Oh! what a firmness of soul the Lord gives to the Lord's people for this last, as well as every other event of life, when the Holy Ghost hath once granted that covenant promise in its full

exercise in the soul, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee," Isa. xxvi. 3.

Precious Lord Jesus! let thy well known voice be everlastingly comforting my heart with thy well known words; "I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die." And then, whensoever my Lord shall come, at midnight, or cock-crowing, or in the morning; when I hear thy chariot wheels, and my Lord saith, "behold I come quickly!" Oh! for grace in lively exercise, to cry out, with holy joy, "Even so come, Lord Jesus!" Amen.

THE
POOR MAN'S PRAYER BOOK,

FORMED FROM

GOD'S SCRIPTURE BOOK;

IN WHICH IS PROVED

THAT ALL TRUE, SPIRITUAL AND PERSONAL COMMUNION WITH
GOD IS THE SOLE RESULT OF THE GIFT OF GOD;

AND

NOT IN THE WORDS WHICH MAN'S WISDOM TEACHETH, BUT
WHICH THE HOLY GHOST TEACHETH.

AFFECTIONATELY RECOMMENDED

TO THE CHURCH OF GOD;

AND INTENDED AS A SUPPLEMENT TO A LITTLE WORK SOMETIME SINCE
SENT FORTH AMONG THE LORD'S PEOPLE, INTITLED,

THE POOR MAN'S MORNING AND EVENING PORTION.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following pages are designed, as a general answer to enquiries, from the persons of the Lord's people, lamenting the want of forms of prayer, for the use of private and family worship; and more especially, for the little ones of the Lord's household.

It is among the sweetest promises of the old testament, and confirmed by the Son of God himself in the new; "that all the children shall be taught of the Lord." Isa. liv. 13. John vi. 45. Hence therefore, the Lord having undertaken for their education; their province is, simply to wait on the Lord; and "lean not upon their own understanding." For thus the precept runs. "In all thy ways acknowledge him; and he shall direct thy paths." Prov. iii. 5, 6. And the Holy Ghost continuing the same divine teaching, under the new testament dispensation, as in the old, and using the same beautiful similitude, thus speaks to the church by his servant the apostle Peter; "As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby; if so be, ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious; to whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious; ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." 1 Pet. ii. 25.

This leading truth of our holy faith, I have endeavoured to set forth in this little work; hoping, that under divine impressions, the regenerated people of God, may be taught of God, how to pray, and what to pray for, and to be most

fully convinced, that they can say nothing that is truly spiritual unto the Lord, in a way of prayer; until the Lord in his Trinity of Persons, hath first manifested himself unto them in a way of grace.

I send it forth therefore unto the church of God, with the same affection, as I have my former little publications, under the humble but pleasing hope, that the Lord's blessing may go before it, and follow it, in all places of his people, whither it shall come. And if a gracious God, will mercifully own and bless in it what is his own, and as mercifully pardon what is mine; so that his redeemed, (and especially his little ones) may, through his leadings "go in and out," in the sacred inclosure of his word, "and find pasture;" John x. 9. unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages world without end. Amen.

ROBERT HAWKER.

Plymouth, Charles Vicarage,

April 30th, 1820.

THE
POOR MAN'S PRAYER BOOK.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY AND EXPLANATORY.

THERE is no part in the life of grace, and until the renewed child of God is brought into an holy acquaintance and familiarity with God in his Trinity of Persons, in which he finds himself so much at a loss, and of which he more frequently complains, than of that which concerns prayer. Often do we hear him say, that he knoweth not how to pray, neither what to pray for. And although in the very scripture where he finds the same complaints lodged by the church, he might have observed also, it is said, that "the Spirit helpeth us in our infirmities;" Rom. viii. 26. yet forgetting the use to be made, both of our helplessness, and of the Lord's all-sufficiency; and that in fact the very inability of man affords occasion for the manifestation of the power of God, whose "strength is made perfect in our weakness;" 2 Cor. xii. 9. he is everlastingly leaning upon an arm of flesh, and willing rather to go to the mercy-seat upon any crutches of human construction, than the being led there simply under the influences of that gracious "Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father!" Rom. viii. 15.

Alas! what a degeneracy is here, from their illustrious progenitor, in the present generation, of "the praying seed of Jacob!" Gen. xxxii. 24—28. Hos. xii. 3—5. What a departure from "the simplicity that is in Christ!" 2 Cor. xi. 3. Surely, if the regenerated child of God, (and it is of such only I speak) did but attend more to divine teaching, and less to human reasoning, (Gal. i. 15, 16.) the fallacy of such principles would be as glaring, as if written with a sun-beam. For if the sense of our own nothingness, induced (as it is intended to induce) a right apprehension of the Lord's all-sufficiency, and a feeling consciousness of the one, inclined the soul to lean the more upon the other; never would a child of God, "who had begun in the spirit, seek to be made perfect in the flesh." Gal. iii. 3. And indeed, independent of all other considerations, the thing itself testifies its own folly. For how is it possible, for one man to have any just apprehensions of what passeth in the mind of another man? And if he knows not his feelings, how shall he frame his prayers? Much less, how shall he give him, what is the sole prerogative of the Lord alone to give, (and without which, there can be no life in prayer) "the Spirit of grace and of supplication?" Zech. xii. 10. Very sure I am, as it concerns myself, if all the men upon earth, yea, and if joined by all the angels in heaven, were to meet together in one synod, to compose a form of prayer for my soul, even for a single day of my life, so as to say for me all I had to say, and to tell the Lord all I had to unbosom before him, they would fail in the attempt. In relation to public ordinances, and means of grace, perhaps general wants may be formed upon general expressions. And indeed, that comprehensive prayer taught by the Lord himself, and intended for general use, sufficiently confirms its authority. That one precept he hath left, saith as much, "when ye pray, say, our Father," &c. Luke xi. 2.

But it should be remembered, that this is the Lord's prayer, and not man's. And what comes *from* the Lord, will lead *to* the Lord. But when the *regenerated* child of God (and it is of such only I speak) is alone with the Lord, or encircled amidst his little family, who but the Lord can give the spirit of prayer in such hallowed seasons? For my own part, I should consider every book, but the Lord's book, rather an interruption than a help to lead to the throne of grace. Were I to use the best pre-composed prayers of others upon these occasions, I should be for ever apprehensive of somewhat contained in them unsuited to my case and circumstances; somewhat which I could not say, and somewhat omitted which I ought to say; so that after all, many a sorrow would be left untold; many a petition forgotten, and often the throne of grace departed from without the particular acknowledgment of past mercies, and the earnest application for future blessings. And can any *regenerated* child of God (and it is of such only I speak) find comfort in such visits to the mercy-seat? Is not this the very state the apostle describes of the "spirit of bondage again to fear, and not the spirit of adoption?" Rom. viii. 15. Precious Lord Jesus, keep thy people from such frames! Thou knowest our nature by thine own! And very blessedly is it said of thee, "that we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." And therefore we are commanded "to come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Heb. iv. 15, 16.

What saith the child of God, I mean the *regenerated* child of God, (for let it be all along remembered, through the whole of this little work, that it is of such only I speak) what saith he to this statement? In all instances where the Lord is bringing his people "by a

right way to a city of habitation," (Ps. cvii. 7.) he is opening to them more familiarly an acquaintance with himself. He brings them into deeper views also of themselves, and "the plague of their own heart," 1 Kings viii. 38. He doth by them, as he did by Israel of old, when "leading them forty years in the wilderness, to humble them, and to prove them, and to shew them what was in their heart," Deut. viii. 2. He leads them, as he did the prophet, into "the chambers of imagery," in the corruption of human nature; and as the Lord takes them through the different apartments of it, and opens to their astonished view the workings of evil within, and of which they were before unconscious; the Lord speaks to them, as he did to the prophet, and saith, "Hast thou seen this, O son of man? turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these!" Ezek. viii. throughout.

Unawakened, unregenerated, carnal men, who have the *form* and not the *power* of godliness, they know nothing of those heart-searching discoveries made by the Holy Ghost; they have never attended the lectures of the Spirit; they have never been called to the knowledge of his divine anatomy, nor felt his dissecting knife: hence, they know nothing of that fire of God's word, "which is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword; piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow; and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart," Heb. iv. 12. And from this ignorance of themselves, and of their own indwelling sin, such men talk of progressive holiness, and according to their own view are walking upon the stilts of human perfection; and not unfrequently thank God "that they are not as other men are," Luke xviii. 11. But the *regenerated* child of God, (and it is of such only I speak) daily exercised as he is with the conflicts of flesh and spirit, and the transgressions which are in his own heart; and in which, as

appears to him at times, there are growing imperfections; he groans, as Paul did (*twenty years* after his conversion) and exclaims, in similar language, "Oh! wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" Gal. v. 17. Psalm xxxvi. 1. Rom. vii. 18. to the end. Let the *regenerated* child of God say, (for of such only I speak) whether, with such convictions on his mind, and more especially when their poignancy is most sensibly felt, any words but his own words, issuing from the abundance of the heart, would suit him at the mercy-seat? Could he, in such seasons, go before the Lord in the pre-composed prayers of other men? and would such forms of expression give vent to his full soul? Oh! how true are those sayings of old, "the heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy," Prov. xiv. 10.

Moreover, it is altogether as unscriptural, as it is unprofitable, to seek the Lord's face, but in the Lord's strength. "When thou saidst, seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, thy face, Lord, will I seek," Psalm xxvii. 8. There is no coming unto the Lord, but by the Lord, John xiv. 6. "No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him," John vi. 44. And this corresponds to what the Lord hath said, by the prophet, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee," Jer. xxxi. 3. And that the divine agency of God the Holy Ghost must be known and felt, in conjunction with the drawings of the Father, and the comings to the Son; we find this sweet prayer given to the church, "Draw me, (said she) we will run after thee," Song i. 4. And hence, all over the word of God, wherever grace and faith are in lively exercise among the *regenerated* children of God, (and it is of such only I speak) we discover the goings forth of the soul in acts of the most earnest prayer. "O send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead me, let them bring me unto thy holy hill,

and to thy tabernacle: then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy: yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God, my God!" Psalm xliii. 3, 4. See also Ps. iv. 6, 7. Isa. xlv. 1, 7, 8, 9, 12. Ps. xliii. throughout, &c. And the gracious answers of the Lord to those awakened cries of the soul, which are also scattered, more or less, all over the bible, most plainly shew how much the life of prayer depends upon this communion between the Lord and his people. "He will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer. Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, this is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left," Isaiah xxx. 18—21. And in that lovely scripture, where the Lord, adopting the figure of some little one put to bed in the dark, and awaking out of sleep and finding himself alone, cries for his mother; so the Lord, comforting his people in their dark seasons, saith, "then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, here I am!" Isa. lxiii. 9. See also Isa. xliii. 1—4. James iv. 8. Ps. i. 15. But without those awakenings of the Holy Ghost, the drawings of the Father, and the consciousness of being come to the Lord Jesus, and in the strength of the Lord Jesus; all prayer (if it can be called prayer) will be dull work at the mercy-seat.

But we must not stop here. So great and indispensable are those acts of the Lord upon the souls of his people, for the purpose of communion, that, under the authority of scripture, I venture to assert, there never was, neither in the very nature of things can there ever be, a single prayer, truly *spiritual*, which can come up *before* God, unless that prayer is first formed in the heart *from* God. I am well aware that this assertion will expose me to the displeasure both of the professor and profane; but none of these things move me. Nay, I find cause to bless the Lord when reproaches, on such

accounts, come from such quarters. They tend to confirm the divine word, concerning "the perilous times of rebuke and blasphemy," which were to distinguish "the last days," 2 Tim. iii. 1, &c. 1 Cor. xi. 19. and through grace, by the right use of them, they are made to minister to good. True Israelites now, as well as those of old, sharpen their armour on the files of the Philistines, 1 Sam. xiii. Leaving all such to the vanity of their mind, my present province is only to prove the fact itself; the clamors of professors or profane are alike indifferent to me; and no more engage my attention than the noise of a distant multitude with whom I have no concern. Happily in proof of my assertion, the Son of God himself hath said, and left it upon everlasting record, "God is a Spirit, and they who worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth," John vi. 24. And the Holy Ghost as decidedly hath shewn the same, when declaring by Paul, that "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. Hence it undeniably follows, that prayer being a spiritual act, cannot be performed by a mere natural man. And consequently my assertion is fully proved, namely, that there never was, neither in the very nature of things can be, a single truly spiritual prayer to come up before God, unless that prayer first came from God. And how then shall the regenerated child of God (and it is of such only I speak) find help in prayer from the labours of men? What can nature in her highest attainments do to give grace? May it not be said of all such helpers, or pretended helpers to the saints of God in prayer, as Job said of his dunghill preachers, "miserable comforters are ye all! physicians of no value!" Job xvi. 2. and xiii. 4.

And what renders this conduct yet the more preposterous, is, that it is only for the most part men pray

by proxy. In all the other transactions of life, of man with man, every one is led, or supposed to be led, according to the dictates of his own mind. He speaks as he thinks, and is guided in his conversation when no restraint is upon him, as his sentiments may suggest. Look at the beggar on the highway; in his going forth day by day to seek his alms of support, doth he need that any one should tell him what his wants are; or doth he study any eloquence but that which the sorrows of his own heart teach him, to make known his tale of sorrow? How would the world gaze with wonder, until the novelty of the sight ceased to attract attention, to behold men of this description begging by book? And yet, if the subject was not too serious for laughter, I would ask what would be said, if it were told us that all the beggars which swarm in our streets were doing, as too many beggars at the heavenly court do, seeking their daily alms by system, and their petitions for the most part were the production of other men's study, and not their own. And yet what comparative statement can there be between the vast object of their different statements, to give energy to their several petitions, between him who merely asketh for the things of the life that now is, and the man who is seeking for the everlasting blessings of the life to come?

Let us state the striking contrast of the two, if but in a few particulars only. The mendicant among men hath to make his application, for the most part, to an unfeeling world, who are too much taken up with their own concerns to attend to the concerns of others. But the beggar before God hath to do with the God of all grace, who both knows and regards the affliction of the afflicted; and concerning whom it is said, that the sorrowful of his people are "to cast all their care upon him, for he careth for them," 1 Pet. v. 7. The poor of this world in their suits to their fellow creatures, have no claim for what they ask, nor any promise or assur-

ance that they shall be heard and answered. But the poor in spirit, in their cries to God, found their claims in Christ, and in those exceeding great and precious promises whereby they are assured of "all things being given to them that pertain to life and godliness," 2 Pet. i. 3, 4. Hence, "all the promises in him are yea, and in him amen," 2 Cor. i. 20. The friendless of this world's poor are strangers to the greater part of those from whom they ask alms, and can use none of those interesting and endearing claims of relationship which arise out of the charities and connections in life. But the sorrowful of the Lord's poor are well known, and well beloved at the heavenly court where they lodge their petitions, being heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, "and the Spirit witnessing to their spirits that they are the children of God," Rom. viii. 16, 17. The earthly suitor to his fellow creatures has seldom any to plead his cause, or make interest in speaking a word for him with any assurance of success. But the heavenly pleader before God hath one whom the Father heareth always, and in whose high priestly office he is commanded "to come boldly to the throne of grace, that he may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need," Heb. iv. 16. Man towards man, is not only too generally unfeeling, and regardless of each other's misery, but will sometimes add cruelty to unkindness, and return the cry of the broken in heart with frowns and punishment. But "the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort," comes home to his mourners under those endearing names, not only in the assurance that he hath all mercy and all comfort suited to the case of every one of his people; but that so far from turning any away, he assures them that he will be before hand with them in their suit. The proclamation from heaven runs in these words, "And it shall come to pass, that before they call I will answer,

and while they are yet speaking I will hear," Isa. lxxv. 34. And can the child of God, yea, the regenerated child of God, (for it is of such only I speak) can he be confident of these things, and with that conviction on his mind ever go to the mercy seat and pardon office of the Lord Jesus Christ in the words of others, and not his own? Will he desire any other preparation to prayer than "the preparation of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, which are both from the Lord?" Prov. xvi. 1.

One word more. As all the grace and energy in prayer, which leads the soul to the Lord, must first come from the Lord; so in every spiritual prayer thus formed by grace, there is an equal assurance given to all, that it is alike heard and will be answered in mercy. And this becomes a matter of the fullest joy to every child of God, because how weak and poor soever his prayers may appear to him, yet have they in them a sweet savour of the name, and grace, and love of all the Persons in the Godhead. Hence we find the Lord Jesus comforting his church under all her conscious weakness, and infirmities in prayer, with those sweet words; "Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honeycomb; honey and milk are under thy tongue, and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon," Song iv. 11. What drops from the lips of a child of God in prayer and praise, when both are awakened in the soul by the Holy Ghost, perfumed by the blood and merits of the Lord Jesus Christ, and come up in his name before God our Father, are more sweet than honey, and more fragrant than all the spices of Lebanon. As the confirmation of this precious truth is very fully set forth in the scriptures, and the constant belief of it is, of all other considerations the most encouraging to the regenerated child of God, (and it is of such only I speak) to lead him, amidst all the inability he finds in

himself, before the mercy seat, in full dependence on divine strength; I beg indulgence to state this point somewhat more particularly.

All the ways and works of God as manifested in his Trinity of Persons, towards his church and people, are one and the same. For as the whole Persons which constitute the Godhead are but one and the same in nature and in essence, so are they but one in purpose, council, will, and pleasure. There is a beautiful order observed by Jehovah in all the acts of grace which he is pleased to manifest to his church, when coming forth in holy communion. Each glorious person in the Godhead takes part in the love-tokens shewn the people. The child of God under divine teaching can, and doth receive them, in such a way and manner, as do most clearly and fully define and identify each person in the Godhead; while no less at the same time, though the distinct acts of each prove the distinction of person, the whole is shewn and proved to be the joint result and agency of one and the same will, of one and the same undivided Jehovah. If with profound reverence, I might presume the attempt of illustrating those sublime acts of God in his grace, by an allusion to the works of God in nature, I would say, that the personal manifestations of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, are not unsimilar for distinctness to the different colours of the rainbow. In that beautiful arch we behold in the heavens, any, and every eye can very plainly perceive, that there is a diversity of colours distinct from each other, but yet the whole is so intimately blended, that no eye can discern where one begins, or another ends; for all is but one and the same "bow of the covenant which God hath set in the cloud," Gen. ix. 13. In like manner, those acts of grace manifested to the church, in the love-tokens of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, are all sufficiently distinct, so as to define distinction in each person; but yet the

whole is so blended as to form together but one complete whole; the joint love, and grace, and favour, of One infinite and eternal Jehovah, "who is One Lord, and his name One," Zech. xiv. 9.

Thus, to make application of this statement to the point now in view. I have before remarked, that every spiritual prayer formed by grace in the heart of a regenerated child of God, (and it is of such only I speak) how poor and weak soever it may appear to him, hath in it the savour of each Person in the Godhead, and as such it bears an equal assurance of acceptance with the highest and the best. And thus this great leading truth is proved from scripture. God the Holy Ghost is said to be the quickener to prayer, and the helper in prayer. His is the blessed work to renew from day to day, the souls of those whom he hath regenerated. His, to maintain and carry on the life of grace in the heart, by glorifying to his redeemed ones the Person of Christ, and taking of the things of Christ and shewing unto them. He excites a sense of want in the soul for Christ: he puts an hungering and thirsting after Christ. He opens to such rich and blessed views of Christ, in his Person, fulness, suitableness, and all-sufficiency, as nothing short of the personal enjoyment in Christ can satisfy. And by opening a door of communication with the Lord, and keeping open that door in real spiritual refreshment from the Lord, he performs that gracious office which is specially and personally his in the covenant of grace, and which is spoken of in the scripture under that comprehensive expression, of filling the souls of the Lord's people "with all joy and peace in believing, abounding in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost," Rom. xv. 13. Hence we find the Lord Jesus himself calling upon the Spirit, "to blow upon his garden, (the church) that the spices might flow," Song iv. 16. Hence God the Father is revealed, as commanding the prophet to the same thing, by inviting

the Spirit "to breathe upon the slain of his people that they might live," Ezek. xxxvii. 9. And hence we find the apostle praying for the church, for the same influences of the Holy Ghost to be poured upon them. "The Lord (said he) direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ," 2 Thess. iii. 5. I stay not to make references for all the proofs; the bible is full of them. Let a few suffice. Rom. viii. 26. Isa. xlv. 3—5. Zech. xii. 10. John xiv. xv. and xvi. Thus the conclusion is, that it is the personal work of God the Holy Ghost to quicken and lead, to keep up and maintain in all spiritual prayer, the regenerated child of God, (and it is of such only I speak) and his, and his only to induce what the apostle John calls, "a joy that shall be full, in having fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ," 1 John i. 3, 4.

And in relation to the part which God the Father takes in every prayer of the regenerated child of God, (and it is of such only I speak) there cannot be a single petition presented at the mercy seat, as taught by the Holy Ghost, but what is agreeable to the mind and will of God. For "it is the Spirit which searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." And hence the apostle saith, "now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things which are freely given to us of God," 1 Cor. ii. 9—12. And therefore elsewhere it is said, "he that searcheth the heart knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God," Rom. viii. 27. So that here we gain another point in confirmation of this most precious doctrine. We have before seen, that it is the Holy Ghost which leads out the soul in prayer: and we have now seen, that all the leadings of the Lord in prayer are in conformity to the will of God. And hence the conclusion is undeniable, no prayer can

come up before God but what bears with it the double testimony of the Father's will, and the Spirit's searching the deep things of God; so that both are in the same divine agency; the Holy Ghost knoweth what the Father is disposed to give, and the intercession he puts in the heart is in perfect correspondence to the same; "he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God," Rom. viii. 27.

And that God the Son is equally engaged in every prayer of the regenerated child of God, (and it is of such only I speak) is evident from the whole tenor of scripture. Indeed, his unceasing work is intercession. But what I now particularly aim at, is to shew the beautiful order and correspondence which is manifested in the sacred Three, in relation to the saints of God in their seasons of prayer. And a reference to a single verse in the close of the chapter, which hath been already quoted on this subject, will be enough in point. For the apostle having most decidedly shewn that the Spirit "searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God," and as such, teacheth the Lord's people to make intercession "according to the will of God," makes this very blessed conclusion, "that we have the mind of Christ," 1 Cor. ii. 16. Now how may a child of God, taught of God, be said to have the mind of Christ? Evidently from hence; because the same Spirit which dwelleth in Christ, dwelleth in his people also. And therefore the prayer which the Spirit indites in our hearts, is in perfect agreement to the mind of Christ. What the Holy Ghost teaches us to pray for upon earth, is an echo to the intercession of Christ in heaven. So that as a voice reverberates from broken walls, the intercession of the Son of God will return in corresponding language from our broken hearts, and both be in conformity to the will of God our Father! What a blessed testimony is the whole, of the joint grace and love, and favour, of the Holy Three in One, to the

poorest and humblest breathings of the souls of the Lord's people in prayer, when drawing nigh the mercy-seat? And what a relief ought the conviction of it afford to every regenerated child of God, (and it is of such only I speak) under all his own short comings, and heart straitenings in prayer? Who of the Lord's little ones would evermore fear to go before the mercy-seat, while assured of the love of God the Father, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the communion of the Holy Ghost? And who then would suffer those sweet and hallowed seasons of personal knowledge of, and fellowship with the Holy Three in One, which bear record in heaven, to be broken in upon by any or by all the studied words of creatures upon earth? How hath my heart been affected, when beholding men bolstered up in such trammels of devotion, unable to come to the Lord's table without bringing with them what is called, "the Week's preparation for the Sacrament," and afraid to receive the elements of the supper, before they had repeated certain forms of words, written in this book? Surely the regenerated child of God, (and it is of such only I speak) cannot but see that the Poor Man's Prayer Book must be the Lord's Scripture Book, for we can say nothing that is truly spiritual to the Lord in a way of prayer, until the Lord hath first spoken to us in a way of grace. And all true spiritual personal communion with God, must be the sole gift of God, and "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth."

And here I might close my introductory and explanatory chapter. And, indeed, if the proof that all spiritual prayer must first come *from* God before it can come *to* God, was all I aimed at in this introduction, I should think it unnecessary to add more. But what hath been hitherto said, is but a preface, and that a very short preface, to what might be offered on the subject

of holy acquaintance *with*, and communications *from* God, in his Trinity of Persons in prayer. When we consider the vast and interesting thought, in relation, not simply to the life that now is, but of that yet more principally which is to come, it riseth to a magnitude indeed! We then enter as into a new region. Here objects hitherto unexplored, open before us. And, as the man who hath been ascending an high hill, when reaching the summit, discovers before him a boundless prospect extending on every side to the utmost verge of the horizon which he saw not before, so in the contemplation of the world to come, where the personal knowledge of and communion with Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons is to constitute the whole blessedness of eternity; the consciousness of this gives a ten-fold energy to all that hath been said for the cultivation of acquaintance with these glorious Persons of the Godhead *now*, with whom ere long, the church of God will *everlastingly* dwell.

I dare not trespass any longer by way of introduction. But I must not conclude without first observing, that the very idea of that oneness and union, into which the church of God is brought for communion with the Persons of Jehovah to all eternity, as it is among the first and leading points of our most holy faith, so is it the first and greatest which is the most affectionately endeared to our feelings. When Jehovah, in his Trinity of Persons was pleased to go forth in acts of creation, and to call a church into being, the purpose was declared to be for communion—"This people have I formed for myself, they shall shew forth my praise." Isa. xliii. 21. "But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself." Ps. iv. 3. And the Lord Jesus Christ most blessedly confirmed the same when speaking to the Father on the subject, he said, "That they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in

us. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one. 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. If then, this was the first and is the ultimate end for which Jehovah formed the church for communion here by faith, and hereafter in open vision, will not the *regenerated* child of God (for it is of such only I speak) in so glorious a prospect, desire above all things for a growing acquaintance with the Lord, and by prayer and praise be as one walking on the confines of the invisible world, until faith is lost in sight, and grace consummated in glory?

It is true indeed, our knowledge and apprehension of such sublime objects is very limited. We only see as through "a glass darkly." The present state is but the twilight of being. The church is in her minority; and every thing we meet with is suited to the education and trainment of children. But, according to the beautiful figure the Holy Ghost is pleased to adopt, in accommodation to this nonage of our present state; he hath said, that "as new-born babes we are to desire the sincere milk of the word that we may grow thereby; if so be we have tasted that the Lord is gracious." And the *regenerated* child of God (for of such only I speak) hath tasted that the Lord is gracious, and is therefore coming unto him, not in forms of prayer of other men's composing, but in the awakened language of his own heart. His is a spiritual apprehension, and a personal knowledge; and the great design of all communion in prayer is, "to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." 1 Pet. ii. 2—5.

It is very blessed to observe how holy men of old are described in scripture when engaged in their godly exercises before the throne. Some of the sweetest, because some of the most successful prayers recorded

by the Holy Ghost contain only a few broken sentences and fragments, as if bursting from broken hearts. And indeed it will ever be a scriptural doctrine, to which the experience of the *regenerated* children of God in all ages fully subscribe, (it is of such only I speak) that where there is the least of man there is most of God. When David (the man after God's own heart) came to review his life, and went in under that frame before the Lord, his soul was so overwhelmed in the prospect, that he cried out, "Whom am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto. And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God, but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while yet to come. And is this the manner of man, O Lord God? And what can David say more unto thee?" 2 Sam. vii. 18, &c. And in the relation Hezekiah gave of the goings forth of his soul in prayer when receiving abounding mercies, he tells us that he could only "chatter like a crane, or a swallow, and mourn like a dove." Isa. xxxviii. 14. Yes, the blessedness at a mercy seat when the soul is brought into intimate communion with God, is not as much from what we say to God, as what God saith to us; not from what we can bring to the Lord, but from what the Lord manifesteth to us. I would rather on these occasions, the Lord should speak one word to me in grace, than that I should offer to the Lord ten thousand words in prayer!

What saith the child of God, I mean the *regenerated* child of God (for I am only having such in view) to this statement? Many of the Lord's little ones there are, who can say but little to the Lord in a way of prayer, for whom the Lord hath done great things in a way of salvation. But if the *regenerated* child of God (it is such only I have in view) cannot speak much to God, doth he wait upon God. If he cannot utter words, yet it is said, "the sighing of the prisoner

cometh up before God," Ps. lxxix 11. If only tears awakened by grace fall, it is said, he putteth "our tears into his bottle." Ps. lvi. 8. If he can do neither, a look unto the Lord with an eye of faith is prayer; for he hath said, "look unto me and be ye saved!" Isa. xlv. 22. Precious Lord! let me but hear thy voice in which thou hast said, I will say, "it is my people:" and sure I am, thou wilt enable me to say, "the Lord is my God." Zech. xiii. 9.

CHAPTER II.

THE FULNESS OF THE SCRIPTURES OF GOD, IN FURNISHING WORDS,
BOTH FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER, FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

An acquaintance with God, in his Trinity of Persons into which the child of God, by regeneration is brought; in which, through all the after stages of his continuance upon earth, he is daily increasing, until a life of grace is opened into a life of glory; finds ample resources for maintaining and keeping alive, this holy communion and familiarity with all the Persons of the Godhead, both in the scriptures of the old testament and of the new. And so very full is the word of God of those supplies, that it is hardly possible for the regenerated child of God, (and it is of such only I speak) to open to any part without finding somewhat immediately suited to his purpose. Let his present circumstances be what they may, either under depression, or the reverse; through all, and in all, the departments of nature, providence, and grace, with which the child of God is exercised; in this precious book of God, he will discover expressions, so exactly suited to his own personal situation, as are the most calculated of all others, wherewith he may come, and present himself and his concerns before the Lord. As

if a gracious God designed, (and which is indeed the case) that the Lord's people, should speak to the Lord, in the Lord's own words. For in truth, (and it is a truth, which can never be too often, nor too strongly impressed upon the mind) we can say nothing to God, that is profitable to us, in a way of prayer or praise, but what God hath first said to us, in a way of grace and love. And however forgetful and inattentive our memories are, to such love tokens of the Lord, certain it is, that the Lord, in his Trinity of Persons, is continually coming forth in them, yea, abiding with his people, and for ever manifesting himself unto them, otherwise than unto the world. John xiv. 16—23. Rev. iii. 20. And these things, so plainly revealed in the new testament, are only so many confirmations of the Lord's gracious promises in the old. "As for me, (saith God the Father to his dear Son) this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord. My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever." Isa. lix. 21. Hence, in a daily conversation at the mercy-seat with God in his word, not only sweet soul-refreshing communion is carried on, and kept alive in the soul, but hereby is as continually manifested, the persons of the Lord's people, whose they are and to whom they belong. For these are the features of God's children. These are the marks of their training and education. These prove, that they are brought into the school of the Lord, and are of that blessed number, of whom it was said, "all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children." Isa. liv. 13. John vi. 45. That covenant promise, so graciously recorded by the prophet, and brought to the memory of the church again and again, by the apostle, manifest that the last days are

come, wherein the Lord said, "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." Jer. xxxi. 33. Heb. viii. 10. and x. 16. So that by thus coming daily, yea, hourly before the Lord, in the Lord's own way, (John xiv. 6.) and speaking to the Lord, in the Lord's own words, (Prov. xvi.) 1. we grow more and more into an holy acquaintance with the Lord; and like children at home, and in their father's house, who are living always under the father's eye, we go in and out, and find access at all times, and upon all occasions, to come "boldly to the throne of grace, and obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Heb. iv. 16.

And it is most blessed to the regenerated child of God, (and it is of such only I speak) when thus brought under divine teaching, to observe what a profusion of the most precious things the Lord hath provided, in every part of his scriptures, for opening and keeping open unceasing communion and "fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ," 1 John i. 3. For the gracious Lord hath not only said, "take with you words, and say unto the Lord," thus, and thus. Hosea xiv. 2, &c. but so very condescending the Lord is, that he hath both furnished words of what we are to say to him, and also recorded very often in the same scriptures, what he hath said, and will say, and is for ever saying to us. And indeed, infinitely more are the Lord's words to his people, in a way of blessing and favour, than all they can, or do say to him in a way of supplication or praise. The Lord is always before hand with his people, that "before they call, he answers." And as one of old said, so all now find, "the God of my mercy (said he) shall prevent me;" that is, shall be beforehand with me. He comes forth to prevent me with his grace, before that I am ready in prayer. Ps. lix. 10. And oh! how truly blessed it

is, when we can and do remember what the Holy Ghost hath said, and act faith upon it; "Be careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." And what a full, rich, and comprehensive promise followeth—"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Phil. iv. 6, 7.

I cannot, within the limits which must be observed in an humble work of this kind, attempt to bring before the regenerated child of God, (and it is of such only I speak) the whole of what is contained within the sacred inclosure of scripture, which the Lord hath furnished, both for praise and prayer, in words for all their situations, wherewith to come before him. Neither, indeed, would it be proper. Far more will it be [for their pleasure and profit, for every child of God to gather therefrom for himself. A sample only, therefore, will be necessary, under a few leading points. And if the same Almighty author of his word, which filled the minds of those inspired men to write, will give grace to read; and what came warm from their hearts, will, under the same unction, produce a like holy flame in our's: then shall we be able to say with the apostle, "unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly, above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." Eph. iii. 20, 21.

FIRST.—*Scripture for blessing and praising God for what he is in himself in his Trinity of Persons.*

I begin with those scriptures which furnish words for holy worship, in the contemplation of what Jehovah is, in his Trinity of Persons in himself, and abstracted from what he hath done, and is for ever doing, and

will to all eternity do for his church and people. A view of his gracious manifestations towards them, will naturally arise from hence, and succeed in order as we go on. But our first consideration ought necessarily to be directed to the contemplation of Jehovah himself, as revealed in his holy scriptures, in which we find endless causes for unceasing adoration, love, and praise; so as to cry out at every step we take, in the review, with one of the sacred writers, “blessed be his glorious name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory: Amen and amen!” Ps. lxxii. 19.

Now, the Holy Ghost, in many parts of scripture, hath given the highest, and most finished representation of the church of God, at this employment, and, no doubt, by way of example to every regenerated child of God, (and it is of such only I speak) to follow. Thus, in the vision of the prophet; and, again, in that of the apostle. One cried unto another, and said,

“Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!” Isa. vi. 3.

“And they rest not, day and night, saying, holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty! which was, and is, and is to come!” Rev. iv. 8.

“Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.” 1 Tim. i. 17.

“Who is the blessed and only Potentate? The King of kings, and Lord of lords: who only hath immortality; dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.” 1 Tim. vi. 15, 16.

“Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like unto thee? glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders.” Exod. xv. 11.

“Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty: give unto the Lord, glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the

glory due unto his name: worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." Psalm xxix. 1, 2.

"Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable." Psalm cxlv. 3.

"For who in the heavens can be compared unto the Lord? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord? God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are round about him. O Lord God of Hosts, who is a strong God like unto thee, or to thy faithfulness round about thee?" Psalm lxxxix. 6—8.

"Lord! to whom shall we liken thee? or what likeness shall we compare unto thee? Thou sittest upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; thou stretchest out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadest them out as a tent to dwell in! Thou hast measured the waters in the hollow of thine hand, and meted out heaven with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance. Behold! the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance; behold thou takest up the isles as a very little thing. All nations before thee are as nothing; and they are counted to thee as less than nothing and vanity! To whom then shall we liken God?" Isa. xl. 12, 15, 17, 18, 22.

"Have we not known, have we not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not; neither is weary: there is no searching of his understanding?" Isa. xl. 28.

"O Lord! thou art exceeding glorious; thou art clothed with majesty and honour. Thou coverest thyself with light, as with a garment; thou stretchest out the heavens as a curtain. Thou layest the beams of thy chambers in the waters; thou makest the clouds thy chariots; thou walkest upon the wings of the wind!" Psalm civ. 1—3.

“ O sing unto the Lord a new song : sing unto the Lord all the earth ; give unto the Lord the honour due unto his name : bring presents, and come into his courts. For the Lord is great, and greatly to be praised ; he is more to be feared than all gods. Honour and majesty are before him ; strength and beauty are his sanctuary. Give unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name ; bring an offering, and come into his courts ! O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness ; fear before him all the earth. Say among the heathen that the Lord reigneth ! ” Psalm xcvi. 1—10. Psalm lxxviii. 1, 2.

“ Sing unto God ; sing praises to his name : extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH ! and rejoice before him. ” Psalm lxxviii. 4. See also Psalm xxxiv. 1, 2. Psalm cxlv. throughout.

“ Oh ! the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out ? For who hath known the mind of the Lord ? or who hath been his counsellor ? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again ? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things : to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. ” Rom. xi. 33, to the end.

I hope that these portions from the word of God will be sufficient in point, to answer the object I proposed. I must not, in a work of this kind, enlarge, by selecting any more, though the bible is full of similar expressions, in the pure simple praise of Jehovah, as he is in himself. Neither must I stay to observe, in this place, all that is said, in what I have quoted, of the proof of the Trinity of Persons to be gathered from them. This point will meet us more luminously, under the succeeding part of this chapter, when we come to speak of those scriptures, which specially relate to Jehovah, in

his grace and favour manifested to his people. Nevertheless, I will detain the regenerated child of God, (and it is of such only I speak) for one moment, just to remark, how striking a testimony the last quoted passage brings with it, of the Unity of the divine essence in a Trinity of Persons! For if the apostle had in contemplation, the Person of God the Father, when he cried out, "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! Who hath been his counsellor?" &c. Let it not be overlooked, that the same, and almost in the same words, it is said of God the Son, when by the prophet it is said, "the government is upon his shoulder, and his name is called Wonderful! Counsellor! the mighty God! the everlasting Father! the Prince of Peace! And of the increase of whose government and peace, there shall be no end." Isa. ix. 6, 7. And no less, doth the same prophet, speak of God the Holy Ghost, under the same distinguishing attributes, which can be ascribed to none, but One in the divine nature. "Who hath directed the Spirit Jehovah?" (for such is the original) "or being his counsellor, hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?" Isa. xl. 13, 14. Let it not be forgotten, how very much such scriptures tend to refresh the Lord's people, when by the way they meet us, and not as if designed, (though, no doubt, the Lord means as much) in confirmation of that glorious fundamental article of our faith; "for there are Three that bear record in heaven; the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these Three are One." 1 John v. 7.

Before I go further, to gather from the word of God some of those many scriptures which furnish forth praise and prayer, from the contemplation of what Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons, is, and hath done,

is doing, and will everlastingly do, to his church and people; I would beg to call the regenerated child of God, (and it is of such only I speak) to the consideration of the peculiar privilege and blessedness, which every one of this description becomes interested in, from being enabled to bless Jehovah for what he is in himself. And, indeed, it is not more a claim, than it is a matter of heartfelt joy, when we can and do bless God for his own transcendent glory. For this riseth above all his works, and above all his love tokens, to his people. God is infinitely good, and infinitely gracious; but his nature and being, which gives source to those actions, is of necessity higher, just as much as the cause transcends the effect. Moreover, when we can, and do, bless God, on his own account, it becomes the truest mark of sonship. For the whole creation of God, may be said, in a certain sense, to praise him, for they praise him passively. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handy work." Psalm xix. 1. But the Holy Ghost, by David, hath drawn a line of distinction, when he saith, "all thy works shall praise thee, O Lord!" but he adds, "thy saints shall bless thee." And who but a saint of God can say, it matters not what becomes of me, and of the whole creation of God, let God be but praised: and puts his hearty amen, to every thing which relates to the divine glory, without an eye to himself? Here is a true mark of a saint of God. 2 Sam. xv. 26.

SECONDLY.—*Scriptures for blessing and praising God in his Trinity of Persons, for what he hath done, is doing, and will everlastingly do to his church and people.*

I begin this head of division, in gathering scriptures for the adoration of Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons, as I did the former, with a representation the Holy Ghost himself hath given of the church of God on this

point, blessing God for the grace shewn his people; as the other was for the glory in himself. Thus, in the vision John saw of the throne of God, and the church around. Rev. v. 6—8.

“ And they sung a new song; saying, thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.” Rev. v. 9.

“ Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.” Rev. v. 13.

“ Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb! Amen. Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever.” Amen. Rev. vii. 10—12.

“ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places, in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will; to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved.” Ephes. i. 3—6.

“ 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 them who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.” 1 Pet. i. 3—5.

“ Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits! Who forgiveth all thine

iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases. Who redeemeth thy life from destruction, who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies. Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." Psalm ciii. 1—5.

"We give thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." Colos. i. 12.

"May grace and peace be, from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come: and from the seven spirits which are before his throne; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth: unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood; and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father: to him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen." Rev. i. 4—6.

"Blessed be God, that after the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, and not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour, that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Titus iii. 4—7.

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people! And hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David: as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began; that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant, the oath

which he sware to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life." Luke i. 68—75.

"We bless God, because happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God; which made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that therein is, which keepeth truth for ever." Psalm cxlvi. 5, 6.

"It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High! To shew forth thy loving-kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night." Psalm xcii. 1, 2. Deut. vii. 9. Psalm ix. 1, 2.

"O Lord, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name, for thou hast done wonderful things." Isaiah xxv. 1.

"O sing praises, sing praises to God, sing praises unto our King; sing praises! For God is the King of all the earth; sing ye praises with understanding." Psalm xlvii. 6, 7.

And to add no more. As God the Holy Ghost furnisheth us with that beautiful vision referred to, Rev. v. 6—9. of the church adoring God and the Lamb, with which I opened this part; so hath the same gracious Lord drawn as lively a picture of the whole creation of God, as engaged in the same employment. Psalm cxlviii. throughout.

"Praise ye the Lord! praise ye the Lord from the heavens! praise him in the heights! praise ye him all his angels! praise ye him all his hosts! Praise ye him sun and moon; praise him all ye stars of light. Praise him ye heaven of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the Lord; for he commanded, and they were created: he hath also established them for ever and ever: he hath made

a decree which shall not pass. Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons and all deeps; fire and hail, snow and vapors; stormy wind fulfilling his word. Mountains and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars; beasts and all cattle; creeping things and flying fowls: kings of the earth and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth; both young men and maidens, old men and children; let them praise the name of the Lord; for his name alone is excellent: his glory is above the earth and heaven. He also exalteth the horn of his people; the praise of all his saints, even of the children of Israel; a people near unto him. Praise ye the Lord."

I hope that I have gathered enough, by way of sample, from the holy scriptures, to shew the plentiful provision that is there made, under the second particular, as well as in the former: for the regenerated child of God, (and it is of such only I speak) to frame suitable expressions for approaching the throne of grace, in blessing and praising God; for what he hath done, is doing, and will everlastingly do for his church and people. And before I prosecute the subject further, I would entreat him to pause over what is here brought before him; and, looking up to the Lord for his decision, say, whether there can be any form of words like God's own words, to speak to God, of what God hath first said to us, of the great love wherewith he hath loved us; and that his mercy endureth for ever? Can there be any plan equal to open, and keep open, a perpetual communion between the Lord in his Trinity of Persons, and his people, than what is here done, in those, and the numberless other scriptures of the same kind, which are furnished from the Lord himself in his holy scriptures, that we may come before the Lord, "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual." 1 Cor. ii. 13.

Would we speak to God of his everlasting love, in his choosing the church, adopting the church, accepting the church, in Christ, to be everlastingly holy before him in love? And where shall we find any form of words, like those which God hath himself provided in those scriptures for this purpose? Speak we of redemption, by the sole work, righteousness, sufferings, and death of the Lord Jesus Christ? And what so sweet, so blessed, and so suited, as those most blissful scriptures, which tell the Lord what the Lord hath first attested to us: that "we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace!" Eph. i. 7.

Speak we of regeneration, and all the blessed love tokens of grace from God the Holy Ghost; and where shall we find any thing in all the stores of human learning, equal to those sweet and precious scriptures, which in numberless parts, tell the church, that all these come from that one divine source of divine manifestation, in "the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, shed upon the church abundantly through our Lord Jesus Christ." Titus iii. 5, 6. The Lord grant to every regenerated child of God, (and it is of such only I speak) a right understanding in all things; and very sure I am, that he will find with me, the truth of that blessed scripture in this, as well as in all other occasions, that "if any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth, that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ; to whom be praise and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen." 1 Pet. iv. 11.

THIRDLY.—*Scriptures for drawing nigh to God, in his Trinity of Persons, for what he is to his people, and they to him, in covenant relations in Christ.*

GOD THE FATHER.

I. “They shall call on me, and I will hear them; I will say it is my people, and they shall say, the Lord is my God,” Zech. xiii. 9.

“I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house,” Isa. xlii. 6, 7.

“Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield and thine exceeding great reward,” Gen. xv. 1.

“That the blessing of Abraham might come on the gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith,” Gal. iii. 14.

“This people have I formed for myself, they shall shew forth my praise,” Isa. xliii. 21.

“But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself,” Ps. iv. 3.

“For the Lord hath chosen Zion, he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell, for I have desired it,” Ps. cxxxii. 13, 14.

“For the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure,” Ps. cxxxv. 4.

“For the Lord’s portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance,” Deut. xxxii. 9.

“For whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. 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. 29, 30.

“Having predestinated us unto the adoption of

children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will; to the praise of the glory of his grace wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved," Eph. i. 5, 6.

"Israel was holiness unto the Lord and the first fruits of his increase; all that devour him shall offend; evil shall come upon them saith the Lord," Jer. ii. 3.

"I pray for them, I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine, and all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them," John xvii. 9, 10.

"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his," 2 Tim. ii. 19.

"Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God," Isa. lxii. 3.

GOD THE SON.

II. "My beloved is mine, and I am his; he feedeth among the lilies," Song ii. 16.

"Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits," Song iv. 16.

"I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me," Song vii. 10.

"Now will I sing to my well-beloved a song of my beloved, touching his vineyard. For the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant," Isa. v. 1, 7.

"I will mention the loving-kindness of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness towards the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his loving-kindnesses. For he said, surely they are my people, children that will not lie; so he was their Saviour. In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them. In his love

and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old," Isa. lxiii. 7—9.

"Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory," Eph. i. 14.

"Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold from your vain conversation, received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot," 1 Pet. i. 18.

"He hath purchased with his own blood," Acts. xx. 28.

"Neither by the blood of goats, and calves, but by his own blood, he entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us," Heb. ix. 12.

GOD THE HOLY GHOST.

III. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" 1 Cor. iii. 16.

"What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost!" 1 Cor. vi. 19.

"For ye are the temple 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," 2 Cor. vi. 16. See also Lev. xxvi. 12. Rex. xxi. 3.

"God be merciful unto us and bless us, and cause his face to shine upon us. God even our own God shall bless us," Ps. lxxvii. 1, 6.

"Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not; thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer, thy name is from everlasting! We are thine, thou never barest rule over them; they were not called by thy name," Isa. lxiii. 16, 19.

"And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with

them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily!
Luke xviii. 7, 8.

Now let the regenerated child of God (for it is of such only I speak) again pause, and while he beholds before him some few of those precious scriptures, (and they are but a few indeed compared to what might be gathered) which I have selected on this most blessed of all the articles of our holy faith, the Lord's union with his people, in his Trinity of Persons; let him say with what words like those of the Lord's own words can the renewed souls of God's children come before the throne of God, when at any time the Holy Ghost is there leading them, in and through the Lord Jesus Christ "in prayer and supplication, with thanksgivings to make their requests known unto God!" Was not this the very design for which Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons went forth, in acts of creation, to raise up a church for communion with himself? And did he not constitute his dear Son the head of the church, and his people the body, "that in him all fulness might dwell, and through him all his members might have access by one Spirit to the Father?" Eph. ii. 18. Hence, putting yourself into those covenant relations, which holy scripture so very fully and so very blessedly shews, in becoming our God and our Father; we are in so gracious and peculiar a manner his own, as none but the chosen in Christ can be called; and derive the privileges and rights belonging to our adoption character, as children by Jesus Christ to himself, Eph. i. 5. Hence all those blessings which are promised in the bible to Christ and his seed! Hence God in his Trinity of Persons hath made himself over, in all his fulness of blessedness to his people in Christ! Hence the blessedness to which they are chosen is not to kingdoms or empires, not to a mere consecration to the Lord's service, or to honour; no, nor even to any thing of holiness or happiness abstractedly considered in themselves; but to such a nearness, and oneness, and

union with the Lord himself, as shall become their supreme happiness, and holiness, and glory, both in time and to all eternity. This is so fully proved and confirmed in that sublime prayer of the Son of God when in the flesh, and not in one or two places only, but again and again repeated, as leaves the glorious truth perfectly unquestionable. "Holy Father! keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are," John xvii. 11. "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us," John xvii. 21. "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one even as we are one. 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. 22, 23. Oh! the unspeakable grace, and glory, and blessedness contained in these words? This oneness with this mighty US! leaves at an infinite distance every other thing which might be called blessed; and which in the contemplation of, and comparison with, loseth the very name of blessed. All other things are but shadows to this the substance! All but fruits and effects to this the sole cause. Hence that sweet scripture of the Lord, "that I may cause those that love me to inherit substance, and I will fill their treasures," Prov. viii. 21. Hence that precious assurance also, that "he that blesseth himself in the earth, shall bless himself in the God of truth!" Isa. lxxv. 16.

Neither let the regenerated child of God (for it is of such only I speak) overlook in all his drawings nigh to the mercy-seat of God in Christ, that this oneness and union with God, for which the church was formed in Christ, and which God with such unparalleled grace and condescension calls his inheritance, is, with all the Persons of God in and through Christ. God the Father,

as hath been shewn in those scriptures here gathered, calls his people "his portion, his lot, his inheritance," Deut. xxxii. 9. And he allows himself to be called their's. "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup; thou maintainest my lot," Ps. xvi. 5. Ps. lxxiii. 26. Ps. cxix. 57. Ps. cxlii. 5. God the Son is said to have redeemed it by his blood, for it is called, (as hath been seen) "the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory," Eph. i. 14, 18. And God the Holy Ghost is said to be the "earnest of our inheritance," in that, though given by God the Father, and purchased by God the Son, it is the Holy Ghost by quickening and renewing grace, makes the church in every individual member of Christ's mystical body, "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light!" Eph. i. 14. Colos. i. 12. Oh! the unspeakable love we may here again well exclaim, that God in his Trinity of Persons, who can need nothing from his creatures, and to whom in his essential glory and blessedness nothing can be added by his creatures; should nevertheless condescend to call his church his inheritance, and allow his church to call him their's. And should expressly declare, that he had chosen them for this very purpose, to be his pleasure house, his demesne, his inheritance! And that as a man lives upon his possession, so the Lord lives upon his. "This people have I formed for myself, they shall shew forth my praise," Isa. xliii. 21. Eph. i. 18. 2 Cor. v. 5. Well might the man of God cry out, "Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it; shout, ye lower parts of the earth, break forth into singing, ye mountains; O forest, and every tree therein; for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel," Isa. xlv. 23.

FOURTHLY.—*Scriptures for approaching God in his promises, which manifest that Jehovah in his Trinity of Per-*

sons is a prayer-awakening, prayer-hearing, and prayer-answering God; and both a promise-making and promise-performing God in Christ. "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust," 2 Pet. i. 4.

God himself in his Trinity of Persons is the sum and substance of all promises, as well as the author and giver of all. He is the Almighty promiser, and including every thing promised. That one promise contains in its comprehension the whole charter of grace. "I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people," Heb. viii. 10. Jer. xxxi. 33. Ezek. xxxvi. 28. And this is equally the promise of each glorious Person in the Godhead. The Father is hereby engaged in all covenant promises: the Son is emphatically called, "the mercy promised," Luke i. 72. and the Holy Ghost is known in one of his divine names as "the Spirit of promise," Eph. i. 13. So that Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons, makes over himself, and all he hath of property suited for his church and people, to make good all his promises to them in Christ Jesus.

"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.

"All the promises of God in him are yea and in him amen, unto the glory of God by us." How is this proved? God's people are the children of promise. "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise," Gal. iv. 28. Eternal life given to them with all preliminaries.

"In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie promised before the world began," Titus i. 2.

"Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling; 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.

"All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me, and him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out," John vi. 37.

"Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power," Ps. cx. 3.

Are they long, before they are brought to the new birth? What saith the Lord? "Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? Shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb, saith thy God?" Isa. lxvi. 9.

Are they long before they enjoy the privileges of their new birth? "Ye shall suck and be satisfied with the breasts of consolation; ye shall milk out and be delighted with the abundance of her glory," Isa. lxvi. 11.

Are they as little children wayward and cross? What saith the Lord? "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you, and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem," Isa. lxvi. 13.

Have they the hard heart, and the stubborn mind? The Lord saith, "A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh," Ezek. xxxvi. 26.

Are they by nature and by practice in a state of sin and transgression? The Lord saith, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you," Ezek. xxxvi. 25.

Are they in any of the various troubles of life? The Lord saith, "I will deliver thee in trouble," Ps. xci. 15. "Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me," Ps. l. 15. "But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O

Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel. Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee, for I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel thy Saviour. I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee, therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life," Isa. xliii. 1—4.

Are they in poor circumstances? What saith the Lord? "When the poor and needy seek water and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of vallies," Isa. xli. 17, 18. "I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen," Isa. xliii. 20.

Are they groaning by reason of indwelling corruption? The Lord saith, "Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace!" Rom. vi. 14. Are they exercised with temptations? The Lord saith, "There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man, but God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able, but will with the temptation make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it," 1 Cor. x. 13.

Is Satan throwing his fiery darts at them? The Lord promiseth, that "the shield of faith shall enable them to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked," Eph. vi. 16. "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under their feet shortly," Rom. xvi. 20.

Are they, though children, through fear of death all their life-time subject to bondage? The Lord saith,

“ I will ransom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death. O death, I will be thy plagues! O grave, I will be thy destruction; repentance shall be hid from mine eyes,” Hosea xiii. 14. Hence they shall at length shout with the apostle, “ O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory! Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ,” 1 Cor. xv. 55, &c.

Doth unbelief induce fear, that after all they shall come short of the grace of God? The Lord saith, “ Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom,” Luke xii. 32. “ Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee; yea, I will keep thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.” Isa. xli. 10. And “ the God of all grace who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To whom be glory, and dominion, for ever and ever, amen,” 1 Pet. v. 10.

I might amplify these pages, in filling in from the promises of God, until that I had swollen this little work into a large volume, and even then left a multitude unnoticed. But I have purposely gathered but a few, and chiefly one of a sort, and of the more general promises for general use, that the regenerated child of God, (and it is of such only I speak) may be prompted, the more earnestly to study the divine oracles, and gather for himself. And I will be bold to say, that the more he doth so, the more gratified he will be; and the more the divine faithfulness will be proved. For every promise is linked to another; and he that obtains one, obtains all. Jehovah hath never outpromised himself. And there is nothing the Lord delights in more, in relation to his people, than when they bring his promises for payment before the throne. It is very blessed when in faith, we are able to do this and to

bring the promise, and the Almighty Promiser together, "for he is faithful that hath promised." And what one saint of God found, who lived and died in the full exercise of this faith, and left upon record for the comfort and encouragement of all future generations; all might, and would find, if like him they were enabled to give credit to God, and trust him as God. We have it among the last words of the man after God's own heart, and it was in this believing view of the divine faithfulness of Jehovah, that he expressed himself so sweetly; "Although my house (said he) be not so with God, yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; and this is all my salvation and all my desire, although he make it not to grow," 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

FIFTHLY.—*Scriptures for approaching the mercy-seat, under all heart-straitenings in prayer, in the contemplation of the personal acts of grace towards the church, from the united love of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.*

OF GOD THE FATHER.

"Behold! what manner of love, the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God! Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not," 1 John iii. 1.

"But I said, how shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the hosts of nations? And I said, thou shalt call me, my Father! and shalt not turn away from me," Jer. iii. 19.

"Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, my Father, thou art the guide of my youth?" Jer. iii. 4.

"I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God," John xx. 17.

"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," Eph. iii. 14, 15.

“ But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because we are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son ; and if a son, then an heir of God, through Christ,” Gal. iv. 4—7.

“ But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name ; which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God,” John i. 12, 13.

“ And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good ; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land, assuredly with my whole heart, and with my whole soul,” Jer. xxxii. 39—41.

OF GOD THE SON.

“ Go, and proclaim these words towards the north, and say, return thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you ; for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree ; and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith the Lord. Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord, for I am married unto you ; and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion,” Jer. iii. 12—14.

“ Therefore, behold I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her.

And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope, and she shall sing there as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt. And it shall be at that day, saith the Lord, that thou shalt call me, Ishi, and shalt call me no more Baali; for I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name. And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord." Hosea ii. 14—19.

"For thy Maker is thine Husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called," Isa. liv. 5.

"O the hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble; why shouldest thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night? Why shouldest thou be as a man astonied, as a mighty man that cannot save? Yet thou, O Lord, art in the midst of us, and we are called by thy name, leave us not," Jer. xiv. 8, 9.

"Seeing, then, that we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an High Priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need," Heb. iv. 14—16.

"For we are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that

heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more. But we are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling," Heb. xii. 18, &c.

OF GOD THE HOLY GHOST.

"For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," 2 Cor. iv. 6.

"Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God," 1 Cor. ii. 12.

"But we have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things," 1 John ii. 20.

"But the anointing which ye have received of him, abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie; and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him!" 1 John ii. 27. "And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ," 2 Thes. iii. 5.

"He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you," John xvi. 14.

"Now, I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit," Rom. xv. 30.

"Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," 2 Pet. i. 21.

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all, amen," 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

Here, again, it will be proper to make a pause. And in the review of those few scriptures selected, by way of establishing the great truth I had in view, in gathering them from the general mass of the like nature, with which the word of God abounds; let the regenerated child of God, (for it is of such only I speak) judge for himself, how full and satisfactory they are, in their several bearings to the point in hand. What heart-straitenings ought any one of the redeemed family of the Lord to feel, in his approaches to the mercy-seat, while having in remembrance, and acting faith upon that remembrance, of the personal, everlasting, unchanging love of God the Father; the union with, and interest in all that belongs to the Person, offices, character, and relation of the Lord Jesus Christ; and the fellowship and communion of the Holy Ghost? What heart-straitenings, or coldness, in prayer, ought to hold back the regenerated child of God, from the throne of grace, (and it is of such only I speak) who keeps in view those gracious acts of Jehovah toward the church, in his Trinity of Persons? Had the love of God the Father, in his choice of his church, been made from any thing lovely or good in the persons of those whom he chose: or had that love been the result of some supposed good to be done by them, during the time-state of their being upon earth: then, indeed, a coldness and deadness in their affection to him, might have been supposed also a cause for a change in the Lord's love to them, who is himself unchangeable. But all those gracious acts of God the Father to his church, were eternal acts, and depended upon nothing to be done by them; being wholly the result of God's own sovereign will and pleasure, in what God had from all eternity designed for them. Grace is expressly said to have "been given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began," 2 Tim. i. 9. And the whole church of God is said to be accepted in the Beloved; not for works of

righteousness which we have done, or can do; but wholly to the praise of the glory of his grace. And, because they are all one with Christ, yea, and adopted in Christ, and are the body of Christ; his person, blood, and righteousness are the cause of their acceptance, and from nothing of their's: and the very appearance of the Lamb that was slain in the midst of the throne, pleads all-sufficiently for them; when, from heart-straitenings, and barrenness of soul, they can plead nothing for themselves.

Nay, doth not the Holy Ghost, from those shuttings up of the soul, in seasons of prayer, at one time, and enlargements at another, very sweetly teach the Lord's people most profitable lessons? For what doth it proclaim, but what holy scripture hath before uniformly, by the experience of the church of God, in all ages proclaimed; namely, "that we are not sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God?" 2 Cor. iii. 5. And for my own part, I find cause to bless God for those occasional heart-straitenings and self-emptiness which I feel. And very sure I am, that by such spiritual exercises, God the Holy Ghost is teaching me to profit. I feel the better, and know the better, the blessedness of the Lord's strength, being made perfect in creature weakness. It is the sun's absence, or presence, which produceth the different effects of darkness or light in the earth. And all the day-light in the soul, is solely induced by the Lord, the Sun of righteousness. Oh! then it is blessed, yea, very blessed, to call to mind the unchangeable love in the Person of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost towards the church; when in our approaches to the mercy-seat, we can only lay low in the dust before God, and utter a few broken sighs and self-reproaches of unworthiness. The Holy Ghost hath drawn a beautiful portrait of one of the old testament saints, under those humblings of soul, in the instance

of Ezra, the man of God. Ezra ix. 3, to the end. "And I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head, and of my beard; and sat down astounded until the evening sacrifice. And at the evening sacrifice, I arose up from my heaviness, and having rent my garment, and my mantle, I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the Lord my God; and said, O my God! I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God! for our iniquities are increased over our head; and our trespasses is grown up unto the heavens." Here is the very case in point! The heart-straitening of the man of God, was manifested by the plucking off the hair, and renting the garment and the mantle, as so many signs of the distress of the soul. And what was the relief, when at the evening sacrifice, which set forth by type and figure, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; but what I have been dwelling upon—the personal love of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; which Ezra, like another Abraham, beheld, of "the day of Christ, afar off." John viii. 56. And what sweet meltings of soul, in this view by faith, were those burstings forth, in which the man of God vented himself? Shame of countenance, and the blushing of face, were then, as they are now, precious tokens of the Lord's pouring out the Spirit of grace and supplication: and at the time of the evening sacrifice; meaning, the type of Christ: in looking unto him "whom we have pierced and mourn." Zech. xii. 10. It is not our preparedness, or our enlargements of spirit, which become the cause of our acceptance before God; neither our heart-straitenings, or being shut up, preventions to acceptance. It is indeed good to feel, and to enjoy at times, the goings forth of the soul, in the actual exercises of grace. But then these are but effects, and not the cause of divine favour. And the regenerated child of God, (and it is of such only I speak) can never be too cautious how he substitutes the

one for the other. Never, oh! never let my soul lose sight of the glorious object of all faith, in the enjoyment of faith; nor suffer the person of the Lord Jesus Christ to be hidden from my increasing view, in a cloud of the Lord Jesus's own gifts. Be this my every day, and all the day cause of access to the throne, which God the Holy Ghost hath shewn, and which God the Holy Ghost leads to the enjoyment of: "having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us through the veil; that is to say, his flesh: and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near, with a true heart, in full assurance of faith," Heb. x. 19—22.

SIXTHLY.—*Scriptures for opening and keeping open continual communion with God, in his Trinity of Persons; through the quickening and renewing influence of the Holy Ghost; and in which is manifested, that not only all intercourse between the Lord and his people begins on the part of God, but that, through the whole, the Lord himself is the chief speaker.*

"But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord," Gen. vi. 1.

"And the Lord said unto Noah, come thou and all thy house into the ark," Gen. vii. 1.

"And they that went in, went in male and female, of all flesh, as God had commanded him; and the Lord shut him in," Gen. vii. 16.

"And the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, fear not, Abram, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward," Gen. xvi. 1.

"And she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, thou God seest me; for she said, have I also looked after him that seeth me? Gen. xvi. 1.

"And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran; and he lighted upon a certain place,

and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold the angels of God ascending and descending upon it. And behold the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac; the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south; and in thee, and in thy seed, shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, how dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven! And he called the name of that place Bethel," Gen. xxviii. 10—19.

"I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowest a vow unto me," Gen. xxxi. 13.

"And God appeared unto Jacob again when he came out of Padan-aram, and blessed him. And God said unto him, thy name is Jacob; thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name; and he called his name Israel. And God said unto him, I am God Almighty!" Gen. xxxv. 10, 11.

"And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob! Jacob! and he said, here am I! And he said, I am God, the God of thy father; fear not to go down into Egypt, for I will there make

of thee a great nation, I will go down with thee into Egypt, and I will also surely bring thee up again!" Gen. xlv. 2—4.

"Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back side of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire, out of the midst of a bush. And he looked, and behold the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses! Moses! And he said, here am I! And he said, draw not nigh higher, put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover, he said, I am the God of thy fathers; the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God," Exod. iii. 1—6.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first. And be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning unto mount Sinai, and present thyself there to me in the mount. And he hewed two tables of stone like unto the first, and Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto mount Sinai, as the Lord had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tables of stone. And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin." Exod. xxxiv. 1—7.

"Yea, he loved the people; and all his saints are

in thine hand, and they sat down at thy feet, every one shall receive of thy words," Deut. xxxiii. 3.

"Thy shoes shall be iron and brass, and as thy days so shall thy strength be. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms; and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee, and shall say, destroy them," Deut. xxxiii. 25—27.

"Thus saith the Lord, the heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things hath been, saith the Lord; but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word," Isaiah lxvi. 1, 2.

"Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. Then said I, Ah! Lord God! Behold I cannot speak, for I am a child! But the Lord said unto me, say not I am a child; for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee, thou shalt speak. Then the Lord put forth his hand and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, behold I have put my words in thy mouth?" Jer. i. 4—9.

"The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and sat me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones. And he said unto me, son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest. Then said he unto me, prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, thus saith the Lord God, come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live," Ezek. xxxvii. 1—9.

"But unto you that fear my name, shall the Sun of Righteousness arise, with healing in his wings, and ye

shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall," Malachi iv. 2.

"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?" Matt. vii. 9.

"Take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate; but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye; for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost," Mark xiii. 11.

"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, if any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink; 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 that Jesus was not yet glorified,)" John vii. 37—39.

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you," John xiv. 26.

"Now thanks be unto God which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place," 2 Cor. ii. 14.

"For our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself," Phil. iii. 20, 21.

I hope I have not been too tedious on the one hand, neither too hasty on the other, in going over the sacred inclosure of the word of God, through both testaments of scripture, and selecting a portion here and there from

the several books, more or less in each, by way of explaining the title at the head of this section. My design in what I have done under this particular, hath been to shew, that from the beginning of the bible to the end, multitudes of the sweetest and most interesting passages every where occur, for opening and keeping open continual communion with God in his Trinity of Persons. And I hope the regenerated child of God, (for it is of such only I speak) will not overlook also one of the chief designs I have had in view, in gathering the several scriptures which I have here brought before him, which hath been to make manifest, and in the history of the Lord's people, that not only all intercourse between the Lord and his people begins on God's part, but that through the whole it is the same gracious Lord that carries it on; for he is the chief speaker, and which the examples of those holy men of old as here quoted, abundantly prove.

And I venture to persuade myself that I shall not be thought tedious, if I endeavour to establish this great truth with yet further evidences. For in following up the design of this little work, and answering the title-page of it satisfactorily, I cannot more effectually do this, and prove that the Poor Man's Prayer-book is found only in God's Scripture-book, than by calling in the testimony of God himself, in his Trinity of Persons, to demonstrate his holy will and design in this particular. For what in truth are the several parts of the ordinance of prayer and praise, but real and personal communion and conversation between the Lord and his people? And if the regenerated child of God (for such only I have in view in this humble service) will indulge me under this branch of the subject a little longer, I shall hope under the Lord's teaching to make it appear most fully.

I begin with noticing some of the love-calls of God to his people, and the answer through grace the Lord's people give to them.

“Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon; look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lion's den, from the mountains of leopards. Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck. How fair is thy love, my sister my spouse; how much better is thy love than wine, and the smell of thine ointment than all spices. Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honey-comb; honey and milk are under thy tongue, and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon,” Song iv. 8—11. See also Song ii. 14. Song viii. 13. Rev. iii. 20.

And what are the answers of the church to those love-calls of her Lord? “Draw me, we will run after thee. The king hath brought me into his chambers; we will be glad and rejoice in thee; we will remember thy love more than wine! Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon; for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?” Song i. 4—7. “Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat of his pleasant fruits!” Song iv. 16. See also Ps. xxvii. 4. Ps. lxiii. 1—7. Ps. ci. 1—2. Isa. xxvi. 8, 9.

Again. The Lord's complaints when his people remit their attention to him are further proofs. “O generation, see ye the word of the Lord. Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness? Wherefore say my people, we are lords, we will come no more unto thee! Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? Yet my people have forgotten me days without number!” Jer. ii. 31, 32. See also Hosea xi. 7. Rev. ii. 4.

And what are the cries of the Lord's people in answer to those tender expostulations? The bible is full of them when grace hath again entered the heart, and the love-calls of the Lord are accompanied with the quickenings and renewings of the Spirit. “Oh! that thou

wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence. Be not wroth, very sore, O Lord, neither remember iniquity for ever! behold, see we beseech thee, we are all thy people!" Isa. lxiv. 1—9. See also lxiii. 17—19.

Once more. When the Lord from the repeated backslidings of his people manifests his displeasure, and makes sad threatenings to them. "And he said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be; for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith. They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not god; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities; and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people. I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation," Deut. xxxii. 20, 21.

And what saith the church under an awakened sense of her departure? "O Lord, though our iniquities testify against us, do thou it for thy name's sake, for our backslidings are many, we have sinned against thee! O the hope of Israel, and the Saviour thereof in the time of trouble, why shouldest thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night? Hast thou utterly rejected Judah? hath thy soul loathed Zion? Why hast thou smitten us, and there is no healing for us? We looked for peace, and there is no good; and for the time of healing, and behold trouble! We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness, and the iniquities of our fathers, for we have sinned against thee. Do not abhor us for thy name's sake; do not disgrace the throne of thy glory; remember, break not thy covenant with us!" Jer. xiv. 7—21.

Lastly, to mention no more. We find the church brought under a sense of her backslidings, and the Lord instantly noticing the change, and expressing his approbation. "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning

himself thus; thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke. Turn thou me, and I shall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh; I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth!"

And what are the gracious answers of God? "Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still, therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord," Jer. xxxi. 18—20.

SEVENTHLY.—*I have but one point more to accomplish in this chapter, in shewing what abundant provision God the Holy Ghost hath made in his sacred word, for the Lord's people to come with before the Lord: and that is, to gather a few of the many short, but sweet and savoury hymns of praise, with which the scriptures are every where so richly full; as if that Almighty teacher (and which is indeed the case) would not leave his regenerated children (and it is of such only I speak) without praising words, as well as praying words, when drawing nigh the mercy-seat, in and through the glorious Person and finished redemption of the Lord Jesus Christ. A few from the old testament scriptures first.*

"And David said to all the congregation, now bless the Lord your God. And all the congregation blessed the Lord God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads, and worshipped the Lord," 1 Chron. xxix. 20.

"Stand up and bless the Lord your God for ever and ever. And blessed be thy glorious name which is exalted above all blessing and praise," Neh. ix. 5.

And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God! And all the people answered, Amen! Amen! with lifting up their hands, and they bowed their heads and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground," Neh. viii. 6.

"Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who

only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name for ever, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen," Ps. lxxii. 18, 19.

And now a few from the new testament. And let the regenerated child of God (for it is of such only I speak) observe with me, that old testament saints, as well as new testament believers, had their souls tuned by grace to the same divine song; all directed to the God of Israel; for Jehovah from the very early days of the church, said unto the children of Israel by Moses, "the Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations," Exod. iii. 15. Hence Israel's God is our God, for ever and ever, and this is his memorial to all generations. But though the Holy Ghost hath not altered a single word in this divine song, yet since the open manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ in the flesh, he hath added that sweet and precious note to the same string, when calling him by that endearing name, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. One or two quotations will explain.

"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," Eph. iii. 14, 15.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ," Eph. i. 3.

"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," 1 Pet. i. 3—5.

"Now unto him that is of power to establish you, according to the gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ; according to the revelation of the mystery,

which was kept secret since the world began; but now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God. To God, only wise, be glory, through Jesus Christ, for ever, amen," Rom. xvi. 25—29.

"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort! who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God!" 2 Cor. i. 3, 4.

"Now the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God that your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," 1 Thess. v. 23.

"Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory, for ever and ever, amen." 1 Tim. i. 17.

"Now the God of peace, which brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make us 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," Heb. xiii. 20, 21.

"That God in all things may be glorified, through Jesus Christ; to whom be praise and dominion, for ever and ever, amen," 1 Pet. iv. 11.

"Now the God of all grace who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that you have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, amen," 1 Pet. v. 10, 11.

"Now unto him that is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy. To the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever, amen," Jude 24, 25.

“ Grace and peace from him which is, and which was, and which is to come : and from the seven spirits which are before his throne ; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, and to his Father ; to him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever, amen,” Rev. i. 4—6.

The old testament blessing. “ The Lord bless us and keep us. The Lord make his face to shine upon us, and be gracious unto us. The Lord lift up his countenance upon us, and give us peace,” Numb. vi. 22, to the end.

The new testament blessing. “ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with us all, amen,” 2 Cor. xiii. 14.



CHAPTER III.

A SELECTION FROM THE SCRIPTURES OF GOD, OF SEVERAL PRAYERS AND SONGS OF PRAISE, OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD IN THE EARLY AGES OF THE CHURCH, WHICH BECOME SAMPLES TO ALL THE SUCCEEDING GENERATIONS, FOR SPEAKING TO GOD, IN GOD'S OWN WORDS ; AND AS FOLLOWERS OF THEM, WHO NOW THROUGH FAITH AND PATIENCE, INHERIT THE PROMISES.

I stay not, at the introduction of this chapter, to offer more, than just to state, that nothing can more decidedly manifest what the Lord's will is, concerning the use of his holy scripture on the subject of prayer and praise ; than from having caused to be recorded those exercises of the saints of God in their approaches to the throne. Evidently they are meant as so many models for the church to frame her communions with the Lord. And as they take in a great variety of cases, in which at various times the Lord's people are exercised, they minister, as they were intended, under divine

teaching, to lead the regenerated child of God, (and it is only such I have in view) to God in his Trinity of Persons, in God's own way; "and not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth: comparing spiritual things with spiritual," 1 Cor. ii. 13.

I begin with the case of Abraham. Not as if there were none prior to Abraham; for God the Holy Ghost, in that blessed scripture to the Hebrews, chapter xi. hath shewn in the history of those eminent worthies, who all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them; that most blessed and gracious communion with God, in his Trinity of Persons, was as much enjoyed by the faithful from Abel to the days of Abraham, as from Abraham, by the faithful, down to the present hour. See Heb. xi. 4—37. See also Gen. iv. 4. The Lord's acceptance of Abel and his offering. See also Gen. vi. 8 and 18. "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. And God said unto Noah, with thee will I establish my covenant." See also the blessing of Shem. Gen. ix. 26, 27. But I begin with the patriarch Abraham; because, in this man's history, we have so many sweet relations of the Lord's communion with him, and he with the Lord. And, moreover, as God the Holy Ghost hath graciously taught the church that the gospel was preached to Abraham, and with whom the blessing itself was deposited; the regenerated child of God, (and it is of such only I speak) may enter the more immediately into the enjoyment of that delightful conclusion, made of it in the scripture, where it is said, "so then, they which be of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham," Gal. iii. 7—9.

"Now the Lord had said unto Abram, get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee. And I will

make of thee a great nation; and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee, shall all families of the earth be blessed. So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him," Gen. xii. 1—4.

"And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, unto thy seed will I give this land. And there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him," Gen. xii. 7.

"And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel. And there he builded an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord," Gen. xii. 8. See also chap. xiii. 14, to the end.

"And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, blessed be Abram, of the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand," Gen. xiv. 18—20.

"After these things, the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, fear not, Abram, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. And he believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness," Gen. xv. 1—6. Rom. iv. 16, to the end.

"And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee; and will multiply thee accordingly. And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him," Gen. xvii. 1—3. See also Coloss. i. 28. John xv. 4, 9.

Now pause, and let the regenerated child of God (for it is of such only I speak) first remark, in confirmation of what all scripture, and the experience of the Lord's people uniformly shew in all ages, that all the overtures of communion between the Lord and his people, begin

with the Lord. Here is Abram's first call; then, the Lord's promise; and this, again and again confirmed. Next, the exercise of Abram's faith and belief, in building the altar, with an eye to Christ, and calling upon the name of the Lord. To which follows, as if, in a sacramental way, in bread and wine, the blessing by Melchisedek; and this, succeeded by the word of the Lord, in a vision, in which Jehovah, in his Trinity of Persons, commanded the patriarch to fear not: and declared himself to be his shield and exceeding great reward. And, lastly, Jehovah, the Almighty God, calling himself by that glorious name, and blessing Abram into a life of faith, so that the Lord accounted him righteous before him; and willed him into the gospel perfection of being perfect in Christ Jesus. Col. i. 28. The proper apprehension of these leading points, which were the foundation of all the patriarch's communion with the Lord, opens to a like apprehension of the patriarch's prayers which follow; and which, when beheld together, unite to throw a light on the whole, as samples which God the Holy Ghost hath given the church for a model to form our prayers by. One of those solemn and interesting seasons of communion between the Lord and Abraham, will serve as an illustration of the whole; and which God the Holy Ghost hath graciously caused to be recorded at large in the 18th chapter of Genesis.

“ And Abraham drew near, and said unto the Lord, wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city; wilt thou also destroy, and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked; and that the righteous should be as the wicked; that be far from thee: shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? And the Lord said, if I find in Sodom, fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes. And Abraham

answered, and said, behold now I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes. Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five? And he said, if I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it. And he spake unto him yet again, and said, peradventure there shall be forty found there? And he said, I will not do it for forty's sake. And he said unto him, Oh! let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: peradventure there shall be thirty found there? And he said, I will not do it if I find thirty there. And he said, behold, now I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord! peradventure twenty shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for twenty's sake. And he said, Oh! let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once. Peradventure ten shall be found there? And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake! And the Lord went his way as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place." See Gen. xviii. 22.

Was there ever any form of words equal to those which God the Holy Ghost here furnished the patriarch with, in drawing nigh unto God? And can there be any thing more gracious, than what is here given of the Lord's answers? I pray the regenerated child of God, (for it is of such only I speak) not to overlook some of the many most sweet and precious things contained in this prayer of Abraham's; and then let him judge for himself, whether the Holy Ghost, in recording the whole of what passed between a gracious God and his faithful servant, and causing it to be handed down to the church, through all the several successive generations of it, did not intend it as a pattern for the Lord's people to form their prayers by, in drawing nigh unto the Lord. Observe, it was the Lord which began the conference, in telling Abraham his intention concerning Sodom. See Gen. xviii. 16—22. And it was Abra-

ham, and not the Lord, which brake it. See verse the last. Oh! how blessed is it at all times to make this discovery! A child of God finds grace to draw nigh to God, both in prayer and praise, when God hath first drawn nigh to him in grace and love. This is what the apostle calls "the rencwing of the Holy Ghost, shed upon us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour," Titus iii. 5, 6.

Let it be further observed, the great plea the patriarch used, in order to obtain favour, namely, God's justice, in not destroying the righteous with the wicked. This was the bottom on which he grounded the whole for the obtaining favour. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? And what a proof was this, that in all the patriarch's arguments for mercy, he had an eye to Christ. The Holy Ghost expressly tells the church that the gospel was preached to Abraham, Gal. iii. 8. And the Son of God himself hath said, that "Abraham saw his day afar off, rejoiced, and was glad," John viii. 56. And with him the Lord entered into covenant; and with him confirmed the blessing, which his Christ himself, Gal. iii. 16. And can there be a doubt then, that the Holy Ghost intended this prayer of the faithful patriarch's, as a model for all the children of the faithful in all ages? Do we not look to the Judge of all the earth to do right, when we plead the righteousness of God our Saviour? Blessed for ever, blessed be God, there is this One, this Holy One, this only one in the Sodom of our nature, to save his people from their sins. "In him shall all the seed of Israel be justified; and shall glory," Isaiah xlv. 25. God himself hath said, "my righteous servant shall justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities," Isaiah liiii. 11. "Here, mercy and truth met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other!" Psalm lxxxv. 10.

I pass on to another most precious monument, which the Holy Ghost hath erected in the aisles of his church,

for his people to read and copy after, in following one another in the christian walk, as pilgrims on their journey; namely, Jacob's communion with the Lord, as recorded Gen. xxxii. This is a different view from the former; the one, being an example of intercession for others; and this for himself: but both resting on the same covenant faithfulness of Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons; and equally holding forth a pattern for all the regenerated children of God to follow, (and it is of such only I speak) in their drawing nigh to the mercy-seat. The patriarch Jacob, at the time he offered up his prayer to God, was brought into a great strait, by reason of his brother Esau coming forth towards him, armed with four hundred men. And Jacob did what all the faithful in Christ Jesus ought to do, and will do, when faith is in lively exercise, cast himself and all his concerns into the Lord's hand, pleading the Lord's promises; and in terms of the strongest assurance of trust in the Almighty promiser, thus made known his requests unto God.

“ And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which saidst unto me, return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee; I am not worthy of the least of thy mercies, and of all the truth which thou hast shewed unto thy servant, for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands. Deliver me I pray thee from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him lest he will come and smite me and the mother with the children. And thou saidst I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea which cannot be numbered for multitude!” Such was Jacob's prayer, Gen. xxxii. 9—12. Now comes the Lord's answer.

“ And Jacob was left alone, and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he

saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh, and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint as he wrestled with him. And he said, let me go for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou will bless me. And he said unto him, what is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel, for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. And Jacob asked him, and said, tell me, I pray thee, thy name? And he said, wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved!" Gen. xxiv. 30.

Now let the regenerated child of God, (and it is of such only I speak) remark with me, some of the leading points in this prayer of the patriarch, and of the Lord's gracious dealings with him in answer; and then as before, let him judge for himself, whether there can be any thing like it for example, and whether God the Holy Ghost, the Almighty teacher and quickener to prayer, did not intend it for similar occasions of use to the Lord's people, in all their exercises and approaches to the Lord during their spiritual as well as temporal warfare.

For as a proof, ought not every child of God to begin prayer as Jacob did in reminding God in his Trinity of Persons of his covenant name, and the everlasting memorial Jehovah hath given of himself, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? Nor reminding God of what he is in himself, and what he is as he hath been pleased to reveal of himself to his people; this is in the fullest sense of the words, following up the Lord's own command when he said, "Let him take hold of my strength to make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me."

Exod. iii. 15. Isa. xxvii. 5. Then again, Jacob reminds God that he is where God appointed him. "The Lord which said unto me, return unto thy country and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee." Surely if we are in the very place in which the Lord in his providence appointed, and difficulties meet us in the way there, of all other places we may reasonably expect the Lord will appear for us, especially as the Lord hath promised "to deal well with us." *Thirdly.* What a very striking argument the patriarch next adopted, when he said, "I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies;" thus throwing himself wholly upon sovereign grace for all he had received, and all he hoped to receive; and in the moment he had such rich blessings, to acknowledge himself undeserving of all of them. And such is and will be the case with all the Lord's people. For never doth the soul lay lower before the Lord in humility, than when the Lord is lifting up the soul in blessings. Aboundings of grace will always induce aboundings of a sense of unworthiness. "Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?" 2 Sam. vii. 18. *Fourthly.* Jacob now comes to the point that then pressed him most sorely. "Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him." Here we see the suitableness of calling in to our deliverance, when the Esaus of the present day threaten the people of God. All the saints of God have made God their refuge in time of trouble. "What time I am afraid I will trust in thee," said one of old, who had declared to the Lord, "Thou art my hiding-place, thou shalt preserve me from trouble, thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance," Ps. lvi. 3. xxxii. 7. *Fifthly.* The faithful patriarch clenched the whole with the strongest of all arguments, namely, God's own promise, "Thou saidst I will surely do thee good." By thus taking hold of God's promise, the regenerated child of God (and it

is of such only I speak) takes hold of God himself. As if he had said, Lord! it is thine own promise, thine own word. And hath God forgotten his own word? Did God promise and will he not perform? "Hath he said, and shall he not do it?" If I am cut off by Esau, and he smites the mother and the children, how will the Lord make my seed as "the sand of the sea which cannot be numbered for multitude?" Was this record made in the word of God, and all the circumstances so faithfully handed down to the church of God with the success of Jacob's prayer, and the prayer itself, not intended by God the Holy Ghost for the perpetual use of the Lord's people under similar exercises, to go to the Lord in similar words? Surely, upon all and every occasion, the strongest words we can use in prayer are, what the Lord first saith to us in a way of promise. And when to the promise the Lord adds examples, where those promises have been fulfilled to the Lord's people, nothing can more decidedly shew than that the church of God in all ages, are to make use of them under similar trials in all their approaches to the throne. And such of the Lord's people as are led to the Lord as Jacob was, by grace, among the praying seed of Jacob, will as assuredly come off, as he did, the prevailing Israel. The Lord may wrestle with his people, and for a while put faith into sharp exercises. But when the day breaketh, though the Lord may seem to say, let me go, yet this is only, that by faith, and which the Lord himself gives, we may fasten ourselves upon him the more. The Lord that first put the cry in the soul, knows that a blessing we came for; and the very blessing, even Christ himself, we must have; and as the Lord said to Abraham, so he saith to all his seed, "fear not, Abram, I am thy shield and thine exceeding great reward," Gen. xv. 2.

From Jacob let us go on to Moses, and in that most sweet and precious communion which the man of God

had with God in the mount, see whether any interview the Lord hath had with his people can furnish out matter for prayer and praise, more than what is there recorded in the history of Moses. Surely God the Holy Ghost graciously intended it as a pattern and encouragement to every regenerated child of God to form his prayers by (and it is of such only I speak) whenever drawing nigh to the throne, in all the generations of the church, until grace is opened into glory. I might indeed in the life of Moses gather many beautiful passages from the word of God, as so many illustrations in point. For from the first moment of the Lord's revealing himself to Moses at the bush, *Exod. iii. 3.* when the visions of God began, through a whole life of grace until the man of God breathed out his soul upon the mount of God at Pisgah's heights. *Deut. xxxiv. 5.* numberless are the views of the Lord's mercy and favour manifested by this man's history to his people in seasons of communion. Neither can there be the shadow of a doubt but that the Lord's having so minutely recorded them, and in all their variety it was and is intended by the Lord as our ensample; and the people of God would do well to have them always in view when drawing nigh the Lord in prayer. But I must limit myself to one instance only, which may serve as a key to the rest. The Lord bless our view of it.

“ And the Lord spake unto Moses, face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And Moses said unto the Lord, “ see, thou sayest unto me, bring up this people; and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight. Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me thy way now that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight, and consider that this nation is thy people. And he said, my presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. And he said

unto him, if thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? Is it not in that thou goest with us? So shall we be separated, I and thy people from all the people that are upon the face of the earth. And the Lord said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken; for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name. And he said, I beseech thee shew me thy glory. And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee; and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee, and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy," Exod. xxxiii. 11—19.

Now let the *regenerated* child of God, as Moses was, (for it is of such only I speak) pause and ponder over this holy and familiar communion, which the gracious God held with his faithful servant whom he had called by sovereign grace. Let him first observe, that here, as in the former instances, the conversation began on the part of God. Let him next notice how much was said on both sides in answers and responses. And let him not overlook that as the gracious conference began with God, so it ended with God. God will never be outdone by his people. After the child of God hath duly pondered these precious things, let him next observe, that the sole cause here assigned for which Jehovah went forth, and is now going forth in acts of communion with his people is, because they have found grace in the Lord's sight. This is the bottom of all our mercies. Not for any thing we have done; no, nor any thing we can do; but, as the Lord himself saith, "Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, but for mine holy name's sake, O house of Israel." Ezek. xxxvi. 22. And wherefore then did God the Holy Ghost record this sweet scripture, and cause it to be handed down to the church of God in all ages? Wherefore is it we read the familiar manner in which

the Lord deals with his people, in allowing a conversation “as a man talketh with his friend,” but to encourage the Lord’s people to come to him in every time of need. Have we indeed found grace in his sight, and in consequence doth the Lord say to us, as to Moses of old, “I will do this thing which thou hast said, my presence shall go with thee; I will give thee rest.” And doth the Lord make all his goodness pass before us, and proclaim his great and glorious name in being “gracious to whom he will be gracious, and shewing mercy to whom he will shew mercy?” And can the *regenerated* child of God (for it is of such only I speak) want words with these precious words before him to come before him? Can we need any other to tell the Lord than what the Lord hath first told us, when we have found grace in his sight, and the Lord calleth us by name, in speaking to us personally in all we have, and all we are, both the objects and the subjects of his everlasting love and unceasing care?” Isa. xxvii. 2, 3.

And what a pattern doth the Holy Ghost furnish for the church of God, in both testaments of scripture of songs of thanksgivings and praise to form our hymns upon in the songs of Moses, Exod. xv. 1—21. Judges v. throughout. 1 Sam. ii. 1—10. And Deborah, and Hannah, and the Psalms, in the Songs of Solomon, and the writings of Isaiah, and the prophets, Habak. iii. throughout; the virgin Mary, Luke i. 46. Zacharias and holy Simeon, Luke ii. 25, &c. Let the *regenerated* child of God (for it is of such only I speak) look at all those and the like scriptures. Let him ponder well their sweet contents. Let him observe the gracious variety contained in them, as if God the Holy Ghost had studied the cases of all the Lord’s people, so as to suit not only the circumstances of those in whose hearts the Lord then endited them; but so framed the whole as to suit the exercised state of all

the saints of God, in all ages of the church; and then let him ask his own heart whether any form of words can come up to these sacred words, and in which so much of the savour of the Lord's name can be found? Surely it is a self-evident truth, that this divine treasury was made for the everlasting supply of the church of the living God in all the approaches of the Lord's people to the Lord's throne; here are the words which we are commanded to take with us when we turn to the Lord; here is the open fountain for Zion's travellers to be refreshed from by the way. And here therefore whenever grace is in lively exercise for holy communion with the Lord, we may "with joy draw water out of the wells of salvation," Isa. xii. 3.

I have unwarily, and without design, increased the pages of this little work, much beyond the original intention. I had in contemplation, when I began it, just to have stated what appeared to me to be scriptural teachings on the subject of prayer; and to have added, by way of recommendation, a few scriptural examples of the Lord's chosen ones at prayer. And, as I designed it for humble pockets, I meant that it should come within the reach of all such, among the Lord's poor; and therefore called it *the Poor Man's Prayer Book, formed from God's Scripture Book*. And indeed, I still hope, though the subject hath increased upon me, as I have prosecuted it, that it will be rendered by the bookseller so cheap, as not to exceed the ability of any of that class of people for whom it is designed. And under this hope, I venture to add one or two more examples in the history of the Lord's people, at their communions with the Lord, as may become, under the Lord the Spirit's gracious teaching, models for our own.

One of the most striking, in the scriptures of the old testament under this particular is, that of the patriarch David; because the Holy Ghost hath drawn his

portrait under so many and various points of view, with all his shades, as well as his more pleasing colours, as renders his history, on this ground, more generally useful. And it hath pleased God the Holy Ghost to give the church so much of this man's life in detail, and caused to be recorded with it so great a variety of the burstings of his soul in prayer and praise, upon the various occasions with which he was exercised, as in my apprehension most decidedly shews, that the Lord intended his regenerated children, (and it is of such only I speak) should continually have in remembrance the Lord's dealings with this subject of his free and sovereign grace, in order to see the blessedness of that everlasting covenant the Lord hath given to his people, "even the sure mercies of David," Isaiah lv. 3. Acts xiii. 34. The period in the patriarch's life, which I would more particularly select for this purpose, is that which the Holy Ghost hath thought so important to have recorded, that it occupieth no less a portion than two whole chapters: the former, the 7th of the first book of Samuel; and the latter, the 17th of the first book of the Chronicles; where the whole is again, and almost word for word repeated. I beseech the reader to open the bible at either, or both of those chapters; and if the Lord be his teacher, he will discover the gracious acts there recorded of the Lord towards David; and the gracious workings of David's spirit, in the views the Lord then gave him of divine mercy. The chapter opens with an account of the Lord's stirring up the mind of David, as he sat in his house, to review the Lord's gracious dealings with him. His account thereof to Nathan; and Nathan's message to David from the Lord. And then follows the effects on David's mind.

"Then went king David in, and sat before the Lord. And he said, who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? And this

was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God: but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come. And is this the manner of man, O Lord God? And what can David say more unto thee: for thou, Lord God, knowest thy servant. For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these great things to make thy servant know them. And now, O Lord God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever; and do as thou hast said. And let thy name be magnified for ever: saying, the Lord of Hosts is the God of Israel! and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee!"

What a most interesting representation hath God the Holy Ghost here given, in a few words, of the patriarch David! What a life of mercies was his! What a subject of rich, free, sovereign, and unmerited grace, from beginning to end! And what a frame of mind was the man brought into, in this pause of life, when the Lord led him, in the full contemplation of it, to go in and sit down before the Lord! The thought of his own nothingness, and his father's house, the sheep-cote from whence the Lord had taken him to make him a ruler over Israel, the house which he as a prophet knew that God had sworn with an oath to found in the Person of God's dear Son, as the fruit of his loins after the flesh; (see Acts ii. 30.) the covenant God had made with him, "ordered in all things and sure;" (2 Sam. xxiii. 5.) the review of his mercies; the consciousness of his sins; the recollection of the past; the prospect to come; the unalterable assurance of the divine promises that all the blessings Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons had given in Christ, should be established for ever; these, and all the wonders of grace, pouring in upon his mind as an overflowing tide from the ocean of divine love, so rushed to his view in one and the same mo-

ment, that he could only give vent to his feelings in half unfinished sentences, and cry out, "Is this the manner of man, O Lord God? And what can David say more?"

And now let the *regenerated* child of God (for it is of such only I speak) pause and ponder well what God the Holy Ghost hath here set before him; and then ask his own heart whether, if the Lord at any time should lead him to go in and sit before the Lord, and under the review of past mercies, and the assured promise of future covenant blessings in Christ, should open his mouth to speak to the Lord, what form of words like these words could suit his case and circumstances? Oh! what a melting subject doth the life of every one of God's children open to him in the looking back upon it, when the Lord by sovereign grace hath called him "from darkness to light, and from the power of sin and Satan to the living God!" "Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house that thou hast brought me hitherto?" is and can be but one and the same sentiment, which equally suits all the redeemed of the Lord. *Where* the Lord found his people; *how* he found them employed; *what* their pursuits; and *when* their state at the time the Lord "passed by and bid them live, when cast out to perish in their blood," and altogether "dead in trespasses and sins," Ezek. xvi. 5, 6. Eph. ii. 1. This opens an everlasting subject in all the various departments of life, to speak the language of David, as we contemplate the divine mercy, and our undeservings. And as the volume of life goes on to relate the Lord's dealings of grace to his people, and their returns of forgetfulness, backslidings, and departures from him; and amidst the whole, the mighty streams of the everlasting covenant running on free and uninterrupted by all our provocations, transgressions, and sins; every word in David's prayer comes home suited to all the circumstances of the children of

the Lord like David, concerning whom in every individual instance as his, the Lord hath said, "if his children (that is, Christ's children) forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments, then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes; nevertheless my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail; my covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David," Psalm lxxxix. 30—35.

One pattern more from the old testament scripture shall be all that I will trespass in bringing into view, namely, that of the prophet Daniel. The Holy Ghost hath been pleased to provide the church with so gracious a relation of this man of God at prayer, and treasured up the very blessed words so largely, as should seem to intimate the Lord's intention for its becoming a sample to the Lord's people to follow after in all ages of the church. And I the rather subjoin it to the foregoing one of David, from the different occasion in which it was used. The prayer of David manifested the state of the *regenerated* child of God, (and it is of such only I speak) when in the review of the Lord's grace he was overwhelmed in the recollection of his own unworthiness. The prayer of Daniel appears to have been awakened in his soul after the work of grace upon his heart, in the contemplation of the desolations of Jerusalem! Daniel ix. 2.

"And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth and ashes. And I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and them that keep his commandments. We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by

departing from thy precepts, and from thy judgments ; neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee ; but unto us confusion of faces as at this day. To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him ; neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in his laws which he set before us, by his servants the prophets. Therefore hath the Lord watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us, for the Lord our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth, for we obeyed not his voice. And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown as at this day, we have sinned, we have done wickedly. O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city, Jerusalem, thy holy mountain, because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us. Now, therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate ; for the Lord's sake, O my God, incline thine ear, and hear ; open thine eyes and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name ; for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousness, but for thy great mercies. O Lord, hear ! O Lord, forgive ! O Lord, hearken, and do ! defer not for thine own sake, O my God, for thy city and thy people are called by thy name !” Daniel ix. 3—19.

Now here again, as in every former instance, let the regenerated child of God, (for it is of such only I speak) observe the several ponderous things contained in this prayer. And as the one great and leading

point of it had respect to the church of God—so the church of God, like her glorious Head and Husband, is “the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever.” What the Lord the Spirit taught Daniel then, he teacheth now. And whenever the Zion of God is brought under humbling dispensations, either in the whole body of the people, or in the case of any individual of Christ’s mystical members, here is a pattern, and of God’s own providing to go by. And first Daniel began his prayer, by addressing God as the Lord God in covenant revelations. We take a most effectual method of engaging God on our behalf, when we remind God of his covenant relations to us in Christ. The Lord my God, is of all other arguments the most blessed, and successful to take hold of at the mercy-seat. “God, even our own God, shall give us the blessing,” said the church. Ps. lxvii. 6. *Secondly.* To this unanswerable appeal there is immediately added, the humble acknowledgment of the church of utter undeservings. “We have sinned, and done wickedly;” here is an universal confession in the soul, that in the very moment of seeking mercy, and pardon, and peace, in the blood of the cross, not a soul in the church merits it. This is a precious token of the love of God in the heart, and never capable of being exercised by any but the Lord’s people. *Thirdly.* The man of God is led to see, and at the same time acknowledge, the righteousness of God in all that is come upon the Lord’s people; “O Lord! thou hast done right; but we have done wickedly.” Hence the prophet justifieth God in all his ways, while in the same breath he condemns himself and the people. *Fourthly.* He rolls himself wholly upon God’s promise, and God’s covenant relationship to his people in Christ. O Lord our God! O my God! And more than once, he repeats this strongest of all arguments, intimating that God’s name, and God’s covenant engagements, are far above all other

considerations, wherefore the Lord shall answer prayer. He follows up one argument close upon another, to this end, and crieth out, "O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hearken and do; defer not for thy own sake, O my God! for thy city and thy people are called by thy name." This was the very argument both Moses and Joshua used on like occasions! See Exod. xxxii. 11, &c. Joshua vii. 9. "What will thou do unto thy great name?" And what shall the child of God say, but plead God's great name, and God's own covenant promises? Surely, the one is an everlasting security; and the other, the strongest plea in prayer! And did not God the Holy Ghost record such things for his church in all ages, and intend them for our examples and use in all communion with God in prayer?

Having finished my selection of prayers and praises, of the saints of God, from the old testament scriptures, I might go on to gather also from the new. But indeed, under the gospel dispensation and the gospel church, these things are so many, and interspersed so largely over the sacred word, that it would swell this little volume to too great a bulk even to cull out a few. And after all, the gathering that might be made, would leave so many behind, as would still render necessary a reference to all the books of the new testament, in order to do justice to the subject. I rather therefore leave the whole, for the selection of the godly themselves; convinced as I am, that if the regenerated child of God, (and it is of such only I speak) under divine direction, will take the book of God in both testaments for his guide, in forming his prayers and praises, upon these inspired models, he cannot fail of discovering some of the most sweet and precious words as are suited for every occasion, and corresponding to all the wants and exercises in which he may be placed while here below. And when the man of God can say with one

of old, " Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might meditate on thy word;" he will soon add to it, that blessed testimony, " The law of thy mouth is dearer unto me than thousands of gold and silver," Psalm cxix. 72.

CHAPTER THE LAST.

THE SELECTION OF A CHAPTER FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT, AND ANOTHER FROM THE NEW, BY WAY OF FURTHER ILLUSTRATION OF THE ABOUNDING FULNESS IN THE SCRIPTURES OF GOD, IN FURNISHING SUBJECTS BOTH FOR PRAYER AND PRAISE, FOR ALL THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

I will assume for granted, that the regenerated child of God, (and it is of such only I speak) from what hath been brought before him in the preceding pages, cannot but conclude with me that the sacred scriptures of God possess a fund of the most precious words, with which under divine leadings the Lord's people may draw nigh unto God, as well as under the same divine teachings, may be " made wise unto salvation through the faith which is in Christ Jesus." And it will be a matter of much joy to my heart, if from the Lord's gracious blessings on my labours, any of the Lord's little ones shall be led henceforth to seek the Lord's face in the Lord's strength, and approach the mercy-seat when drawing nigh to the Holy Three in One, which bear record in heaven, through the mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ, " not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth."

Under these hopes, and with a longing eye to the God of all grace for his blessing to be upon it, I shall now fold up this little work, with giving an analysis of a chapter or two in the bible, by way of explaining, according to my views, how every *regenerated* child of God, (and it is of such only I speak) may through

the divine teaching, form his daily prayers to God in the words of God; and when reading the Lord's holy book, convert the whole into his own prayer book, and speak to the Lord, in what the Lord hath first said unto his people; and thus through the leadings of God the Holy Ghost, have continual "fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." And for the more effectual carrying on this sweet intercourse between God in his Trinity of Persons and the soul, if no better method be known by the child of God, (whom the Lord hath quickened by sovereign grace, and brought into an holy familiarity and acquaintance with himself) I would venture to suggest one, which I have long used, both in private when alone, and in my own family, when gathered together for prayer; and with all humility of soul and thankfulness before the Lord, I hope I can say, that I have often found profitable. One of my household begins, with reading the Morning or Evening Portion (as it may be) for the day, from 'The Poor Man's Portion,' with the observations. And this is done by way of solemnizing the mind, before we enter upon the more enlarged portion of God's word, in the scriptures of eternal truth.

Every regenerated child of God, (and it is of such only I speak) cannot but know how full of vain thoughts the heart is. Even when we purposely enter into the more immediate presence of God, and with an intention for communion with God, how often do we find, (at least, I take shame to myself in the confession when I say I do) the heart wandering like the fool's eyes to the end of the earth! And certain it is, that the Lord alone can fix the wandering heart, and prepare the unprepared heart. And this he doth, at times, most graciously, by working in us "both to will and to do of his good pleasure." One look from Jesus, such as with which he looked on Peter, will

effectually induce an holy reverence and godly fear, and spiritualize the whole affections of the soul. With this view we read the portion, and then a chapter or Psalm, from the word of God. And when during the reading of the holy word, Jesus himself draweth nigh, and doth by us as he did by his disciples in their walk to Emmaus in the morning of his resurrection, "make our hearts burn within us while he talketh with us by the way, and while he himself openeth to us his scriptures," (Luke xxiv. 32.) every one so blessed and sanctified, will feel, as David felt, when he cried out under the gracious influence, "My heart is fixed, O God; my heart is fixed, I will sing and give praise. Awake up my glory; awake psaltery and harp; I myself will awake right early," Ps. lvii. 8.

Twelfth Chapter of the Prophecy of Isaiah.

1. "And in that day, thou shalt say, O Lord! I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me."

2. "Behold! God is my salvation. I will trust and not be afraid, for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation."

3. "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation."

4. "And in that day shall ye say, praise the Lord, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted."

5. "Sing unto the Lord, for he hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth."

6. "Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion; for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee."

Now if the regenerated child of God, (and it is of such only I speak) will ponder well, the several parts

of this blessed gospel song, or prayer, (for it is indeed most blessed, and nothing but pure gospel from beginning to end) he will discover, under divine teaching, that, short as it is, there is contained in it such vast matter both for prayer and praise, as though but six verses, yet enough to furnish out errands to go with to the throne and mercy-seat of God in Christ, not only for six prayers, but for six thousand; nay, to fill in every prayer through life, from the first call of grace until grace is ripened into glory. I will beg to prove somewhat of what I say, by analyzing the several parts of it; and then draw out before the child of God, what, under the Lord's teaching, I myself might be supposed to offer upon it.

“And in that day.” What day can this be but the gospel day? the day which “Abraham saw afar off, rejoiced, and was glad,” John viii. 56. The day which Jesus saith, “many prophets and righteous men desired to see!” Matt. xiii. 17. The day which every regenerated child of God (and it is of such only I speak) truly seeth, when like Zaccheus the Lord comes home to his heart, and reveals himself to his heart, and saith as he did to him, “this day is salvation come to this house; forasmuch also as he is a son of Abraham.” Luke xix. 9. For then it is (and not before) the poor sinner hath his eyes open to see his misery by nature, and the blessedness of his recovery by grace. And then he is led to confess from the heart, what before he only repeated with the tongue—“O Lord, I will praise thee!” There can be no praise in the heart to the Lord, before we know the Lord. An unknown God can neither be loved nor praised. Neither can any man have a just apprehension of the Lord's anger against sin, nor of his being justly exposed to the wrath of God for sin, until the Lord hath made him acquainted with the plague of his own heart, and shewn him his complete deliverance, both from the guilt and condemnation of sin by

Jesus Christ. Then he seeth and blesseth the Lord, on the view of what he is delivered from, by the rich salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ; and can and doth say with the church, in this divine song of praise and prayer, "thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me!"

"Behold, God is my salvation!" Observe, how beautiful and blessed this is! the regenerated child of God (and it is of such only I speak) doth not merely say, the Lord hath granted me salvation, but that God *himself* is my salvation; not simply all that is blessed is *from* him, but blessedness is all *in* him, yea, that he himself is the blessedness of his people. Oh! what endless prayers and praises arise from hence, in that not only the Lord gives his people all they need, but that he is himself to them all they need; not merely imparts to them life, but is himself their life, their portion, their home, their happiness, and that for ever. Well may the child of God add, "I will trust and not be afraid, for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation!" For what can they have to fear who have the Lord Jehovah for their portion? What shall arise to counteract what the Lord Jehovah hath appointed? What shall dry up the streams of everlasting love? What shall break down the arch of everlasting strength? Oh! how eternally safe and eternally blessed are they "who have the eternal God for their refuge, and underneath whom are the everlasting arms!" Deut. xxxiii. 27. Who of God's dear children who knows and lives in the daily, hourly enjoyment of these things, can do otherwise than trust and not be afraid; or want words or subjects both of praise and prayer, for all and every event which may arise in this short and dying state of things while going home to his Father's house?

But the great glory, and strength, and blessedness of this gospel song and prayer lies in the incommunicable

name of the Lord Jehovah. "The Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation!" The original is, Jah Jehovah; that is, Jah Ve-Jah. We have the same, Isaiah xxiv. 4. so that the words are, Jah! Jah! Jah! meaning each glorious Person in the Godhead. So that each glorious Person is not only Jah, or Jehovah, but is equally as well as conjointly the salvation of his people. Oh! precious truth of a most precious Lord God! And the prophet seems to delight in calling each Person of the Godhead by this incommunicable name. God the Father is thrice called by it in one verse, Isaiah lxiii. 7. God the Son, Isaiah lx. 16. and God the Holy Ghost, Jehovah Ruach, Isaiah lxi. 1. And who of the Lord's regenerated children (and it is of such only I speak) can ever want words for prayer or praise in the glorious object of all praise or prayer, or a subject for either, while through grace, enabled to look up, and call Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons, the Lord Jehovah "my strength and my song, and who is become my salvation." Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." Yes! truly; for when the Lord the Spirit "directs the heart into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ," 2 Thess. iii. 5. "The God of hope fills the souls of the Lord's people with all joy and peace in believing, that they abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost," Rom. xv. 13. And while faith is in lively exercise, the Person of the Father, the Person of the Son, and the Person of the Holy Ghost, each and all become as wells of salvation for the regenerated child of God to draw from for his continual solace, and refreshment and delight, while passing through this barren wilderness. God our Father is a fountain of living waters, Jer. ii. 13. God the Son is a "fountain of gardens, and a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon," Song iv. 15. John iv. 14. And God the Holy Ghost, "the pure river of

water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb," Rev. xxii. 1. And O what endless streams flow from this mighty river, Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons, to make glad the city of God, when through divine teaching thirsty souls are led to draw water, in ordinances and means of grace, from this infinite, eternal, and never-ceasing spring! And how endless also the subject opened for prayer and praise in the everlasting love, council, purpose, will, and pleasure of God the Father; the Person, work, grace, offices, character, and relations of the Lord Jesus Christ; the quickening, renewing, confirming, strengthening, comforting, and soul-refreshing comforts and consolations of God the Holy Ghost! Where shall the child of God begin, or where end his prayer, and praise, and thanksgiving, who is made partaker of those unspeakable mercies, and hath his soul filled with such views of rich, free, unmerited, and everlasting salvation?

"And in that day." Observe how the man of God, when taught of God, harps upon the sweet string of salvation, in the time of its being made known unto him. "In that day!" That glorious, gracious, never-to-be-forgotten day, when the day-spring from on high first visits the soul; the day of light, of life, of grace, of mercy, of salvation! The day, as the apostle speaks, when it pleased God "who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me," Gal. i. 15, 16. When, as with the patriarch of old, the visions of God began, and when from all the after visits of his love, at every renewed remembrance, he saith to every child of God, as to him, "I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me," Gen. xxxi. 13. And doth not every child of God know somewhat of the same gracious manifestations in relation to that day, when God the Holy Ghost having quickened

and regenerated him from the death of sin to a life of righteousness, opens to his view the glories of God the Father's love in the face of Jesus Christ? Whatever exercises may arise, as in the case of Jacob, in the after stages of life, however dark the providences, yet in all these, be our forgetfulness of the Lord what it may, the Lord never forgets his people, but is speaking to them as to the patriarch in all, "I am the God of Bethel!" As if he had said, do you not remember my love-calls and what passed between us then? I am the same God of Bethel now! Oh! what an infinite boundless subject for praise and prayer, is contained in the Lord's words, "And in that day!" First views of God in Christ have been with many of God's dear children, so inexpressibly precious, as all the after manifestations (though all alike gracious) have not so sensibly affected them. Yea, dying seasons, and the cold clammy sweat of death itself have been found not to abate the ardour, but the remembrance of them then hath called forth the love-song anew to the God of salvation. The regenerated child of God (and it is of such only I speak) will enter into an apprehension of these golden things, which, like the *Michtams* of David, form subjects for blessed songs in this house of our pilgrimage. And whether he can or cannot call to his remembrance the time *when*, or the place *where*, or the manner *how*, the God of all grace first began a work of grace upon his soul, yet while he hath in view "the wormwood and the gall" of his former state of nature, and can and doth say with him of old whose eyes the Lord Jesus opened, "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see," John ix. 25. he will sing upon *Alamoth* (Ps. xlvi.) the song of salvation; and say with equal thanksgiving, and joy, "Praise the Lord, call upon his name!" "Praise the Lord, call upon his name! declare his doings among the people; make mention that his name is exalted. Sing unto

the Lord, for he hath done excellent things, that is known in all the earth." Observe here what a beautiful transition is made in this hymn of praise, from the former part. It begins in the instance of one Person; "O Lord, I will praise thee!" But here it is, "Praise ye the Lord." Most sweetly shewing, that God the Holy Ghost teacheth his children that they are not to eat their morsel alone, but call all the Lord's people to the Lord's feast. Hence, throughout the whole word of God, we find the children of God calling their brethren to the same delightful employment as themselves: "O bless our God, ye people, (said one of old) and make the voice of his praise be heard," Ps. lxxvi. 8. Hence, let the regenerated child of God observe, (and it is of such only I speak) how God the Holy Ghost in this chapter (and more or less all the chapters in the bible teach the same) would have his people in all their drawings nigh to the throne, remember the church of God, both in prayer and praise. And very certain it is that all who love the Lord, love the people of the Lord. The beloved apostle John, makes this an infallible mark of regeneration. "We know (said he) that we are passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." 1 John iii. 14. And one of the old testament saints felt his soul so carried out in the love of God's church, from the love he had to the God of that church, that he cried out, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning! If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth: If I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy," Ps. cxxxvii. 5, 6. And what endless subjects both for prayer and praise, are found in the contemplation of Jehovah's doings among the people, the exaltation of his name, in his Trinity of Persons, and for the excellent things manifested to his church, in all the earth. Surely while a single promise of the Lord to his Zion is left unfulfilled, there never will be

wanting subject for prayer; neither while a single soul remains to be translated from "the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son;" and when done, can there be wanting matter for praise. And who that sets his heart, under the Spirit's influence, to praise the Lord in his Trinity of Persons, can want words to come before the Lord, while the bible is full of such blessed words, as the Lord himself hath provided for this purpose?

"Cry out, and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion! for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee!" What a beautiful close this is to this divine song! Surely the Lord the Spirit meant it for perpetual use in his church, and by all his regenerated people, (and it is of such only I speak) in their constant approaches to the mercy-seat. There can be no tongue silent, nor heart unwarmed, as long as the Holy One of Israel is beheld by faith in the midst of his church and people. For let it be here again observed with the thankfulness it claims, that no one cause whatever is assigned wherefore the Holy One of Israel is in the midst of Zion, but for the love he bears to Zion. His greatness, and not her worth; his name, and not her deservings; are made the sole cause both for her confidence and joy. And this runs like a golden thread through all the bible; and like that decisive scripture, which the Lord delivered by the prophet Ezekiel on another occasion, traceth up the whole of the exercise of sovereign grace to its own source, in the Lord's pleasure, and not man's merit; "Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, but for my holy name's sake," Ezek. xxxvi. 22. And this swells the note of praise both in heaven and earth. His name's sake, is the all in all, of all the ways and works of God to his people. When he calls them by grace, when he saves them by his mercy, when he redeems them by his blood, when he justifieth them in his righteousness, when he sanctifieth

them wholly in himself, and when he glorifieth them finally and fully, and everlastingly, in the Lord Jesus Christ; all is for his great name's sake. There can be nothing belonging to the safety, holiness, or happiness of Zion, either in time, or to all eternity, but what must have both its origin and end in the name, and for the sole glory, of that great and Holy One, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, which is in the midst of Zion; for as the apostle said, and the faithful in Christ Jesus know in themselves, through divine teaching to be true, all is in him; "neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," Acts iv. 12. Hence, therefore, in the view of these precious things, while the church, and every individual of the church, contemplate their safety, their blessedness, and their everlasting interest and happiness in Christ, they cannot cease to cry out and shout as inhabitants of Zion! And what one prophet under the Lord's direction commands, another prophet under the same appointment confirms, when he saith, "Sing, O daughter of Zion! shout, O Israel! be glad and rejoice with all thy heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! the Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty! He will save. He will rejoice over thee with joy. He will rest in his love. He will joy over thee with singing!" Zeph. iii. 14, 17.

And now, let the regenerated child of God, (for it is such only I have in view) pause once more over this sweet scripture, and let him then say, whether the solemn perusal of it, simply as it is in itself (and without the observations I have humbly presumed to offer upon it) in the closet alone, or in the circle of a family, purposely met for praise and prayer, is not most blessedly calculated to furnish matter for both in drawing nigh to the Lord. If the Lord the Spirit be graciously present to give a spirit of grace and supplication, and

as graciously pleased to pour out his divine influences to lead in the same, (and without which there can be no offering to the Lord) what can a child of God need more, than the Lord's own words, to speak to the Lord in his own way, John xiv. 6. Here are several distinct heads to furnish almost endless subjects in praise and prayer. Supposing the child of God begins with approaching the Lord Jehovah as he is here proclaimed in his Trinity of Persons, verse 2. And what can the child of God want, for celebrating the praise and glory of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, more than is revealed in every part of the word of God in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Ghost? Then, what vast stores of bible words, may he find, for praising God in the wonders of redemption! Then, what volumes upon volumes will the Holy Ghost open to the regenerated child of God, (and it is only such I am speaking of) in this subject of salvation when making it personal! When the child of God can and doth enter into every part of it, and not only bless God for the salvation of his church and people, but say, behold! God is my salvation! my strength, my song! then how ample a subject opens before him, while at the mercy-seat, and telling the Lord God of his mercies to him personally considered, the Holy Ghost shews him, at the same time, the blessings and the fulness of blessings in his ordinances! When God the Holy Ghost turns over the leaves of the history in his own heart, and shews him how the Lord hath been leading him on his way, in providences, as well as grace; and when, from the misinterpretations he had made of the Lord's dealings with him under dark seasons, and as to him appeared frowning providences, he had concluded the Lord had been angry with him, he now is taught the everlasting and unchanging love of God. Oh! what melting sea-

sons doth the Lord sometimes give at a mercy-seat while bringing all these things before him. And how will the child of God on such hallowed occasions, while the Lord is refreshing him with the manifestations from the throne, find his soul going forth in praise and prayer for the Lord's people. How will he pray, plead, and like Jacob wrestle with the Lord for Zion, her ministers, and people, that the wells of salvation may refresh all the thirsty souls of the Lord's household, and that all the living in Zion, "the father to the children, may make known the truth!" I only here add a prayer, at the close of the review of this sweet scripture, that such may be the Lord's blessing upon it, into the hands of any of his among whom it may come, that "both young men and maidens, old men and children, may praise the name of the Lord;" for, as this chapter expresses it, so all the church of God find it; "his name alone is excellent; and his glory above the earth and heaven," Ps. cxlviii. 12, 13.

First Chapter first Epistle of John.

1. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life."

2. ("For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you, that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.")

3. "That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."

4. "And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full."

5. "This then is the message, which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."

6. "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness; we lie, and do not the truth."

7. "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another; and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

8. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

9. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

10. "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

Now here again, as in the former chapter, if the regenerated child of God (and it is of such only I speak) will mark the features which are most prominent in it, and the Lord the Spirit will shine upon his blessed word, and shine at the same time in the reader's heart, he will discover that there are the same gospel truths contained herein as in the gospel song, in the foregoing recited scripture, and that they alike furnish, both subject and suited words for prayer and praise to God. I shall, for the sake of more general illustration, somewhat vary from my former analysis, and without enlarging by way of comment, simply point out the leading points, which may be made from this scripture, under both heads, for prayer and praise to God.

And first, let it be observed, what the Holy Ghost by the apostle declares to be the design, for which this scripture is sent unto the church, namely, for fellowship and communion. "That ye may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." Hence is discoverable,

what all the other parts of scripture declare, that the first, and last, and ultimate design, of Jehovah, in his Trinity of Persons, when going forth in acts of creation, was to raise up a church for communion with himself. "This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise," Isa. xliii. 21. Let it be supposed then, that the child of God, in private prayer, or in family worship, were to read this chapter; and when read, follow it up in prayer; would he not, after looking to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, "of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named," immediately advert to this most gracious design of Jehovah? Would he not say, in conformity to the gracious promise of Christ, Lord! make good thy promise to thy people, and do as thou hast said; come and make one in our midst, agreeable to the words of the Lord Jesus? "If a man love me, my Father will love him; and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." And again, "He that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father; and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him." And again, "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, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him, but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you," John xiv. 15—23. Did the Son of God graciously promise these things, and will he not fulfil them? Is not the promise absolute, that each glorious Person in the Godhead, will come and make their abode with his people? And shall there be a doubt, much less a question, of such blissful promises being realized? Oh! the unspeakable felicity of such fellowship and communion with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ? Lord! grant to me, grant to all, and every one of thy redeemed family, such sweet, real personal knowledge of, and

communion with, and rejoicing in, and dependance upon, each glorious Person in the Godhead in covenant relations, that the Lord's gracious designs may be abundantly accomplished, and that the joy of his people may be full.

And do thou, dearest Lord, as in the days of thy flesh, thy people saw thee, heard thee, looked upon thee, and their hands handled the word of life, so now in the day of thy power manifest thyself to them in all spiritual enjoyments. Come, Lord, in a way of grace, in a word of power, in the dispensations of thy providence, in the ordinances of thine house; in the ministry of thy word, and in the sacramental communications in breaking of bread, and of prayer; we shall, indeed, have all this and more; if not in the same outward manifestations as thy beloved disciple had, when he handled thee, and saw thee, with bodily eyes; but we shall know thee, and enjoy thee spiritually, and bear witness to thy eternal power and Godhead, when our souls live upon thee, and experience the efficacy of thy great salvation. Oh! what precious, blessed, soul-quickening, soul-feeding, soul-comforting sights of the Lord Jesus are those, when by thy Holy Spirit thou meltest our hard hearts, and takest away our stony hearts; so that when Jesus is looking upon us, in a way of grace, our eyes are looking unto thee in a way of supplication; and the springs of true godly sorrow are opened, in beholding him whom we have pierced, and mourn as "one that mourneth for his only son, and are in bitterness as one that is in bitterness for his first-born," Zech. xii. 10.

Moreover, in the personal enjoyments our God affords us, in his Trinity of Persons, shall we not know, that when the Holy Ghost gives his people grace to walk in the light, as God is light; to know and feel the plague of our own heart; and, while assured, that though in ourselves we are nothing but sinful dust and ashes;

yet, beheld in Christ, and accepted in Christ, we are comely from the comeliness the Lord hath put upon us. Oh! Lord God! how sweet and precious it is to the souls of thy people, to come before thee in the righteousness of God our Saviour, and to "make mention of his righteousness, even his righteousness only." But in the same moment that we find boldness to come before our God, in this new and living way which he hath consecrated for us in the Person, blood, and righteousness of his dear Son: Lord, we feel, and know, and confess before thee, "that in us, that is, in our flesh, dwelleth no good thing." Thy throne of grace is a constant witness for all thy dear children, what groans and confessions we pour out from the consciousness of indwelling sin; and the many prayers which go up before our God, and awakened by the grace of God, for the being kept from the commission of sin, and for the unceasing manifestations of God's pardoning love under the many sins we fall into, all testify for thy redeemed ones, that we cannot, we dare not say, "we have no sin, for the truth would not be in us." And conscious also that many, many, are the sins and infirmities of our nature, which we fall into, while we ourselves are too often ignorant of them, doth not the cry of the soul, when taught by sovereign grace, go up in the words of one of the saints of old, "keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins, and let them not have dominion over me. O cleanse thou me from my secret faults," Psalm xix. 12, 13.

But O Lord God! Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! what soul-refreshing words have we here before us, under all the sins and infirmities of thy people! Surely it is God the Holy Ghost which gives grace to his people to know and feel the burden of sin, and as fully and freely to make confession of our sins. And the faithfulness of God our Father is pledged, on the acknowledgment of our sins, "to forgive us our sins, and

to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Yes, blessed God and Father, every child of God may say, yea, and ought to say, thy faithfulness is made over in an everlasting covenant, which cannot be broken, that by the blood of the covenant thou wilt send forth, yea, thou hast sent forth the prisoners, whom thy dear Son, who is himself the whole of the covenant, hath delivered from the pit wherein is no water. Zech. ix. 11. Oh! the blessedness of looking up in Christ, to a faithful God in Christ, and pleading that faithfulness! And Oh! the still greater blessedness of hearing that faithful God himself, proclaiming himself under that gracious character, and commanding all his people so to know him! "Know, therefore, that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God!" Deut. vii. 9. And doth not God, even our own God, give us the blessing? Doth not God, even our own God, in every instance of pardoning grace, remember his everlasting covenant with his dear Son, and set the captive free? Is not God's faithfulness and truth our shield and buckler? And if the Son of God hath paid my ransom with his blood, shall I not say to God, in God's own words, "if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness!"

And, added to the faithfulness of God the Father, in forgiving all sin, and the enlightening of God the Holy Ghost, in teaching my poor heart both to feel and know that I am a sinner, and daily, and hourly making confession of my sins and sinful nature, before the mercy-seat. Oh! what an endless subject, both for prayer and praise, is opened to me in what is here said, in this precious scripture, "and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin!" Not the blood of bulls, or of goats; not the sacrifices of lambs, of a year old, offered upon a thousand altars: not all the ordinances and means of grace; fastings or prayers, repentance or tears; not all the almsgivings or charities; chapels or

hospitals; no, not even if men would give "the fruit of their body for the sin of their soul?" None of them, nor all of them put altogether, would, or could take away one sin. Nay, the Lord teacheth, that all charities to man, if not done with an eye to God, is altogether sin; "for whatsoever is not of faith is sin," Rom. xiv. 23. And all that men do, or say, in a way of praise, or prayer, if not cleansed and perfumed with the blood of Christ, is offensive before God. And that the child of God is not consumed upon his knees, for the iniquity of his holy things, is because this sin-bearing Lamb of God, whom the high priest of old typified, beareth them away, and in him their persons are accepted before the Lord. Exod. xxviii. 38. Oh! for grace in all my drawings nigh to the mercy-seat, to be for ever pleading, and never losing sight of this precious scripture, "the blood of Jesus Christ, God's dear Son, cleanseth us from all sin!" O Lord! cause me to feel, that this is speaking blood; in speaking to God of the finished salvation of his dear Son; and speaking from God, of his covenant faithfulness, who is well pleased for his righteousness sake! Let me know also that it is sweet-smelling blood: for sure I am, that my prayers in themselves would find no acceptance, but from this, and this alone, which comes up before God as "an offering and a sacrifice, for a sweet-smelling savor!" Yea, all the blessings of redemption, I can and do plead for, when grace and faith are in lively exercise, for all temporal, spiritual, and eternal blessings, are the purchase of this blood. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace," Eph. i. 6. Oh! for grace to be unceasingly singing with the church, the song of redemption, "who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," Rev. vii. 14. I know not how to quit the view of this proclamation of grace—"the blood of Jesus Christ his

Son, cleanseth us from all sin." Cleanseth us, that is, the church! Oh! the blessedness of the person, Jesus Christ! "one with the Father over all, God blessed for ever, amen!" the blessedness of his relationship; God's dear Son! the blessedness and infinite preciousness of his blood, which an apostle calls the blood of God, by which he purchased his church, Acts xx. 28. And that little word US, which as it relates to the church, is also of infinite and eternal moment. So that Christ's church is hereby cleansed from all sin. And if there were a sin in all the creation of God which the church of Christ had not in her nature, by the Adam-fall transgression, then would not this blessed scripture be so infinitely precious. But when the Holy Ghost here declares, that the blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin! evidently the church in the Adam-fall transgression, hath all sin in herself, and that, in every individual of her whole body; and which nothing but the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth from. Oh! what grace, what distinguishing grace, may every redeemed child of God say am I the subject of, that while there is not a sin among the miserable in hell, and all mankind upon earth, but what is in me also, the blood of Jesus Christ, God's dear Son, hath cleansed me from all sin. Thanks! thanks! be unto God for his unspeakable gift. Glory to God and the Lamb! to him who is one with the Father, over all, God blessed for ever, amen. Amen! said Paul: amen! say I. Amen! say all the church in heaven. Amen! the loud response of the redeemed upon earth. All hail! thou great amen!

I forbear to trespass further. Those examples I have given from a chapter in the old testament, and another in the new, will serve to explain, how easily, under divine teaching, may every regenerated child of God, (and it is of such only from beginning to end I speak) convert the words of God into prayers to God; and

raise up to himself subject of matter, both for prayer and praise, for all the circumstances of life. Every chapter, or psalm, more or less, may, through grace, be made to minister, to this great end, and furnish out endless discourse for communion with God in his Trinity of Persons. And herein lies the excellency of such holy conversation between the Lord and his people, when we speak to the Lord in the words which the Lord first speaks to us; for this makes it personal. Every regenerated child of God is brought into communion with God. The Lord first looks on us: and through his grace, we then look to him. The Lord calls, and we answer. "I will say," saith the Lord, "they are my people; and they shall say, the Lord is my God." Hence, from the time this personal knowledge of, and communion with is begun between the Lord and us, we have a growing acquaintance with, and an increasing desire after more frequent communions with the Lord in his Trinity of Persons. True it is, indeed, that all we know of the Lord here below, is but as the knowledge of children in their minority. Our beloved (as the church of old expressed it) "standeth behind our wall; he looketh forth at our windows, shewing himself through the lattices," Song ii. 9. Our bodies, like a wall, obscure full views of Jesus. And even when he looketh forth upon his church, at the windows of ordinances, and sheweth himself through the lattices of the several means of grace, the most we see of him, is, but "as through a glass darkly." Nevertheless, these are at times sweet and refreshing, and afford strong proofs both of the reality and blessedness of communion. And as near neighbours that are very friendly speak to one another over the walls which separate their gardens, and from their windows and lattices, which enable them to converse with full assurance that they are so communing, though their persons they see not, so our communion with the Lord is as

certain and unquestionable; whom, as the apostle saith, "not having seen, we love; in whom though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory, receiving the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls." 1 Pet. i. 6, 7. By and by, our Lord will throw down the wall of separation! Jesus will throw up the sash window, and withdraw the curtain of the lattices, and "we shall see him as he is, and know even as we are known." But to what an infinite degree of blessedness we shall be brought is not said, neither indeed we are told can it! 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." But one thing we are told, and that includes all the rest. Though at death we change worlds, we change not our company. They who have personal knowledge of God, in his Trinity of Persons, or rather are known of God by communion here, will enter into a more immediate and nearer personal communion there. For so the Son of God saith, "to him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne," Rev. iii. 21. So then, we shall sit down, not simply with "Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven;" but with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: and for which the church was chosen in Christ before all worlds. And in Him, we shall be as holy, and as happy, and as eternally and unchangeably blessed, as the utmost extent of our faculties then ripened into glory can be made. Oh! the inconceivable rapture when that promise of Christ hath its full accomplishment, "At that day, ye shall know that I am in my Father; and ye in me, and I in you," John xiv. 20.

APPENDIX.

I will suppose, for the sake of brevity, that what hath been stated in the former part of this little work is admitted; namely, that the scriptures of eternal truth, do furnish ample supplies for the purpose of prayer and praise; either when alone, or in family worship, when the Lord's people draw nigh to the Lord's presence. I will therefore now go on, by figuring to myself a little circle of this kind, assembled for this purpose. Suppose in the morning of the day; and suppose, for the sake of exemplifying what I wish to express on this subject, that I myself were present. As I before observed, that for the solemnizing of the mind, I would read, or desire any one present to read, *the Morning Portion for the day*. And then, when finished, advancing from the lesser to the greater, I would follow this up with some sweet chapter, or part of a chapter, as it might be; (and none perhaps more suited than the one from whence the Morning Portion was taken) and under the impressions, induced by the holy scriptures, and the unction of the Holy Ghost, accompanying his own most sacred word, I would figure to myself the whole assembly falling on their knees before God, and in, and through the mediation of our most glorious Christ, approaching the Lord God in his Trinity of Persons: first, in adoring him for what he is in himself; and then, as the Holy Ghost hath mercifully taught, "in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, letting 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," Phil. iv. 6, 7.

I shall, by way of further exemplifying my views on this most interesting of all subjects, draw out what for the most part would form on those occasions the basis of my own prayers and supplications, with thanksgivings. And when I have done this, I shall analyze the several features of what is offered, by way of a more clear illustration.

MORNING PRAYER.

Holy ! holy ! holy ! Lord God Almighty ! which was, and which is, and which is to come. Lord ! give grace at this time, if it be thine holy will, to the souls which are here before thee, that in our approaches to the footstool of thy mercy-seat, in and through that new and living way, which thou hast consecrated for thy church, in the Person and finished salvation of our most glorious Christ, our minds may be under the leadings and teachings of the Holy Ghost, and find access to our God and Father, by one Spirit.

We desire grace, to have both a spiritual and scriptural apprehension, in and through the person of our most glorious Christ, of the sacred and blessed unity of the divine essence, existing, as the scriptures of our God have revealed to thy church and people, in a Trinity of Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And we do most humbly entreat our God, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, that all and every one of thy redeemed, and regenerated family before thy divine Majesty, may be spiritually taught of our God : that in all our approaches to the mercy-seat, we may always have in view, and never for a moment lose sight of this glorious and soul-refreshing truth, as the bottom and foundation of our most holy faith ; that we are the true spiritual seed of Christ, who adore, worship, and bless our God in the unity of his divine essence and Godhead ; while we offer all our sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving to

the holy Three, "that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; for these Three are One."

Blessed for ever be thy great and glorious name, O Lord God! that each and every one of thy redeemed and regenerated family, can, and do, by thy divine teaching, feel those blessed truths, as living principles in their hearts. We do Lord, through thy favour, know and enjoy the everlasting love of God our Father, in his own personal act of grace to us, as we are in Christ, in choosing, adopting, and accepting us in Christ. We do no less know and enjoy the everlasting love of God the Son, in his own personal grace to our persons, in taking us into union with himself, before all worlds, and redeeming us by his blood, when in the time-state of the church, in the Adam-fall transgression we were lost and ruined, and undone in sin. And equally we do bless God the Holy Ghost, for his everlasting love to us, as we are in Christ, when from all eternity he anointed us in Christ; and in this our time-state, when dead in trespasses and sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Glory to thy glorious and fearful name—the Lord our God!

We are a company of poor, helpless, hopeless, and in ourselves undone creatures, who in the opening of this new day, come to present ourselves before thy divine Majesty. We feel, and we desire to feel our nothingness, our creatureship, and still more, our sinfulness, while we draw nigh to the mercy-seat of our gracious Lord God in Christ. Blessed be our God for the light of this morning! Surely we may well say with the church of old, "it is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning. (They are new this morning!) Great is thy faithfulness."

But we come, O Lord, in the name, and we approach in the righteousness of our most glorious Christ. We

are his, both by God our Father's gift, by the Lord Jesus Christ's betrothing us to himself, by the purchase of his blood, and by the Lord having made us willing in the day of his power. We come under the quickenings and anointings of the Lord the Spirit! We are come for our morning blessing, while we present our morning sacrifice. We feel confidence to come to our most glorious gracious God, because we come only in him, and his complete and finished salvation, who is the Lord our righteousness! And very sure we are of our heavenly Father's blessing; since the Son of God hath said, "if ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

Look then, gracious Lord, upon this part of thy family, whom thou hast brought here this day, and is now before thee. And according to the various wants of thy household, give, Lord, to every one grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

The Lord our God is well acquainted with all the secret circumstances of each before him. Thou knowest our persons, our wants, our sins, our sorrows, our exercises, our temptations. There is not a thought of our heart, but the Lord knoweth it altogether. While, therefore, we present our persons, and all that we are, the objects, and the subjects of, at thy footstool, we would lay low in the dust before our God, that as clay in the hands of the potter, so our souls may be in the hand of our almighty God. Mould us, and let us be shapen to whatever thine infinite love and wisdom be pleased to appoint for us; that as vessels of mercy, which our God hath afore prepared unto glory, we may be so totally emptied of self, as fitted to receive out of Christ's fulness, grace for grace; and "sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work."

Let Him, who hath proclaimed himself under those divine characters, the resurrection and the life, the first and the last, the Alpha and the Omega, the author and finisher of salvation; be the one glorious object of all our thoughts, all our desires, all our hopes, all our affections, and our portion for ever. Precious Lord Jesus! in thee is manifested all the fulness of the Godhead bodily! Thou hast made known the Person of the Father, and the Holy Ghost. For "he that hath seen thee, hath seen the Father." And while we know, from divine teaching, that Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons, is "eternal, immortal, invisible; and whom no man hath seen, or can see"—It is thou, O Lord God, "the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, thou hast declared him!" We receive on our bended knees, in transports of rejoicing this thy gracious revelation. We feel the blessedness of it. We desire to have more and more of the love-tokens of thy favour, in continual manifestations of it. And having tasted of thy love, and knowing that in thy Person, all the grace and favour of the holy Three in One towards the whole church is made known, we rejoice in the spiritual and scriptural enjoyment of it, "with joy unspeakable, and full of glory; receiving the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls."

Look blessed Lord, on each, and every one of thine, that is now before thee. Suit blessings to their several states and circumstances. To the babes and little ones of thy fold, give them an hungering and thirsting for the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby. And as thou receivedst into the arms of thy love, all and every one of thine, with equal affection, the weak in faith, and the strong in the Lord, for all are, what they are, in our most glorious Christ. Thou who feedest thy flock like a shepherd, "wilt gather the lambs with thine arm, and carry them in thy

bosom, whilst thou wilt gently lead those that are with young."

If there be any here before thee, of thine, O Lord, who are of riper years, and are engaged in the more ardent exercises of spiritual life; give them to see in whom all their strength is, and from whom they can alone derive support, to war a good warfare. Daily make them strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus!

And let thine aged ones, as they draw nearer the confines of the eternal world, be loosened more from this; and become more and more acquainted with the deep things of our God in the upper world. Let them have unceasing communion and fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And from the gracious unction of the Holy Ghost, feel their souls as daily walking in the expectation of the Master's call to take them home; that where Jesus is, there they may be also. Lord, cause them to hear by faith, and spiritually to feast upon thine own special promise, to thine ancient followers, in which thou hast said, "and even to your old age I am He; and even to hoary hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you."

We beg a special blessing from our God, on that portion of his holy word which we have heard this day. Oh! grant that the word of Christ may dwell in us richly, in all wisdom. With one of old, we would desire grace to say as he did, "thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart." Lord! let the savor of the name of our most glorious Christ, which is in them, be fragrant to our spiritual senses, as the ointment poured forth; for then will our Lord's gracious promise be tasted in the full blessedness of it, when he said, "the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

* * * * *

We dare not arise from before thy footstool, O Lord God, until we have brought in the arms of our faith, and presented before thy divine Majesty, the whole election of grace in every individual member of Christ's mystical body. All that are dear to our most glorious Head, are dear to us. We take part in all that concerns them. For we would desire to feel much of that spirit, the Holy Ghost hath taught by his servant the apostle, that "whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it. Earnestly we beg of our most glorious God and Father, to bless his Zion "with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. And the Lord appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes; the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness!"

In our Lord's opening to us the events of this day; we beg his presence, his favour, and the light of his divine countenance, to shine upon us in the way. Do thou go before us, O Lord, as with thine Israel of old, in the pillar of the cloud by day. And in every path, and upon every occasion, in all the departments of nature, providence, and grace; cause us to hear the word behind, and to feel the gracious leadings of thy influence within, upon our hearts, saying, "this is the way, walk ye in it; when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left!" And in all our intercourse with men or things, amidst the necessary and unavoidable concerns of life, grant that our whole conversation may be as becometh the gospel of Christ. Enable us to put on, "as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering." Yea! most gracious Lord, let the blessed effects of our morning drawing nigh to thy throne, be felt and known by our own hearts, and with all with whom we have to do. That as the skin of Moses's face shone

from communion with the Lord; so, such a sanctity of life and conversation may appear in our whole conduct, that it may be evident to all around, that we have been with Jesus!

Pardon, Almighty God, in thy Trinity of Persons, the iniquity of our most holy things. Let all we have, and all we are, be washed from our uncleanness in that precious blood of Christ, which cleanseth from all sin. And “unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us; unto Him be glory in the church, by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”

EVENING PRAYER.

In our approaches this evening to the mercy-seat of Jehovah, in his Trinity of Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, through the mediation of our most glorious Christ, we present ourselves, O Lord, in all that poverty of character, which in Adam-fall transgression we are involved in, and without an act of rich, full, free, and unmerited grace, we can never get free from, but through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. Great and glorious God of heaven and earth, pass by as thou didst in the instance of thy servant in the mount, and proclaim thyself under those distinguishing revelations of thine infinite and eternal excellences, as “the Lord, the Lord God! merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands; forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin!” Never surely were there a company of poorer, more needy, more empty, and more undeserving creatures, than those, O Lord, now before thee; but it is on such thou makest thy grace to shine. For if Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons, will have (as is his most just right to have) all the glory and praise

of salvation, our nothingness and unworthiness, are exactly suited for this purpose, for our God must have all the glory as in ourselves we are nothing, we have nothing, are worse than nothing.

Grant, gracious Lord, sweet communion to our spiritual apprehensions this evening. Thou knowest, O Lord, and thou hast in some measure given us to know that all communion with our God must begin with God; for we can say nothing to our God in a way of grace, until that he hath first made himself known unto us in a way of mercy. And very blessed are the privileges of thy redeemed and regenerated family, O Lord, on this ground, for we have personal knowledge of and communion with and manifestations from the holy undivided Three in One, which testify to our adoption character in Christ Jesus. Oh! it is most blessed indeed when from those gracious communications to our persons as we are in Christ, we get into a daily, yea, sometimes into an hourly enjoyment of communion with thee, O Lord, in each glorious Person of the Godhead. Yea, gracious Lord! our salvation in our most glorious Christ, is thus revealed to us, made known to us, and confirmed to us by each and all the Holy Three in One, which bear record in heaven. Infinite and eternal in all the powers of Godhead is our God and Father, to whom the sacrifice and the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all was made, for the salvation of his body the church. Infinite and eternal in all the powers of Godhead, was, and is our most glorious God and Saviour, by whom and in his own blood he purged our sins, and then entered into the holy place, "having obtained eternal redemption for us." And equally infinite and eternal, was and is God the Holy Ghost, in those sovereign acts of Almighty power, and by his Godhead, by which he brings conviction to our souls of our sin, and of the all-sufficient merits of Christ's blood-shedding and death, to do away

sin, and to bring in an everlasting righteousness which is to all and upon all that believe. Lord! we plead the same before thee! We behold in the Person of our most glorious Christ, all that we need for our full and perfect acceptance with the Father. We see in his obedience and death, his resurrection and ascension and return to glory, all the suited and the all-sufficient satisfaction for the sins of his people. We most heartily, cordially, fully, and fearlessly trust in his Person as the glorious object of faith, and his finished salvation, as the glorious subject of all confidence. We behold him, as made of God to us "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." And under the full impression of these divine truths, through the unction and quickenings of the Holy Ghost, we can and do cry out with the church of old; "Behold! O God, our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed."

And will not our God look upon us, having from all eternity chosen us in Christ, adopted us in Christ, accepted us in Christ, given us eternal life in Christ, and grace in Christ before the world began, and blessed us in Christ with all spiritual blessings in Christ? Can we doubt the less while we have the greater? Did our God love us in Christ before all worlds, and will he not now accept us in Christ, when he hath redeemed us from the world? Hath God our Father so loved us, as to give his dear Son for us, and "will he not with him freely give us all things?" Hath the Son of God so loved us, as to give himself for us; so loved us, as to die for us; so loved us, as to wash us from our sins in his own blood; and will he not acknowledge us for his own, when so loved, so purchased, and so cleansed from all our iniquities? And hath God the Holy Ghost so loved us as to quicken us, regenerate us, bring us under his continual renewings; make our bodies his temple, and daily taking of the

things of Christ and shewing them to us? Surely he doth, he will "direct our hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ. He hath sealed us as the earnest of the promised inheritance unto the day of redemption!"

And now, O Lord God, we desire grace to bless thee for the mercies of the past day, closing in as it is on the departure, and going to be numbered with the years beyond the flood. We humbly beg to commit our persons, and all our concerns, with the whole church of our God, into thy protection for the night. And while we know, from the very construction of our nature from the circumstances into which, by reason of our Adam-fall transgression, that nature is involved, no creatures are more exposed to peril, than our nature during the defenceless state of sleep. We take confidence in our glorious Christ, and in the gracious assurance of our promising and performing God, in what thou hast said of thy church and people, "I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment, lest any hurt it: I will keep it night and day!" If we lay sleepless in the night, will not our God give us songs in the night? Surely, Lord, it is the special personal privilege of thy redeemed and regenerated ones, and whereby thou dost manifest thyself to them "otherwise than thou dost unto the world;" that thou dost come unto them, and not leave them comfortless. Yea, our God hath said, "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: and the Holy Ghost shall abide with you for ever!" Oh precious, precious Lord Jesus! let some sweet words of thine arise continually to our recollection, whether by night or day. So shall we realize thy divine presence, and the presence of the Father, and the Holy Ghost; and in this very blessed scriptural manner, prove the confirmation of thy promises, and be distinguished from the carnal and the

mere nominal professors of the present awful day, whom thou thyself, O Lord, hast marked as “loving not thy Person, nor keeping thy sayings,” John xiv. 21—24.

Let the portion of holy scripture, which we have this evening heard, be our daily meditation. Let it be the language of our hearts, to say with Job, “I have esteemed the words of thy mouth, more than my necessary food.” And with another old testament saint, to add, “mine eyes prevent the night-watches, that I might meditate in thy word. The law of thy mouth is dearer to me than thousands of gold and silver!”

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Vouchsafe, most gracious LORD; to be our unceasing ruler and guide; that living in constant access to, and communion with, the Holy Three in One, as the stated privilege of thine adopted children, such a savour of grace may be in all we say or do, that we may “adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things;” that we may “put off concerning the former conversation, the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of our mind; and put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness.”

And, while our glorious, gracious God, according to his own most blessed promise, “keepeth the feet of his saints, and the wicked one silent in darkness;” grant to all thy redeemed and regenerated family, increasing knowledge of, and increasing communion with, and increasing dependance upon our most glorious Christ. Suffer none of thine, O Lord, to be looking to ought else for acceptance and salvation. Give grace to each, and to all, to rest on him, and him only. Let there be no procuring causes mingled in our creed. Neither repentance, nor good works, not even faith itself, as an act of our's, be brought into the account. These, all of them, are but the fruits and effects of salvation in Christ, and no part of our salvation, Christ

is all and in all. With the words of scripture, give us continually to say, and spiritually to feel and enjoy what we say, when our language is, "my mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day, for I know not the numbers thereof. I will go in the strength of the Lord God; I will make mention of thy righteousness; even of thine only!"

Committing and commending ourselves to our most gracious covenant God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as we are in Christ; approaching our God with the most earnest desires in him, and through him, to bless and adore the divine Unity in his Trinity of Persons; and looking up to the throne of grace, as our everlasting witness, that we seek acceptance only in the beloved, to the praise of the glory of thy grace, we drop into thine Almighty arms for the night we are now entered upon; and for all that yet remains to be filled in our eventful lives; sleeping or waking, in life and death, in time and eternity, we pray to be found in Christ; while to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, we would ascribe endless praises. Amen.



ANALYSIS OF THE FOREGOING PRAYERS.

THE spiritual reader, taught of God, will have perceived from the general tendency of both the foregoing prayers, how important a part of sacred worship is there made of approaching to Jehovah, in the Trinity of his Persons, while keeping in remembrance the unity of the divine essence. Indeed, I am free to confess, that with me it forms the whole sum and substance, and the very life of communion. I know of no other approach to the throne. For, unless the awakened and regenerated child of God hath a real spiritual and scriptural apprehension of the one true and only God, as manifested to himself as he is in Christ, from the gra-

scious acts of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, he worships an unknown God. Whereas, the child of God, who draws nigh the mercy-seat, under the sweet unction, and leadings, and teachings of the Holy Ghost; and feels his very soul led out into a spiritual apprehension of the love of God the Father, and into the patient waiting for Christ, he knows personally and spiritually the love of each glorious Person, in those acts of grace manifested to himself, and doth to all intents and purposes glorify and adore the unity of the divine essence in his Trinity of Persons. And I confess, that I have the more particularly upon the present occasion, endeavoured to have this in view, in the foregoing forms of prayer, because it is to be feared, that many, yea, very many of the Lord's chosen ones, do not steadily and invariably attend to these most important scriptural directions, in their approaches to the mercy-seat. And yet nothing can be more blessed, than when we are enabled 'to worship God in the Trinity, and Trinity in Unity: neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the substance.'

I am well aware that sceptics and infidels of all denominations will rise up in anger against this statement, and be ready to condemn it as rank enthusiasm. But with men of this description I have nothing to do or say. I leave them where the Lord hath left them, to the proud, presumptuous, and unhumbled reasonings of their own minds. The Lord's direction upon all such occasions, is both plain and imperative, when he saith by his servant the apostle, "from perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, withdraw thyself," 1 Tim. vi. 5.

But for the comfort and encouragement of all the Lord's own redeemed and regenerated family, and especially for the little ones, who from the timidity of their minds, and the weakness of their faith, are much exercised, I hold myself their continual debtor. And to all

such, I would say, there is nothing so sweet, nothing so lovely, and nothing so interesting and delightful, when from an unction from the Lord, the spiritual faculties of the Lord's people are brought forth in a way of knowing the Lord in his Trinity of Persons; and holding daily communion with the Lord, from the revelations made by each glorious person to the soul, in the gracious acts by which each are known and defined; and by which, in fellowship and communion, we enjoy each, when thus the Holy Three bear record to each other, and testify to our hearts, that those Three are One.

I know, as well as though a voice from heaven did daily proclaim it, yea, infinitely more satisfactory than a thousand voices, (and every redeemed and regenerated child of God, when attending to it, must know the same) that it is the Person of God the Father which hath chosen me in Christ, adopted me in Christ, accepted me in Christ, given me eternal life in Christ, grace in Christ, and blessed me with all spiritual blessings in Christ. Hence, therefore, when at any time faith is in lively exercise, and I can, and do enjoy those sweet and gracious love-tokens of God my Father, do I not, yea, am I not constrained to contemplate and acknowledge such sovereign acts of grace, as so many proofs of his Almighty favour, and bless him for them accordingly? And as each and every one of these mighty deeds could be shewn only, and given only by none less than God, surely, while I behold the personal act of God my Father in such clear demonstrations of Godhead, I no less behold at the same time, that he must, and doth possess all divine attributes and perfections in common with the Son, and Holy Ghost, in the one undivided essence of Jehovah, in his Trinity of Persons: and precisely the same, in relation to the Person and grace of God the Son. In all those personal acts which the sacred scripture peculiarly and

specially ascribe to him, in marrying his church, and every individual of his church to himself before all worlds, and redeeming his church by himself from the Adam-fall transgression in time. As these are equal acts of love, and equal proofs of Godhead, I am no less constrained to behold him as an equal object of my love, and equally entitled to my adoration and praise, as One of the sacred Persons with the Father and the Holy Ghost, in the unity of the Godhead. And in like manner, the Person and Godhead of the Holy Ghost is plainly revealed to my soul, from those acts of grace, which the scriptures, specially and peculiarly ascribe to him, in his making the bodies of the Lord's people his temple; and those sovereign acts of regeneration, and the renewings of his love, when glorifying the Person and salvation of Christ to our hearts, and directing us into the love of God our Father. So that I am constrained to contemplate each glorious Person in his own eternal power and Godhead; while the clear and plain revelation of holy scripture states the unity of the divine essence, and that each and all constitute One and the same Almighty Jehovah, who is "One and the same Lord, and his name One," Zech. xiv. 9. And I hesitate not to add, that every one of the election of grace, taught of God, cannot but desire thus to know God, thus to adore God in his Trinity of Persons, and to ascribe equal glory, equal praise, and to love, and reverence, and fear, with equal regard, the Holy Three in One, in the unity of the divine essence, as the glorious, holy, undivided Jehovah.

Let me not, however, be mistaken by any of Christ's little ones, for whose comfort and encouragement I have engaged in this work. I do not mean to say from this statement, that all the Lord's people have, or can have, an equal apprehension in those great truths, and are all equally taught to have the same clear views of them. I mean not so, neither is it necessary. All the

Lord's children are not equally strong in faith, nor of like spiritual attainments, no more than in nature, are all of equal age or of equal stature. But it is enough, when the redeemed and regenerated child of God is brought into a personal knowledge of and communion with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, so as to have manifestations from each, and all the glorious Persons in the Godhead, so as to know and enjoy "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost."

In addition to the above observations, in analyzing the specimen I have given in the foregoing prayers, of forming the sum and substance of all we can or have occasion to say, in our approaches to the throne of God, I would beg to make this further remark, that what I have gathered together, on those occasions, for morning and evening prayer, if examined, will be found to be wholly from scripture. Indeed, the scriptures are so full of ample resources for this purpose, that it were a pity to look elsewhere. In one part or other of the word of God we may find subjects suited for every purpose: and not a case or situation, in which a child of God can be placed, but what he may find words prepared for him, wherewith he may come before the Lord. And what words can I, or any child of God find, to speak unto the Lord, equal to those wherewith the Lord hath first spoken to us?

In looking at the *Poor Man's Morning and Evening Portion*, I was astonished to find so much of prayer in those little diurnal selections, as there is, however undesignedly. The greater part of them is formed in a way of prayer. And I have left a chasm, marked with stars

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on purpose to say that there, every morning and evening, the portion of scripture, and the observations made upon it, might be introduced, if the Lord so direct the heart.

I have done this much in this *second* edition of the *Poor Man's Prayer Book*, because some of the Lord's little ones have thought it might minister in the Lord's hand, to the help of the Lord's people. But I again cannot but express my hopes, it will be used no further than as the mere elementary principles, to bring all the Lord's people wholly to the Lord, to learn the discovery of the Lord's teaching. My prayer will accompany it, that the Lord himself will be the teacher of the Lord's people. "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord!" The Lord be graciously pleased to take the whole of his family under his divine unction; that all his church and people may be of the "true circumcision which worship God in spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh!"

SWEET MORSELS

TO

HUNGRY SOULS,

IN THE LORD'S WORD, FOR THE LORD'S PEOPLE.

PREFACE.

I HAVE often taken occasion to remark to the Lord's people, in the course of my ministry, what a fulness may be found under the Lord's teaching, from short sentences, and even from single words sometimes, in the scriptures of our God. It is astonishing to observe it, and indeed it becomes decisive of the divine authority. Never surely can there be found such a comprehension as God the Holy Ghost useth in his scriptures of truth. A word will often convey a volume of expression. Here therefore we trace the Almighty Writer: here we recognize a divine hand. Surely none but God could accomplish such a purpose!

And it should seem that our translators had a clear apprehension of the Lord's design in this particular, from the frequency of their marginal notes and references. For when at any time they felt themselves at a loss to convey the full sense of any word or passage in the body of the chapter or verse, they have given another word by way of explanation in the margin. And most sweet and ponderous sometimes these marginal notes are. Our old bibles abound with them. And our old bibles are like old gold on this account, they are true bullion and without alloy. And next to the scriptures themselves, that faithful and correct translation which we have of those divine records as established by law among us, is the greatest blessing the Lord ever bestowed upon our nation. And however it may subject me to the censure of modern writers, who either to support their several systems, or to affect learning, are for ever talking of false renderings, and interpolations and the like, in this translation; yet sure I am, that all the wisdom of the several centuries which have

succeeded that golden age of the church, when the bible was first translated, never hath been or ever will be able to form an equal: the Lord's blessing hath gone before it, and followed it to thousands now in glory: and his blessing will watch over it for good to the thousands yet to follow of the church to the latest posterity. In this little tract I have availed myself of the labours of those men of God, in gathering some few of the sweet morsels for spiritual refreshment to the Lord's people. I send it forth on the knee of prayer, that the Lord's blessing may accompany it.

ROBERT HAWKER.

SWEET MORSELS,

&c. &c.

I.

“HIS OWN.”—John xiii. 1.

“HIS OWN;” what own? Are not all things God’s own, in all the departments of nature, providence, grace and glory? Is not “the earth the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein?” Ps. xxiv. Yes! the Lord himself answereth the question; “all those things hath my hand made!” Isa. lxvi. 2. Yet, nevertheless, the same divine authority hath drawn a line of everlasting distinction between his works in nature and his choice in grace. “Behold, the heaven of heavens is the Lord thy God’s; the earth also with all that is therein. Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day,” Deut. x. 14, 15. Hence, therefore, it will undeniably follow, that when the Lord in any part of his sacred word speaks of his own, the very term carries with it the clearest idea of a certain special, personal, and peculiar right, of a very near and endearing connexion. As the Lord elsewhere expresses it, so the sense as plainly follows, “this people have I formed for myself, they shall shew forth my praise,” Isa. xliii. 21. Moreover, it should be observed, by way of further confirmation, that God the Holy Ghost, as if to determine the express application of his own, in direct reference to the people of God, hath marked it in this place, where it is

made use of concerning them, in different words in the original, from what the same words in our English translation have rendered it, when not speaking of them.

In this place, where it is said, "Jesus having loved his own, loveth them unto the end," John xiii. 1. the Greek words (as those who know the language well know) are *tous idious*; whereas in the passage, John i. 11. the words are *ta idia*, and which mean no more concerning his own, but that the Jews to whom Christ came, and who received him not, were his countrymen, and of the nation to which he belonged. The same words therefore might be used when a person would describe his townsmen, or his neighbours, or his goods, or any other indifferent thing. But in the place where the words *tous idious* are used, here "his own" implies a nearness and dearness of affinity and love, and regard as well as right; such as a man hath for his own spouse, or his own children, yea, the members of his own body, his flesh and his bones. Oh! sweet and precious words of our lovely and all-loving Jesus. Jesus from everlasting having loved his own, and in loving them loved himself, "he loveth them unto the end!"

Further. By his own, as part of himself, is intended to express at the same time how they are his own, and in consequence thereof, how very dear they are to him. They were chosen of the Father, and given to him as for ever distinguished from the world, and betrothed by Christ himself for his spouse; anointed with him their glorious head by the Holy Ghost before the foundation of the world; redeemed by him himself, during the time-state of the church, from all the evil of the Adam-fall transgression: and being both the objects and the subjects of Jehovah's everlasting love, have been, and as they come forward in due time will be regenerated by God the Holy Ghost, and "made willing in the day of his power." Hence they are his

own, by every tie that can make them his own; by choice, by gift, by union, by marriage, by purchase, by blood, by conquest, and by power; and thus for ever made his own, in an everlasting covenant which cannot be broken. Very sweetly doth our Jesus testify to this close and intimate oneness and union, when he saith to the Father, "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. 23.

But we must not stop here. His own are known also by certain marks and features distinguishable in their character. They are made "partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust; and there are given unto them all things that pertaineth to life and godliness." So saith the Holy Ghost by Peter, second epistle i. 3, 4. Hence, a certain sanctity, a certain dignity belonging to Jesus's own. Moreover, they are called—God's people, his jewels, his treasure, his inheritance, his flock, his diadem, his crown of rejoicing. So that they are peculiarly marked throughout the whole word of God, for their nobility, royalty, yea, infinitely beyond all these in their oneness and relationship with Christ. One calls them "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people." And another styles them, "kings and priests unto God and the Father," 1 Pet. ii. 9.—Rev. i. 6.

And all these distinctions of character, whereby Christ's own are marked in the scriptures of eternal truth, are rendered incalculably more blessed, from the special and particular love-tokens with which they are so. There are no such things said of the holy angels; for though they are elect angels, and as such God our Saviour hath kept them in the holiness in which they were first created; yet this preservation is not from union with him, but from dominion by him. The

highest angel in heaven cannot say what the lowest sinner upon earth can say, when renewed by sovereign grace, Christ is my brother! Angels love Christ, adore Christ, praise Christ, (and I love angels for loving him) but there is no relationship between Christ and them, but as creatures to the Creator. Oh! the preciousness of that scripture. "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham. For both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one. For which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren," Heb. ii. 10, 11. Shall we go further? Yes! One of the sweetest thoughts to crown the whole remains to be noticed. And what is that? Truly, that when God chose the church, gave the church to Christ for his own; and when the Holy Ghost quickens the church to the knowledge and everlasting enjoyment of it, the whole Godhead in the Three holy Persons constituting Jehovah, needed not the church to add to his glory. There could be nothing in the creature to induce such acts of grace; for all creatures in themselves are alike unprofitable to God. No motive but in the divine mind could operate to those acts of divine favour. That question meets us every where, "how can man be profitable to God?" Oh! who that properly contemplates these things under divine teaching, but must fall down before this great God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in that he hath from his own sovereign mind and will, thus called into being the church to make "his own," when in himself he needed nothing, and when nothing can add to his essential glory, by all the praises of the whole creation of God.

Reader! what say you to these things? pause and ponder well the whole. Then look up to God the Holy Ghost and say, is there not an indescribable sweetness and preciousness in this scripture morsel, "his own?" Sure I am the reader will say so, if so be "he hath

tasted that the Lord is gracious!" None of those happy souls who have been taught who Christ is, and who have felt the plague of their own hearts, but must feel also the blessedness of the Lord's acknowledgment of his own.

My brother, can you say with the church, "I am my beloved's, and his desire is towards me?" Song vii. 10. Have you a well-grounded hope, from divine teaching, that God the Father hath chosen you in Christ to be "holy and without blame before him in love:" hath adopted you by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will; hath accepted you in Christ to the praise of the glory of his grace? That Christ hath taken you for his own, betrothed you to himself for ever, and redeemed you according to the riches of his grace? That God the Holy Ghost hath anointed you together with Christ, from everlasting, and regenerated you in time, from the death of trespasses and sins in the Adam-fall transgression? Oh! the unspeakable felicity of such unalterable testimonies in the heart of every child of being of "his own" concerning whom such things are said!

So then Jesus's own are God the Father's own, for he it is who first gave them to Jesus. And God our Father doth not alienate his right in them whom he thus gives. For while God our Father gives all things to Christ, and all things are our's, because we are Christ's; yet Christ himself is God's, and all his people with him. Sweetly to this glorious truth, bears God the Holy Ghost testimony. "For all things are your's, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are your's, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's," I Cor. iii. 21—23. And no less are we God's the Holy Ghost, "for he which establisheth us in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who also hath sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts,"

2 Cor. i. 21, 22. God the Holy Ghost is both the sealer, and the earnest, or seal. And, therefore, "nevertheless (Oh! that sweet nevertheless) the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his," 2 Tim. ii. 19. Hallelujah! Blessed, blessed for ever be God for Jesus Christ!

And now then what hath a child of God to fear, while living by faith on those sweet assurances? Sealed by God the Spirit, that loving Spirit will lead and guide his own whom he hath sealed, into "the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Jesus Christ!" Redeemed by God the Son, will he not love his own, whom he hath bought with so dear a price? "No man ever yet hated his own flesh." And how must Jesus love his? And shall not God the Father avenge his own elect (saith Jesus) "who cry day and night unto him?" O yes! "he will avenge them speedily," Luke xviii. 7. For they are not simply an elect, but God's elect. Not merely chosen, but God's chosen. Not simply set apart, but set apart for God, and set apart by God and for himself. Oh! the dignity, the honour, the blessedness, the safety of the elect, yea, God's elect, and God's own elect.

Lamb of God! is it so, and art thou everlastingly interested for thine own? Methinks I hear thee still uttering these precious words concerning them; "that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee; that they all may be one in us!" John xvii. 21.

Oh! this mighty US! and the blessedness of union with this mighty US! Not only one with Christ in his having taken into union our nature, and married the persons of all his people; but by means of this union with Christ, brought into union in Christ with God, "predestinated to the adoption of children according to the good pleasure of his will," Eph. i. 5. Oh! this mighty US in Jehovah, and the blessedness of union with this mighty US in Jehovah.

“HIS OWN INHERITANCE.”—Ps. cvi. 40.

It was a vast prayer which God the Holy Ghost put into the heart and mouth of Paul to offer for the church, when he begged for them that they might know the “riches of the glory of the Lord’s inheritance in the saints,” Eph. i. 18. The knowledge and right apprehension of this, if possessed by the Lord’s chosen ones, would be little short of bringing down heaven into the soul, and bringing up the soul, by faith, into the very suburbs of heaven!

For only consider what an inheritance implies. An inheritance is the substance or property that a man lives upon. It is his demesne, his house, his home. Hence, in accommodation to our manner of speech, the Lord calls his people his inheritance, yea, “his own inheritance.” Their persons being chosen by him for himself, he considers them his inheritance. So that the happiness which they derive from him, and the glory which they have in him, he lives upon. Both their persons, and the blessedness they enjoy in their persons from the Lord, terminate in his glory, and become his inheritance.

And there is this additional sweetness in it also, the Lord making his people his inheritance, thereby gives them a right to call him their’s. There is a beautiful echo or response in scripture to this amount; “for the Lord hath chosen Zion, he hath desired it for his habitation; this is my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it,” Ps. cxxxii. 13, 14. And the gracious answer is, “the Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup; thou maintainest my lot,” Ps. xvi. 5. Doth the reader enter into the sweetness and blessedness of these things? Our inheritance in the Lord ariseth out of his inheritance in us. His is the cause, our’s the effect. Christ was not formed for us; but we for him. His whole church is chosen to be

in him everlastingly holy and without blame before him in love; but he himself is infinitely more precious than all.

And there is one property more in this view of the subject which tends to heighten the blessing ten-fold, and endear it to every heart of the Lord's people, namely, in that all the persons of the Godhead concur in this appropriation of the church of Christ to an inheritance. It is God the Father's by choice, and by eternal decree, "according to the good pleasure of his will." It is God the Son's both by gift and by purchase. And it is God the Holy Ghost's by regeneration and renewing grace, when from the time-state of corruption in the Adam-fall transgression, we are raised up from being dead in trespasses and sins, and cleansed and "built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit," Eph. ii. 22.

Let the reader pause over the contemplation. That God the Father, who is over all God blessed for ever, and can need nothing, neither derive any thing in addition to his glory from his creatures, should nevertheless make choice of his people for his inheritance. And again, when that inheritance was defiled with sin, should cleanse it with blood, and no less than the blood of his dear Son. And still more, that God the Holy Ghost, to purify and renew, should quicken us together with Christ when dead in trespasses and sins, and raise us up together, and cause us to sit together in heavenly places in Christ! What wonders are folded up in this one view of the Lord's inheritance? Was it not enough to give us his dear Son, but will he give us himself for our portion; nay more, will make us his portion, and say, "I will dwell in them and walk in them; I will be their God, and they shall be my people," 2 Cor. vi. 16.

But we must not stop here: The Lord's personal choice of this inheritance of his, is among the richest jewels of this coronet. Jehovah, when determining to

have his dwelling-place and portion in his people, did not leave it to a peradventure among what class of the sons of men he would fix his inheritance. It was Zion he chose, and the sons of Jacob he appointed, and that from everlasting. The charter of grace runs in these words:—"For the Lord's portion is his people, and Jacob is the lot of his inheritance," Deut. xxxii. 9.

And what heightened this choice, in manifesting it to be the sole effect of free unmerited grace, the Lord declared that at the time he so determined, and that his purpose according to election might stand, it was "before the children were born, or had done any good or evil," Rom. ix. 11. Nay, the Lord declared further, that he knew Jacob and his seed "would deal very treacherously, and be called a transgressor from the womb," Isa. xlviii. 8. And yet, as if in direct opposition to those things, the Lord manifested his predilection for his inheritance in that he called it his own, saying, "For the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure," Ps. cxxxv. 4.

Reader! pause over the subject, for we can go no further. The truth itself is all that we are concerned to know. Wherefore that high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity, should choose such an inheritance, and dwell in his creatures, whom the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot obtain, may indeed well excite the highest wonder and astonishment, but to explain is impossible. It is enough, the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance; yea, his own inheritance. All the persons of the Godhead have shewn the interest taken in this inheritance. A voice from heaven hath confirmed it. John heard it, saying, "behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them!" Rev. xxi. 3.

My brother! see to it that you are in the blessed portion of God's inheritance, yea, "his own inheritance." One of those chosen ones given by the Father to the

Son before all worlds; redeemed by the Son from all the evils of the time-state transgression; and regenerated by the Holy Ghost, and become a new creature in Christ Jesus. And with these divine impressions upon your mind, yea, inlaid by God himself on the mind like Mosaic pavement; take with you all the blessings which belong to the Lord's inheritance, for grace here, and glory hereafter.

In relation to "the life that now is," the emptiest state of the soul is the most prepared state of the soul to denote the Lord's inheritance. Jehovah hath himself said, "I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit," Isa. lvii. 15. So that an empty heart, broken walls, a conscious sense of nothingness, unworthiness, and being stripped of every thing a man might call his own, is just then prepared by the Lord for the Lord's reception. Here, saith the Lord, "will I dwell, for I have a delight therein," Ps. cxxxii. 14.

And in relation to the "life that is to come," the Lord that hath chosen Jacob for himself, and Israel for his own possession, hath decreed, and will fully make sure the means, that his people, whom he hath chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blame before him in love, shall be in Christ as holy and as happy, beloved of God, and loving God, as God himself can make them; and be his portion, and he their's, through all the unnumbered ages of eternity. Hallelujah! Oh then the blessedness of being the Lord's inheritance! yea, his own inheritance. Lord! be it my portion "to be filled with all the fulness of God!" Amen.

"BLESSED."—Ps. i. 1.

Perhaps it is not generally known, but from its great importance it is to be wished it were, that the word blessed in this Psalm, as well as in many other scrip-

tures, is in the plural number (*ashrei*), and means blessedness. And in allusion to him of whom he speaks, he is truly blessedness. The Hebrews used this word for the most part plural, because they thought (and thought rightly) that blessedness is not confined to one object, but includes many. So that, when considered as referring to Christ, he is indeed in the fullest sense of the word, blessedness. Some call him the God-man of blessedness!

Pause, reader, look at Christ! Is he not the foundation of all blessedness? Doth he not comprehend in himself all blessedness? Is he not essential to all blessedness? And if possessing him, have we not all blessedness, whatever else is wanting.

With respect to his title in this Psalm, of none but Christ could what is here said be true. He only walked not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seat of the scornful.

But we must not stop here. Christ is the whole and sole blessedness of his people, both in time and to all eternity. "Men shall be blessed in him." For there is not a single blessing out of Christ for all the race of men. Reader! is he your *ashrei*, your blessedness?

One word more. While Christ is known, and felt, and enjoyed, as all blessedness, and God our Father blesseth us "in him with all spiritual blessings;" doth your heart go forth in blessing him? It is true, indeed, we cannot add to his glory with our faint praises, no more than we can increase the thunder with our voices, or add to the sun's light by a candle; yet Jesus loves the good word and good will of his people. He saith, "whosoever offereth me praise glorifieth me," Ps. li. 23. The hearty amen of his people, is grateful to God's amen to his people. For this is the line of distinction between his people and the world. All God's works must praise him, but it is the saints which give thanks to him. His works praise him because they are the

displays of his power: and they praise him passively. But his saints alone give thanks to him, for they do it actively. Reader! I ask again, is Jesus your blessedness? And do you see Jesus as all blessedness, and all fulness of blessedness in himself? Then when we read of him as in this, or any other place of scripture, take the sweet word as the *ashrei*, indeed as the Hebrews did, and say, blessed and blessedness is the God-Man Christ Jesus!

II.

“THE TENDER MERCY OF OUR GOD;” OR, AS THE MARGIN RENDERS IT, “THE BOWELS OF THE MERCY OF OUR GOD.”—
Luke i. 78.

The reader, in order to enter into a clear apprehension of this very precious portion of scripture, should be told, that the original word (*splanchna*) which our translators have rendered tender, is also rendered by them in the margin, *bowels*. And indeed this is more correct. For as the learned, who know the original, cannot but very well know also, that the word (*splanchna*) is plural, and a noun of itself, and therefore cannot be joined with another noun in the same case, but of necessity, as is here done, it puts the noun following (*eleous*) mercy, in the genitive case. Hence, the correct reading is, as the margin renders the passage, “the bowels of the mercy of our God.”

Moreover, the word itself, (*splanchna*) is uniformly rendered in the scriptures, *bowels*. Thus Acts i. 18. 2 Cor. vi. 12. Phil. i. 8. and in the Hebrew, Ps. xxv. 6. margin. But yet more eminently striking in the 40th Psalm, 8th verse, where the Lord Jesus Christ, speaking

of himself under the spirit of prophecy, most blessedly saith, "I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart." In the margin it is, "in the midst of my bowels;" that is, wrapped up in my very nature. All within me is holy. The law is in me, innate, part of myself, formed in my being, and in the midst of my bowels.

Reader, pause over this view of the subject, before we go further. We see from it, that the very nature of Christ is such, that all the gracious acts which mark the features of his character, flow from him as naturally as streams from a fountain, for they are in his very nature, yea, in his bowels. Not only from him, but in him. Not only the acts of Jesus, but Jesus himself. His person, which is more precious than all his works. For he must cease to be Jesus, before that he can cease to be what he is, both in himself and to his people; for all come from what he is. Neither can any thing tend to lessen or take away the everlasting security his church hath in him. He saith himself, "because I live ye shall live also." And those scriptures shew the cause. A man may lose an arm, a leg, yea both arms and legs and yet live. But the bowels can never be torn from the body and life preserved. Oh! lovely views of the all holy, all lovely Jesus! Oh sweet security to our being, and well being, and blessedness in Jesus! the *splanchna*, the bowels of Jesus, yearn over all his people; and he enters into a fellow feeling for all the persons and concerns of his people. Now do I see a blessedness in what Paul said to the church, which I never saw before; "God is my record," said the affectionate servant of his most compassionate Lord; "God is my record; how greatly I long after you all, in the bowels of Jesus Christ," Phil. i. 8.

But we must not stop here. More beauties open to us in this sweet verse of scripture. The day-spring

from on high is said to have visited us, through “the bowels of the mercy of our God.” Hence we discover, that though all our blessings flow to us, in and through a nature like our own, and come with a tenfold sweetness when from Jesus’s bowels, our’s are refreshed, and the love of his heart pours into our hearts; yet all that Jesus hath, and is, and ever will be, considered as in his Headship and Redeemer fulness to his church, he is from the joint love, and grace, and favour of all the persons of the Godhead. This is a precious addition to the blessed view of Christ’s *splanchna*. Let us dwell a little upon it.

It was God our Father formed the human nature of Christ, with this tenderness of bowels. “A body, said Jesus, (speaking to the Father) “thou hast prepared me,” Heb. x. 5. And hence the command of God to love his people, is among the law, Jesus saith, was written in his heart, or in the midst of his bowels. And hence James, when speaking of God’s love as instanced in the case of Job, makes use of the very same word as Luke hath here done, only compounding it with another which makes it more expressive. The Lord, said he, “is very pitiful, and of tender mercy,” The words “tender mercy,” are (*polie splanchnois*) “full of bowels,” James v. 11.

And to shew no less that God the Son was the same, in those rich acts of grace, when assuming our nature for this express purpose, he is represented by the prophet Hosea as saying, “I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies,” (or bowels, as it might be read) Hos. ii. 19. Hereby sweetly corresponding to that other scripture of the prophet, where the Lord promiseth “to rejoice over his people with his whole heart, and with his whole soul,” Jer. xxxii. 41.

And that we may not overlook the very blessed part

which God the Holy Ghost hath taken in the formation of the body of Christ, most sure it is, that by his overshadowing the virgin, as this same chapter relates, his incarnation was accomplished; and his unction of Christ without measure, became the cause, as the Lord Jesus himself declared, of his preaching good tidings to the meek, healing the broken heart, and the like. Hence, the whole Persons of the Godhead were all engaged in forming the human nature of Christ, whereby (as this passage renders it) the person and grace of Christ Jesus is blessedly called "the bowels of the mercy of our God." Compare together the scriptures in proof, for they are most precious: Psalm xl. 5—10. with Heb. x. 5—10. Heb. ii. 16. Luke i. 35.

And now what saith the godly reader to those things? Doth he behold the very great blessedness contained in these words, "the bowels of the mercy of our God?" Yes! if so be God the Holy Ghost hath regenerated him, and he, whose scripture it is, hath not only caused the words to be written in the bible, but engraven them in the reader's heart. Oh! the unspeakable nearness and dearness in which the church in Christ is formed in the affections of Jehovah. They are conceived in the womb of his mercy, in the bowels from whence that mercy comes. So that they are as natural and dear to God, as the bowels of a man are dear to himself. No wonder then that we hear the Lord speaking of them as of Ephraim of old: "Is Ephraim my dear son! is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still, wherefore my bowels are troubled for him: I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord," Jer. xxxi. 20.

"BY MYSELF HAVE I SWORN, SAITH THE LORD."—Gen. xxii. 16.

Reader! have you ever duly pondered the solemn and gracious truth contained in those words? If not,

pause, and consider with me, somewhat of their immense importance. And let us bend the knee in prayer together, that in the humblest posture of soul and body, we may learn to fear, as Moses commanded Israel, "this glorious and fearful name, the Lord thy God!" Deut. xxviii. 58.

And *First*. Contemplate with holy reverence and godly fear, the Almighty Speaker of those solemn words, even Jehovah! He it is, who thus proclaimed from heaven, "by myself have I sworn, saith the Lord!"

Secondly. Mark, it is the Lord proclaiming by oath: not by promise only, but by oath, "by myself have I sworn, saith the Lord."

Thirdly. Ponder well the manner of the Lord's swearing, "by myself," saith the Lord.

Fourthly. Do not forget the Lord's motive for this astonishing act of grace: namely, to confirm all his promises in Christ by oath, and that oath by himself.

Fifthly. And if possible more than all, cherish in the view of the whole, the firm, unalterable, and eternal assurance contained in it, that that great and glorious God will make all his promises good; not by word only, but by oath, and by blood: his language is, "once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David," Psalm lxxxix. 35.

With these impressions on our mind, and looking up to God the Holy Ghost for his gracious instruction, let us ponder well the sacred words, and hear what the Lord God will graciously condescend to teach us concerning their vast and ponderous meaning, who hath said, "by myself have I sworn, saith the Lord."

And here, in the very first moment of reading the sweet assurance, my heart involuntarily cries out, was it not enough, O Lord, to promise, but will my God condescend to confirm the whole by an oath also? Is not the promise in itself infinitely great; including

Christ and all his fulness, suitableness, and all-sufficiency; but shall we have the oath of the Almighty Promiser to make it sure also? Yes! saith the gracious Lord, my people shall not only have all the promises in Christ Jesus, yea and amen, but I will confirm the whole by oath. As sure as I am God, so sure will I make good to my people all that I have promised them in my dear Son; and I will pledge my holiness, by oath, for their security. "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord."

Now, reader! let us contemplate the vast subject under some few of the more prominent features of it, and the Lord make it blessed to our view.

Some of the old saints of God have thought that by the expression, "by myself," is meant Jehovah's oath with Christ. For the oneness in the divine essence, renders it correct; according to the words of Christ, "I and my Father are one," John x. 30. And we know that the everlasting priesthood of Christ was confirmed by oath, "the Lord hath sworn, and will not repent; thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedec," Psalm cx. 4. And we have a further authority, when Jehovah in vision spake unto his Holy One, he said, "once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David," Psalm lxxxix. 19—35.

Add to these, certain it is, from the expression "by myself," is implied, all that is in Jehovah. The oath *by* himself, and *to* himself, and *from* himself. It is not made *to* Abraham, but *for* Abraham. It doth not depend for its accomplishment on Abraham's faith, or Abraham's obedience, but wholly rests on God's truth, and God's faithfulness. Surely the oath of Jehovah, irreversible as in its very nature it must be, could never be subject to the precarious goodness of man. An oath, by which God pledged himself to cease to be holy, and to cease to be God, if he ceased to fulfil his

promise, could never be subject to the possibility of any thing depending upon another.

But we must not stop here. By going further, and calling in to our aid what the Holy Ghost hath said in his comment upon this oath of God, we arrive to a perfect clearness on this subject.

In the sixth chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, we find the Holy Ghost teaching the church by his servant the apostle, how to form just conclusions concerning this oath of Jehovah, as delivered in the book of Genesis, "When God," said he, "made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swear by himself." But wherefore swear at all? The Holy Ghost gives the answer, and a most gracious answer it is, "wherein God," saith he, "willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." Here, therefore, we have the Holy Ghost graciously explaining the whole design of Jehovah in this oath. And as this oath is said to be by himself, so must it be to himself, and depending upon fulfilment wholly in himself. And who doth not, or will not see, that all the Holy Three in One are alike engaged in it, and are mutually guarantees to each other for the accomplishment of it? Who doth not here behold the truth of that blessed scripture confirmed, which infidels in every age have been nibbling at, without being able to break one thread of the holy knot, which confirms the blessed foundation of our most holy faith, "For there are Three that bear record in heaven; the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these Three are One," 1 John v. 7. Reader! do not fail to remember, as often as you read this blessed scripture,

that it is in heaven those holy witnesses bear record. And to whom can such bear record but to each other? And what is it they give record to, but like Jehovah's oath sworn by himself, that "this is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son," 1 John v. 11.

One word more, concerning this blessed explanatory scripture, of the oath of Jehovah, by the Holy Ghost. "For men," saith he, "verily swear by the greater; and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife." Yes! an oath among men in an appeal to God for the truth of a thing, when made solemnly, is decisive. "He that sweareth in the earth," the prophet saith, "should swear by the God of truth," Isa. lxxv. 16. With what strength then must the oath of Jehovah be considered, when the form of his oath is, "by myself have I sworn, saith the Lord!"

There is a small point more in this passage, which I would beg the reader to observe with me, by way of following up all that hath been said in a stronger manner to the proof of the doctrine; and that is the translation as in the margin of the bible, the word "confirming by oath." The words in the margin are, "interposed himself by an oath." The original is, *emesiteusen*, that is, *mediated*. He mediated by oath; alluding, perhaps, to the person of Christ in his mediation. For it was the glories and triumphs of Christ's sacrifice which gave foundation for this oath. What a beautiful light it throws upon the whole of this subject!

Before I quit the ground, it may be proper that I should make good what I have said respecting the personal acts of the Holy Ghost in this scripture. I have called it his comment; and full sure I am that it is so. And in confirmation of what I say, if the reader will turn to the ninth chapter of this epistle to the Hebrews, and read the eighth verse, he will there find, that in all

that is said concerning the services and ordinances observed in the old testament, which this book of God records, the Holy Ghost is expressly said to have been the appointer: "the Holy Ghost (saith the apostle) this signifying." A positive proof of the Person and ministry of the Holy Ghost, presiding over the whole affairs of the church in that period, from such personal acts and appointments being ascribed to him as can only be said of a Person. A positive proof no less of his eternal power and Godhead, by whom such acts were wrought: and as positive a proof that he was the founder of the old testament dispensation, as he is of the new; by whom both ministers and ordinances are set apart and consecrated.

Reader! ponder well these things; give thyself wholly to them! Beg of God for that spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of them, "that you 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 may be filled with all the fulness of God!" Eph. iii. 18, 19.

I must not quit the fruitful ground of such divine scriptural truths, neither close this morsel to hungry souls, which affordeth such lusciousness of fat things, in the contemplation of the oath of Jehovah, before that I have made one observation more in a yet further confirmation, how sacred to the view of our gracious God are his pledges to his people by oath.

This oath to Abraham was not the first oath of the kind which the Lord graciously made; though the church would never have known it, had not the same love which prompted the Lord first to make it, prompted the Lord in after ages to make it known.

It appears that God after the deluge made *oath*, as well as *promised*, that he would no more smite the earth with a flood; but though the *promise* is recorded,

Genesis viii. 21, 32. yet not a word do we read in the history of it concerning Jehovah's *oath*. But in the days of the prophet Isaiah, a period of *sixteen hundred years* after the flood, the Lord made known his oath, which had laid hid in his own mind, and probably known to none but himself, being made like the one before Abraham, to himself, that the church might be comforted with the assurance of it. "For this is, (said God) as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee," Isa. liv. 9.

Reader! pause over the consideration of such unspeakable mercy. What grace must it have been in Jehovah, first to make the oath; and what repeated grace at a period so distant to publish it? Had the Lord not been pleased to have it confirmed, never would he have brought it to light. And had he not intended that his church and people constantly should remind him of it, never would he have caused it to be handed down to the present hour. Oh! what an unanswerable evidence it is, that Jehovah loves his oath; loves that his people should know it, should depend upon it, and bring it for payment continually before him. Yes, yes, thou gracious condescending Lord! thy church in Christ will long to hear and live upon thy sweet unalterable oath. We still hear thee say, "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord!" "Oh! for the father to the children to make known thy truth!"

"YEA."—Jer. xxxi. 3.

Here is one of the smallest words in the bible, and at the same time one of the greatest in the world. It is composed but of three letters, but when used as in the instance here recorded, includes the act of the Holy Three in One: and in point of blessedness, security,

and comfort, when pronounced by Jehovah to his people in Christ, becomes the Lord's seal to his charter of grace. 'I had rather,' said one of the old fathers of the church, when contemplating this subject, (and so say I too) 'have God's yea and amen, than a promise from all the great men and princes of the earth.' Let the reader stop and look at it every way, and mark some of its blessedness.

And here to begin in the blessed instance before us. Here is God's love to his people marked with an emphasis the most decided, to shew its greatness and its unchangeableness for ever and ever. "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love!" And this is the greatest yea, to the greatest blessing in the whole revelation of God. Because it refers to the greatest blessing God ever put his yea to, namely, God's everlasting love to the church in Christ. To which there hath never been the smallest interruption, neither can be. Ps. ciii. 17. And in proof of it, the Lord adds, "therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee;" or, as the margin beautifully renders it, "have I extended loving-kindness unto thee."

And if the reader looks to the many *yeas* and *verily's* of the Lord Jesus Christ, they are all over the bible. Yea, Christ himself is Jehovah's yea and Jehovah's verily, eternally and for ever. Jesus puts his yea, his verily, to every thing which concerns the security and happiness of his people. Yea, yea, verily, verily, I say unto you, and the like, to his whole Person, offices, relations, and characters. "I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all, and none can pluck them out of my Father's hand; I and my Father are one," John x. 28, 30. Oh, the blessedness of the Son of God's yea to the interests of his people from their union with him, and security in him! "All the pro-

mises of God in him are yea and in him amen, unto the glory of God by us," 2 Cor. i. 20.

And no less the sweet yea of God the Holy Ghost. He indeed is the Spirit of promise, and therefore his yea is most essentially necessary, both as a seal and as the sealer, to make the whole effectual in Christ Jesus, 2 Cor. i. 21. But in the close of scripture, as if to leave on the mind of the church the certainty of the Holy Ghost's yea, the voice which John heard from heaven, which commanded him write, "blessed are the dead which die in the Lord," God the Spirit immediately, as soon as the command had been given to John, put his almighty yea to it. Yea, saith the Spirit, or as the margin more strongly hath it, from henceforth saith the Spirit. As if the Holy Ghost in every renewed instance of the blessed dead, confirmed that glorious truth to every one with his divine yea, (*nai*) Rev. xiv. 13.

The redeemed of the Lord, who before their entrance into life are interested in the everlasting love of God the Father, and in his almighty yea to that love; betrothed to Jesus before time, saved in time by his blood, and interested in all his promises of yea and amen, during the whole of their eventful pilgrimage here below, at their departure into the world of spirits, among the blessed dead which die in the Lord, have the Holy Ghost's yea to seal their safety to the day of eternal redemption!

Reader! what think you of Jehovah's yea! What value do you put upon it, that hath no ebbings, nor withdrawals, but one everlasting ocean of blessedness overflowing, and making all things sure, in time and to all eternity! Oh! blessed unchangeable yea, of our most blessed unchangeable God.

III.

“ HIS DEAR SON ;” OR, AS THE MARGIN RENDERS IT, “ THE SON OF HIS LOVE.”—Col. i. 13.

The apostle in this scripture seems to have had his mind led out by God the Holy Ghost, to speak of Jesus in the most affectionate and endearing manner. And our translators unable to convey the full sense of Paul’s words by one rendering, have in the margin of the bible given another : “ his dear Son,” or, “ the Son of his love.” But there is a third which the original words admit of, yet more literal, and perhaps every thing considered, becomes the fullest of the three, “ the Son of love,” (*wiostes agapes.*) For if beheld as one with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, in the essence of the Godhead, Jesus is, and must be, the object of everlasting love, yea, love itself, according to that blessed scripture, “ God is love,” 1 John iv. 16. And in relation to his Mediator nature, Jesus is also “ the Son of love,” in whom Jehovah is eternally well pleased, Matt. iii. 17. But in each sense, and in every sense, the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of love, the Son of his love, yea, God’s dear Son. And, indeed, the whole three put together, yea, all that can be said of him of whom this is spoken, falls infinitely short of what he really is ; for there is no end of his love, as of his greatness, Ps. cxlv. 3. And the child of God, if under the unction of the Holy Ghost, while contemplating the Lord Jesus in this lovely view, will not barely find a morsel, but a full feast to feed on, and his “ meditation of him be sweet,” Ps. civ. 34.

In offering a morsel to the godly reader on those words, I dare not venture to say any thing more than what the word of God saith, in relation to the Godhead of Christ. No doubt in the essence of Jehovah, each Person possessing an equal right, in one common participation of glory and blessedness. The belief of

this fundamental article of our holy faith is the province of man: the apprehension of it can be only the province of God. Indeed, Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons, would cease to possess those glorious distinctions of invisibility and incomprehensibility, if any mere creatures, and of the highest intellect, had knowledge of them. On this sublime subject I dare not advance a step.

But if we contemplate on scripture ground this glorious Person, God's "dear Son, and the Son of his love," as God-Man Mediator, some of the most blessed and soul-satisfying prospects are opened at once to our view, by him, whose gracious office it is to glorify the Lord Jesus, in taking of the things of Jesus and shewing to his people.

Let us consider his person. If we contemplate him simply as he is in his person, in his double nature God and Man united; and before we consider him performing a single act of his mediation; here he appears "the altogether lovely and the chiefest among ten thousand." I do not presume on a subject of such an infinitely sublime nature to speak decidedly, but I would most humbly ask the question,—did not Jehovah in predestinating the Son of God into an union with the human nature, propose to himself an object of inconceivable love to delight in, more than in all the works of creation? And was not the first and ultimate design for himself, and his own glory, to higher purposes than any thing beside? And is it not in this high sense and degree the Son of God speaks when he saith, "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his ways before his works of old; I was set up from everlasting. Then I was by him as one brought up with him, and I was daily his delight," Prov. viii. 22—30. And was it not in the same high sense and degree Jehovah calls him, "the Man my fellow!" Zech. xiii. 7. I propose these questions, but I go no further to answer them.

Again. The infinite and unparalleled condescension of the Son of God, in the assumption of human nature, opens to our meditation an object of unceasing wonder, and calling forth unceasing praise. The scripture relation of this event is striking. "Though in the form of God, and with whom it was no robbery to be equal with God; yet he made himself of no reputation;" the original is, he emptied himself, vacated himself, Phil. ii. 6, 7. I beg the reader to remark with me, the greatness of the act from the consideration of the greatness of the actor. And while this is in view, he will confess, that all the acts of Christ's mediation, are to be estimated by the standard of that glory the Lord laid aside in order to the accomplishment. Surely every one taught of God must see from hence, that the merits of Christ's blood and righteousness are infinite, because the dignity he put off for this purpose was infinite; and consequently his church deriveth an infinite interest in him on this account. And let me ask, would the Son of God have laid aside his glory for the accomplishment of such an end, had not greater glory resulted from the end in taking our nature with this view, that he might be both Head and Husband, and Redeemer and Saviour of his people?

Once more. Our Jesus is called God's "dear Son," and the "Son of his love," eminently on this account, as God-Man Mediator, because he contracts to himself all the love of Jehovah, (as rays of light are concentrated through a medium unto one object) and all centre in and upon him. There can be nothing out of God to please God. Hence the human nature taken into union with the divine, becomes thereby the object of love. But for this relationship, there could have been no complacency in the divine mind towards any of his creatures. Elect angels are such only by him: and the elect church hath acceptance only in the beloved. It is evidently the one grand design of

Jehovah in going forth in acts of creation, and for creature communion, was and is to aggrandize and exalt his dear Son. All things are made for him, and by him, and to honour him, and set him forth. Hence the whole of revelation is in him : Christ is the horizon, the boundary of all manifestation. And all that we know of divine things is in him, and by him, and through him, and said to be with the express intention, " 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.

Let the reader pause over these short, but inexpressibly delightful views of Jesus, God's " dear Son," and " the Son of his love." And then let him add to the contemplation what the Holy Ghost saith of the church, " He hath made us accepted in the beloved," Eph. i. 6. he hath made us lovely, comely, and fair, in his view of us in him. He hath chosen every individual of his mystical body in him ; adopted the whole as children to himself in him ; accepted them in him ; and it is in him, and for his sake, they are redeemed from the Adam-fall transgression ; their persons beloved ; their sins pardoned ; their prayers heard ; they find access to the throne here below by grace, and hereafter to the throne of glory in heaven ; yea, after millions of ages are past away, when the church shall have stood perfectly holy, and perfectly happy before God in love ; yet even then, our acceptance in Christ, God's " dear Son," will be more blessed, than all inherent holiness in ourselves. We shall everlastingly derive more blessedness in Christ, and God's acceptance of our persons from being united to Christ, than from all our purity in ourselves, and all our felicity derived from Christ. God's dear Son will be then, and to all eternity to us as he is now, the sole cause of our acceptance before God. What shall we say, what shall we add to the contemplation of these things ? Oh for grace to love

him, whom God so loves! How precious ought Jesus to be to us, who is so precious to God! Oh! God the Holy Ghost! let the sweet influences of thy divine unction, be so blessedly shed in the hearts of thy people, that the Father's beloved may be our beloved; and he whom God delights to honour may we honour. May the whole church while on earth, until she joins the church in heaven, sing her love-song to God's dear Son, and the Son of his love; and chaunt it aloud every day, as we pass on our pilgrimage state; "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved!" Amen.

"THE BROOK OF ESHCOL."—Numb. xiii. 23.

The brook of Eschol, must have been a lovely spot to Joshua the son of Nun, and to Caleb the son of Jephunneh. But to the church in the present hour, taught by the Holy Ghost, to behold new testament blessings veiled under old testament dispensations, how infinitely more delightful is the Eschol in Israel's history to the view? The church indeed nearly a thousand years before the coming of Christ, could and did, discover Jesus as her Eschol, her cluster of all divine and human excellencies, for her everlasting joy. "My beloved (said she) is unto me as a cluster of camphire, in the vineyards of Engedi," Song i. 14. And by the prophet she is described as being commanded by the Lord to call Jesus Ishi. "And it shall be at that day, saith the Lord, thou shalt call me Ishi, that is, my husband, or my man, (as some render it) and shall call me no more Baali," Hosea ii. 16. And as in the former instance, the name Esh joined with Col, alluded to Christ and to the fulness of all blessings in Christ; so in this latter, the name Ishi compriseth every thing

that is affectionate and endearing, and the church's interest and right in him. It is my Ishi, saith the church, my mau, the man which is Jehovah's fellow, the hope of Israel and the Saviour thereof, Zech. xiii. 7. Jer. xiv. 8.

I do not presume to say, that even Joshua and Caleb, had such clear apprehensions of Eshcol, at the brook; but I venture to believe, that the Holy Ghost in almost every striking event in the wilderness church, had respect by allusion to the Lord Jesus Christ and his church, under the gospel dispensation. And in this place more especially as it is well known, the original words of the spouse in the Song, which is rendered by our translators, "my beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire," might have been, "my beloved is unto me the man that atones for me;" it serves to throw a great light on this part of the church's history; and becomes a sweet morsel for faith to feed upon with an eye to Christ. Let the reader as he ponders the thing, act faith upon the person of the Lord Jesus in this and every other instance in which the Holy Ghost reveals him to the soul. Methinks I would wish everlastingly to keep in remembrance the Lord Jesus as the Eshcol, yea, my Eshcol given to me by the Father. Nothing that I have beside can be valuable, but as in him. Not attainments, not knowledge, not enjoyments, no nor even faith itself, as an act of mine. All is nothing but what I was in him before all time, and what I am now, and shall be in him, to all eternity. And while by an everlasting union with him I am interested in all that belongs to him, as the rich cluster of all grace here and glory hereafter, it becomes the finishing zest to the whole enjoyment, the blessed assurance that all Christ is, he is by God the Father's appointment, for all, and to all his people. That precious scripture brings up, and by the Holy Ghost seals up the whole testimony; "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus who

of God is made unto us, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; that according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord," 1 Cor. i. 30, 31.

"AND THE GRACE OF OUR LORD WAS EXCEEDING ABUNDANT WITH FAITH AND LOVE WHICH IS IN CHRIST JESUS."—1 Tim. i. 14.

That the aboundings of grace cover over the aboundings of sin, is among the plainest principles of the gospel of Christ, Rom. v. 20. If the highest mountains of the earth was cast into the Atlantic ocean, it would be lost to view. And in like manner, the sins of the Lord's people, though piled up to the very heavens, are for ever done away when brought under the blood of Christ. "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin," 1 John i. 7. But Paul in this sweet scripture while contemplating his own personal deliverance from sin, seems to be at a loss for expressions to speak his apprehensions of divine mercy. "The grace of our Lord (said he) was exceeding abundant." The original word is yet stronger, (*uperepleonase*) which is a compound word meaning above full, running over, *super abundavit*, above abounding. As if he had said, in my instance, there is shewn such an over fulness of grace and mercy, as must exceed every other conversion of a poor sinner, which God ever wrought. And that the apostle considered it in this light is evident, for he adds, the cause for which he obtained mercy was, "that in me first (said Paul) Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering for a pattern to them that should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." And the apostle harps upon this string. For he saith, "that though it is a faithful saying; and worthy of all acceptation, Christ Jesus came

into the world to save sinners; yet he adds, of whom I am chief." So that under those impressions he cries out; and the grace of God was exceeding abundant (*uperpleonase*) overflowing, above all measure, exceeding all abounding; "with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."

This portion of God's word will be a sweet morsel for every child of God to feed upon, whose feelings of the sovereignty of grace in his own personal history, bears an unison of soul, and in the same key with the apostle. Let us attend to the blessedness of the expression; "exceeding abundant," and see if we have the same concord of the same sound.

And first. What is grace? No doubt, but that in the highest and fullest sense of the word, is meant one of the perfections of Jehovah. It is his distinguishing attribute as distinguished from his creatures. And hence we read of the riches of his grace, and the glory of his grace, and the like! And hence also all the manifestations of his grace, are called "the gift by grace." See Rom. v. 15.

But secondly. While we make a proper distinction between grace as God's distinction of character, and the manifestations of that grace; let it be observed, that the apostle, when speaking of the grace of the Lord as "exceeding abundant" towards him, did not mean the effect of aboundings, as shewing themselves towards him, but as overflowing in the act itself in the mind of God. This is what forms the very great beauty of the apostle's expression, and in fact what the apostle principally meant to say. "The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant," saith Paul. As if he had said, the heart of our God was full of grace, yea, overflowing with grace. And as such, the streams of this great fountain flowed towards me. And that this was Paul's meaning is further evident in what he saith, that faith and love in Christ Jesus became the consequence of

that overflowing grace in the heart of God. Faith and love, Paul speaks of as the effect ; and the grace of God as the cause. If the reader be led by divine teaching to consider this passage in this point of view, he will find great sweetness in it. I know not whether it strikes the reader's mind as it doth mine. But I make a nice distinction in my creed between causes and effects. And I find the blessedness of this distinction. All the Lord's gifts are blessed gifts, and cannot be too highly prized ; but the Lord himself is infinitely more blessed, and more highly to be prized. It may be that for wise and gracious purposes my Lord may be pleased to give me at times but small portions according to my view of things. But, while I keep in view that those portions, however small, are as much the Lord's gifts as the larger portions of his favour ; and come as much from his love as when he gives them more plentifully ; I consider that his love is not to be estimated by his gifts ; but by the good will from whence they come ; and therefore I value the blessing be it what it may, not so much for the blessing itself, as for the person and love of the Almighty giver.

Perhaps I may be singular. Be it so. Nevertheless I find the sweetness of it. Some there are of God's dear children, who seem to think it right to covet more grace, and conclude therefrom, that their attainments in the divine life would in consequence be more. I dare not do so. For, alas ! I have more already than I use to the Lord's glory. And if I sum up the improvements from what I have day by day bestowed upon me, in the close of every day I find only a cypher at the bottom. I rather therefore desire to live upon the fulness of grace and love towards me in the Lord's heart, more than upon the gifts which flow in grace and love from the Lord's heart. The cause with me is the life of my soul, and not the effect. Oh ! it is sweet, it is blessed, yea, very blessed, to live above all creature attainments, by living

upon Creator fulness. And a daily contemplation of that grace and love which passeth knowledge, and which fills the heart of God towards his people, is more than all burnt-offerings and sacrifices which our minds would fondly desire to offer. Lord, I would say, give me grace to say with Paul, "The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant by faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus."

IV.

The 'sweet morsels' of this number are wholly taken from the Songs of Solomon. Perhaps the reader may not be aware what very tender and affectionate love songs are contained in this book of God; in which Jesus is speaking to his church, and the church making her answers to Jesus. I have gathered out a few passages from it by way of illustration; and I hope the reader, from the sample here given, will be prompted to gather many more for himself.

I cannot help expressing my apprehensions, that the Lord's people are not keeping up that close and intimate acquaintance with the Lord Jesus, which their faith warrants, and their daily necessities require. They do not seem to know in what the spirit and life of communion in prayer and praise consists. Most evident it is, that the person of our Lord Jesus Christ is the unceasing object of faith, and the everlasting source of joy. The love of Jesus is supposed to be unremittingly coming forth in manifestations to his people; and, as a fountain, streams issue from his heart, and pour into our's. And while Jesus is thus coming forth to bless, the church in every individual instance of her members, is supposed to be drawing nigh, under the influence of the Holy Ghost to receive. So that every day, and all the day, holy communion with Jesus is maintained

and kept alive in the soul from Jesus. Hence fresh discoveries of Jesus's love are continually making in the heart; and hence, also, a growing acquaintance with Jesus, and a growing desire after Jesus, and a growing conformity to Jesus, mark the Lord's people.

Reader, it will be a blessed use of these 'sweet morsels' from Solomon's Songs, if the Lord the Holy Ghost, the Almighty Author of them, should give you the relish of them in your heart. I would beg for grace to serve them up to you on the knee of prayer, that while, as the church saith, "My beloved stands behind the wall, looketh forth at the windows, and sheweth himself through the lattice" — like her, we may find so much in them of Jesus, as to cry out with her, "It is the voice of my beloved; behold! he cometh leaping upon the mountains, and skipping upon the hills." Song ii. 9, 10.

I. THE MUTUAL PROPERTY OF CHRIST IN HIS CHURCH, AND THE CHURCH IN CHRIST.

FIRST.—THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

"My beloved is mine, and I am his," Song ii. 16.

"I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine," Song vi. 3.

"I am my beloved's, and his desire is towards me," vii. 10.

All these are so many sweet repetitions of one and the same thing. The church is Christ's property. This is the cause. And by virtue of this, Christ is the church's. This is the effect. And by the inversion of the order of the words made use of by the church, in expressing this blessed truth, the mutual property is more strongly defined and confirmed. The church is Christ's by the gift of the Father, by the betrothing and redemption of the Son, and by the anointing of the Holy Ghost. And Christ is the church's, both by the

gift of the Father, and of the Son, and by the quickening the church together with Christ by the Holy Ghost.

SECONDLY.—CHRIST OF THE CHURCH.

“ There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number.”

‘ My dove, my undefiled is but one ; she is the only one of her mother. She is the choice one of her that bare her. The daughters saw her, and blessed her ; yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her,” Song vi. 8, 9.

Let the reader observe, with what matchless love Jesus here speaks of his church, as distinguished from every other, and as the one, the only one of his choice, and undefiled. And as the church had before observed, that “ his desires were towards her ;” so every act of his expressed the blessed truth ; for he so desired her, as to die for her ; so desired her, as to shed his blood for her ; so desired her, as to wash her from all her sins in his blood. Neither will he remit for a moment that desire towards her, until he hath brought her home to himself, to dwell with him, and to be holy and without blame before him for ever. Reader ! while you and I sing those love songs between Christ and his church, can we make a *personal* application of them to our own hearts, and say with the church, “ I am my beloved’s, and my beloved is mine ?”

2. THE MUTUAL INVITATIONS OF CHRIST TO HIS CHURCH, AND THE CHURCH TO CHRIST.

FIRST.—THE INVITATIONS OF CHRIST TO HIS CHURCH.

“ My beloved spake, and said unto me, rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away !”

“ For lo, the winter is past ; the rain is over and gone.”

“ The flowers appear on the earth, the time of the

singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.”

“The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away!” Song ii, 10—13.

SECONDLY.—THE CHURCH’S INVITATIONS TO CHRIST.

“Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field, let us lodge in the villages.”

“Let us get up early to the vineyards, let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth; there will I give thee my loves,” Song vii, 11, 12.

Was there ever any love like Jesus’s love to his church? How very many affectionate and endearing love calls the Lord Jesus here makes use of to win the hearts of his people, and to bring them into sweet communion with himself! What beautiful imagery the Lord expresses himself in, of the *rain* and the *winter* being over, and all the dark seasons of unawakened nature being gone, when the power of God the Holy Ghost, like the *voice of the turtle*, is heard and felt in the soul; and the loveliness of spring *flowers*, the *fig-tree’s* fruit, the *vine’s* smell, and the warbling of *birds* is known in our land.

And what a blessed frame the church is brought into by God the Holy Ghost, when from the love calls of Jesus, her love calls to Jesus are called forth, and each seems to vie in expressions towards each other, whose invitations shall be most earnest for the enjoyment of sweet communion. Reader! are you well acquainted with those love calls of Jesus? and is Jesus often called upon by your’s, in this most endearing manner? Oh! the blessedness of living every day, and all the day, in fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, through the eternal Spirit!

3. THE MUTUAL COMMENDATIONS OF CHRIST TO HIS CHURCH, AND THE CHURCH TO CHRIST.

FIRST.—OF CHRIST TO HIS CHURCH.

“Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon; look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions’ den, from the mountains of the leopards.”

“Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck.”

“How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love than wine, and the smell of thine ointments than all spices.”

“Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honeycomb; honey and milk are under thy tongue, and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon!” Song iv. 8—11.

THE CHURCH’S COMMENDATION OF CHRIST.

“What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? What is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?”

“My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand!”

“His head is as the most fine gold; his locks are bushy, and black as a raven.”

“His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set.”

“His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers: his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.”

“His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl: his belly is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires.”

“His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold: his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.”

“His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely! This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O ye daughters of Jerusalem!” Song v. 9—16.

Let the reader first notice the astonishing grace and condescension of the Lord Jesus, in his commendation of his church. What endearing titles of affection the Lord useth towards her! He calls her his spouse, his love, his sister, his fair one. No fragranciness of ointment, no smell of Lebanon, no honey, or honeycomb, so sweet as the church to Jesus! Oh! how low, how very low in the dust must the soul lay before the Lord, while conscious of unworthiness in ourselves, and calling to mind that in all we are, and ever shall be, it is only from "the comeliness which Jesus hath put upon us."

And while Christ is thus speaking fair of his church, and the church of him, can we join the spouse in full consent of soul to what she saith of Jesus, that he is in our view as he was and is to the church, the "altogether lovely, and the fairest among ten thousand?" Oh! how truly blessed it is, when to those breathings of the church we can add our own, and say of Jesus, as she did, "this is my beloved, and this is my friend, O ye daughters of Jerusalem!"

4. THE CHURCH'S CONFESSION OF HER DEFORMITY; CHRIST'S ACCOUNT OF HER BEAUTY.

FIRST.—THE CHURCH'S CONFESSION OF HER DEFORMITY.

"I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem; as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon."

"Look not upon me because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me: my mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept," Song i. 5, 6.

SECONDLY.—CHRIST'S ACCOUNT OF THE CHURCH'S BEAUTY.

"Behold thou art fair, my love; behold thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes," Song i. 15.

"Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee," Song iv. 7.

"Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely

as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners," Song vi. 4.

Reader, mark the state of the soul taught by the Holy Ghost, when brought acquainted with the plague of our own heart. Every child of God is then led to see and to feel, and know the bitterness of the root within; and while gathering blackness as the tents of Kedar, will rejoice in the Lord Jesus as the royal curtains of Solomon.

And observe, that while the church knows herself, in herself, to be black and full of deformity; Jesus beholds her as in his righteousness, and declares her all fair and beautiful as Tirzah. Yes; such is the real state of the case before God. Clothed in Jesus' righteousness, and washed from all her sins in his blood, the church is holy, and without blame before God in love. Hence that sweet scripture: "In those days, and at that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve," Jer. i. 20.

5. THE CHURCH'S ENQUIRY FOR JESUS'S FEEDING, AND CHRIST'S ANSWER TO HIS CHURCH.

FIRST.—THE CHURCH'S ENQUIRY FOR JESUS'S FEEDING.

"Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth! where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?" Song i. 7.

SECONDLY.—CHRIST'S ANSWER TO HIS CHURCH.

"If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents," Song i. 8.

It is blessedly said in one of the covenant promises, "and it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear,"

Isaiah lxxv. 24. And here we see the Lord Jesus out-running the enquiry of his church, and preventing her by his grace; as he saith elsewhere, "Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, here I am," Isaiah lviii. 9. Oh! precious promises of a precious, precious God! And let not the reader overlook the very tender expression in the Lord's answer. Though the church feels and knows her own nothingness and unworthiness in herself, yet in Jesus' view she is still "the fairest among women!" It is Jesus who speaks to her when he saith, "O thou fairest among women!" Hence the song of the church; "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," Isaiah lxi. 10.

6. THE CHURCH MOURNING CHRIST'S ABSENCE; AND CHRIST BEING FOUND BY THE CHURCH.

"By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not."

"I will rise now, and go about the city, in the streets and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not."

"The watchmen that go about the city found me; to whom I said, saw ye him whom my soul loveth?" Song iii. 1—3.

SECONDLY.—CHRIST BEING FOUND BY THE CHURCH.

"It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him, and would not let him go until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me."

“I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please,” Song iii. 4, 5.

It is always night in the soul of a truly regenerated child of God, when the Holy Ghost is not giving light and life in sweet views of Jesus. But though night, not death; grace is still in the soul, and hence a conscious sense of Christ's absence makes the soul earnest to seek Christ's presence. Jesus is still Him whom the soul loveth. The streets and the broad-ways of the city, mean the ordinances, and means of grace. And by being found of the watchmen, implies the Lord's ministers speaking to the state and present circumstances of the Lord's people.

And oh! how blessed, when the seeking soul becomes a successful soul in finding him whom she loveth. Oh! how will the soul hang upon Jesus, cleave to Jesus, and determine never more to leave Jesus, until brought home by Jesus into the church of the first-born, even the Jerusalem which is above, which is the mother of us all. And then charge every one, even the nearest and dearest friends in nature, not to break in and interrupt those holy rapturous moments we enjoy in the retirings of Jesus by grace, when the Lord makes known his love, “otherwise than he doth to the world.”

7. THE CALL OF JESUS TO THE HOLY GHOST TO ACT ON HIS CHURCH, AND THE CHURCH'S INVITATION IN CONSEQUENCE OF IT TO CHRIST, AND CHRIST'S COMING TO HIS CHURCH.

FIRST.—THE CALL OF JESUS TO THE HOLY GHOST.

“Awake, O north wind, and come thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out!” Song iv. 16.

SECONDLY.—THE CHURCH'S INVITATION IN CONSEQUENCE OF IT TO CHRIST.

“Let my beloved come into his garden and eat his pleasant fruits,” Song iv. 16.

THIRDLY.—CHRIST COMING INTO HIS CHURCH.

“I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice, I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey, I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends! drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.” Or, as it is in the margin, “yea, drink, and be drunken with loves,” Song v. 1.

Oh, how blessed is it to behold Jesus sending, according to his promise to his people, the Holy Ghost. And oh, how blessed, when the souls of the Lord’s people feel the Spirit’s power exciting them to seek Jesus, like the north wind’s pinching necessity, and the south’s warming influence, both constraining the soul to Jesus. And let the child of God, who knoweth what these things mean, (for he only can describe them) say what joy of the soul that is, which is going forth in desires after Christ, and receiving sweet incomings of communion with Christ. Yes, yes, thou dear Redeemer, thou art indeed come truly into thy garden, the church, and taking delight and complacency in thy people, when of thine own thy people give thee, yea, and of thyself thy people enjoy thee. Lord! let my soul be every day, and all the day, hearing thy gracious love-calls of invitation, that I may eat abundantly of thy body broken, and drink of thy blood; yea, “and be drunken with thy loves.”

8. THE WHOLE PERSONS OF THE GODHEAD COMFORTING THE CHURCH, AND THE CHURCH DESIRING TO BE SEALED IN CHRIST.

FIRST.—THE WHOLE PERSONS OF THE GODHEAD COMFORTING THE CHURCH.

“We will make thee borders of gold, with studs of silver,” Song i. 11.

SECONDLY.—THE CHURCH DESIRING TO BE SEALED IN CHRIST.

“Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel

as the grave; the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame," Song viii. 6.

What a fulness of blessedness is contained in these precious promises to the church, from the united love and grace of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. As if the holy Three in One, all taking part in the concerns of Christ and his church, hereby confirms the whole promises of these love songs from Jesus to his church. No doubt, that under the similitude of borders of gold and studs of silver, are meant all rich covenant blessings, both of the life that now is, and that which is to come. And what can more sweetly testify the church's delight in those things, and her joy in her Lord, than when desiring to be dwelling in Christ's heart, and worn on his arm.

9. CHRIST'S LOVE CALL TO HIS CHURCH TO HEAR HER VOICE; AND THE CHURCH'S LOVE CALL TO JESUS TO HASTEN TO BRING HER HOME.

FIRST.—CHRIST'S LOVE CALL TO HIS CHURCH TO HEAR HER VOICE.

"Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice: cause me to hear it," Song viii. 13.

SECONDLY.—THE CHURCH'S LOVE CALL TO JESUS TO HASTEN TO BRING HER HOME.

"Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices," Song viii. 14.

Reader! do not fail to observe the holy jealousy of thy Jesus. He doth not dislike, but loves that his people should be often talking one to another, Malachi iii. 16. But Jesus is more delighted when in sweet communion his people talk to him. And what doth the reader say of the church, when closing her song in calling Jesus to make haste and take her home to himself in glory? Is it your desire also? Oh, the happy frame, when Jesus saith, "behold, I come quickly;"

the soul to echo to her Lord's call, and cry out, "even so, come Lord Jesus."

V.

"NEVERTHELESS."—Psalm cvi. 8. Prov. xix. 21. Ezek. xvi. 60. Rom. v. 14, &c. Ezek. xx. 17, 22.

There is somewhat very blessed in this word, nevertheless; and most gracious indeed it is at times, when matters are most unpromising with the Lord's people. I love to meet with it upon all those occasions, and more especially, when it is spoken of the Lord, and by the Lord himself, in confirmation of his unalterable grace and covenant engagements to his chosen. Jehovah's nevertheless comes in as a mighty relief under all backslidings, and fears, and misgivings. And, when the same sovereign Lord, who pronounceth his nevertheless, gives faith to the soul to rest in it, and depend upon it, this makes it most blessed indeed.

The reader of the bible will find numberless instances of this kind in the word of God; but a few examples will be sufficient to illustrate. Thus, in relation to the everlasting covenant, it is said by the Holy Ghost in one of the epistles by Paul, "nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his," 2 Tim. ii. 19. Now mark! here is the Lord's nevertheless, and his seal, and his knowledge of his people, to do away all the opposition which sin, death, and hell may at any time bring against the Lord's people. And, observe, it is not man's nevertheless, but God's. Not our seal, but his. Not our knowledge of God, but his knowledge of us. This is a precious proof of God's nevertheless. Nothing of our's is taken into the account. Not our grace, not our love, not our attainments, no, nor our faith, as an act of our's. For, though faith is the sweetest of all gifts, and is called in scripture, "pre-

cious faith," 2 Pet. i. 1. (because it brings nothing of our's into the account, but is wholly from the Lord, and exercised upon the Lord;) yet, as a gift, it is but an effect, and not in the smallest degree becoming the least cause in our salvation. God's nevertheless is the whole security. And many a child of God, whom the Lord knoweth to be his, may have but a very slender knowledge of the Lord, and yet hath this nevertheless, and this seal, and is as much included in the whole blessedness of both, as those children of God who have great faith, and great knowledge, and great attainments. Yea, many are now in heaven, and many following them thither, who, while upon earth, could speak but little of their progress in the divine life, and of their adoption character as children. Oh! precious nevertheless of a most precious covenant God in Christ! Be it my mercy to be often dwelling upon it, and having it always in view. "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his."

Secondly. But it is a continuance of the same blessedness, when at any time we find the Lord's nevertheless working for good, when the transgressions and backslidings of his people are engaged in nothing but evil. "We have sinned," said the church, "with our fathers; we have committed iniquity; we have done foolishly. Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt, they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies; but provoked him at the sea, even at the red sea:" yea, that memorable sea, which, as a type of Christ's blood, opened a new and living way for the church's deliverance. Well, what follows? "Nevertheless," saith the scripture, (that precious word comes in again as an overwhelming source, in swallowing up all their rebellions) "nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known," Psalm cvi. 8.

Thirdly. We read soon after, in the same psalm, that they provoked God to displeasure with their idolatry, and their innumerable offences and iniquities; insomuch that God abhorred his own inheritance. But when he had brought them low and made them groan under the oppression of their enemies, nevertheless comes in as before to their relief: for it is said, “nevertheless the Lord regarded their affliction when he heard their cry; he remembered for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies; yea, he made all those that led them away captive to pity them.” Ps. cvi. 43, &c. Oh! the preciousness of God’s nevertheless, in God’s everlasting covenant. The children of God, the seed of Christ, do indeed sadly break Jehovah’s statutes, and walk not in his judgments. And the Lord, as he hath said, doth visit their “transgressions with the rod, and their iniquities with stripes; nevertheless (the charter of grace still runs in the same words) my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, (that is, Christ) nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips; once have I sworn by my holiness, I will not lie unto David.” Salvation is of God, for the whole is founded in God. Though there is nothing but unworthiness in his people, there is complete redemption in Christ’s blood and righteousness. And the Lamb in the midst of the throne hath more to say for his redeemed than all their sins have to say against them. Nevertheless comes in with a fulness of discharge to all their transgressions: “Once have I sworn by my holiness, I will not lie unto David,” Ps. lxxxix. 35.

Once more. When the child of God from the unbelief within him, and the temptations without him, is writing bitter things against himself, and crying out under distressing apprehensions, “Hath God forgotten to be gracious? and will he shut up his loving-kindness

in displeasure?" this "nevertheless" in the covenant comes in like an anchor to a ship in a dark and tempestuous night, and enables the poor soul to ride out the storm until day-light breaks in to his deliverance. Many are the relations in scripture to this amount, but one in point will be enough to explain. The man of God had been lodging his petitions at the throne of grace, reminding God of his exercises and of God's loving-kindness; and, through a long psalm had been pleading and wrestling at the mercy-seat, until in vehemence he cried out, as if almost worn out, "I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes." And what follows? That sweet "nevertheless" comes in to his relief, and not only silenceth all his fears, but puts confidence in his soul to tell to every poor saint of God like himself, the certainty of deliverance, and the blessedness of holding out faith and patience in full assurance of hope of obtaining all the promises. "Nevertheless (said he) thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee. O love the Lord all ye his saints, for the Lord preserveth the faithful, and plenteously rewardeth the proud dœr. Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord," Ps. xxxi. throughout.

Lastly, to add no more. When the child of God is sharply exercised from beholding the prosperity of sinners, while himself is overwhelmed and borne down with outward wants and inward sorrows, nothing comes in to his relief like this "nevertheless" of the Lord. The Holy Ghost hath given the church a most striking instance of this divine cordial to the poor sin-sick and weather-beaten soul, in the history of Asaph. I would have every such exercised child of God read this man's case as it is set forth in the 73rd psalm. And when he hath read it, under the Lord the Spirit's teaching, let him observe to what a state the poor suffering saint was reduced, before the Lord brought him up. He

begins the psalm with laying it down as a truth most certain and sure, that the Lord cannot but everlastingly love his people, however outward or inward circumstances may seem to make against them. "Truly," said he, "God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean (or regenerated) heart. But as for me, my feet were almost gone, my steps had well nigh slipped." And what was this for? "Truly," said he, "I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked." Yea, to such a state of temptation was the poor man carried, that he began to think he had better do as they did, and to deny God. And under this dreadful temptation, he tells the church he was led on to what he thought the very brink of apostacy. "But" said he, "when I went into the sanctuary of God," (Oh the preciousness of God's house, and God's word, and God's ordinances! let the child of God be sure never to stay away, though his heart in his view is as cold as the millstone) then the temptation broke, and he not only saw the fearful end of sinners, but the sure safety of the Lord's people. Then he saw that all this while the Lord's presence had been with him, and not a moment but supporting him. Nay, that the temptation was, while the Lord was looking upon him, and upholding him. In comes that sweet nevertheless amidst all his own misgivings and murmurings, and as he said, he was like a "forgetful beast before the Lord. Nevertheless, said he, I am continually with thee; thou hast holden me by thy right hand." Oh let the child of God have this delightful example always in view; for God the Holy Ghost hath spent a whole psalm for the express purpose of comforting his afflicted ones thereby; and then, like Asaph, our song will be the same. "Nevertheless I am continually with thee; thou hast holden me by thy right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. 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 thou art the strength of my heart and my portion for ever." Oh the blessedness of Creator faithfulness amidst all creature faithlessness! And how sweet doth the child of God at all times find the multitude of sins, and therefore, and nevertheless, to bring him up from the depths of sorrow in the contemplation of the greater depths of divine mercy.

— BUT THE ELECTION HATH OBTAINED IT. —Rom. xi. 7.

What hath the election obtained? What doth this *IT* mean? This is the great point to be considered, and duly considered, and duly made known. Under the teaching of God the Holy Ghost, the Almighty Author of his holy word, it will be found to contain more than all the world, yea, more than all heaven, and all the things of heaven—more than eternity itself. For all the blessedness, and holiness, and happiness of eternity are but the fruits and effects which flow from this *IT*, which is the cause. The *IT* which the election hath obtained by sovereign grace, is God himself in his Trinity of Persons, made over in covenant love, from the united love of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to the whole election of grace. And it is most blessed indeed for every child of God who is made a partaker of this unspeakable gift, to trace his mercies to the fountain head of all mercy, in God himself, and behold how the election hath obtained this glorious and almighty *IT*, in the personal manifestation of, and communion with, each Person in the Godhead, from free, sovereign, unmerited, unlooked-for grace, in and through the Lord Jesus Christ.

To begin with the first manifestation of *IT*, in God the Father. Now the whole title of scripture runs in

a mighty stream through all the channels of revelation in shewing the church that from the everlasting love of God in his Trinity of Persons, as an ocean, the first breaking forth of it appeared in choosing, adopting, and accepting the church in the Person of God's dear Son, and that from all eternity. And although the personal knowledge and enjoyment of these eternal acts of grace became known only to the church when personally revealed to the soul of every individual member of Christ's mystical body by the Holy Ghost; yet "the election obtained it" from everlasting. For thus the charter of grace expresses it: "For after that the kindness and love of God towards man appeared; not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he hath saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed upon us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that, being justified by his grace, we should be heirs according to the hope of eternal life," Titus iii. 4—7. "The hope of eternal life" is, and was, that hope which "God that cannot lie promised before the world began," Titus i. 2. Not what we hope, but the hope itself, which is Christ, and which Paul elsewhere prays for the church, when he saith, "that we may know what is the hope of his calling;" meaning not what we hope, but what Christ is; not our feeling, or confidence, which is changeable; but God's Christ; which is always the same. And this is what the Holy Ghost taught by the prophet, when he said, "O the hope of Israel and the Saviour thereof!" Jer. xiv. 8. And this was and is the *IT* which the election hath obtained. Hence the church is represented as with one voice in a time of trouble; "Awake! awake! put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake, as in the ancient days, as in the generations of old! Art thou not *IT* which hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon? Art thou not *IT* which hath dried the sea, the waters

of the great deep, that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over?" Isa. li. 9, 10. Nothing, therefore, can be more evident, than that the Person of God the Father is here considered, when under the double call the church speaks of him as the mighty IT which cut Pharaoh and the dragon to pieces, and opened a path to the Lord's redeemed when he led them through the red sea as through the wilderness, Exod. xvi. 14, 22.

And that this mighty IT is equally applied to the Person of God the Son is as plain from the very opening of the bible; for the whole promise of redemption is folded up in these most blessed words, when the victory of the Son of God is thus expressed; "IT shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." So infinitely great and expressive is this mighty IT in allusion to the Son of God, Gen. iii. 15.

Nor is God the Holy Ghost less manifested as one of the Persons in the Godhead included in the same glorious IT, which "the election hath obtained;" for it is said, in reference to his office in testifying to the souls of the Lord's people of their adoption character, "The Spirit ITSELF beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God," Rom. viii. 16. And what can be more blessed than the united view of this mighty IT, as equally ascribed to each person of the "Holy Three which bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one!" 1 John v. 7.

Now, then, this is the blessed gift, the mighty IT, which, by sovereign grace, "the election hath obtained!" So that it is not enough to say, that the election hath obtained heaven, and happiness, and holiness, and glory; for all these, and all the *et cetera* comprehended in these, are but effects. In the obtaining this glorious IT, we obtain infinitely more, even the cause. In these eternal purposes of Jehovah

respecting the church in Christ, the highly favoured objects of free and sovereign grace, are not simply chosen to heaven and happiness; no, nor for the love, and worship, and adoration of God only, but for yet more exalted purposes. "This people," saith Jehovah, speaking of his Israel, "this people have I formed for myself, they shall shew forth my praise," Isa. xliii. 21. But in forming them to union and communion with himself is yet an infinitely higher note in the scale of being. For in relation to the simple act of praise, the Lord is said to have made all things for himself, yea, even "the wicked for the day of evil," Prov. xvi. 4. And the Lord's praise is and must be produced from all his works. "All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord, and thy saints shall bless thee," Ps. cxlv. 10. But if to an everlasting union and communion with God in Christ, the first and ultimate purpose of Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons hath ordained the church in Christ; then we pass all the mere streams of love and come to the eternal ocean of blessedness, which is God himself; and the Lord Jesus' own words express, though no imagination can fully conceive, the degree of blessedness which the election of grace hath obtained in obtaining this mighty IT. "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us," John xvii. 21.

Oh! the blessedness of this mighty US! And what child of God in the contemplation but must exclaim in the words of Paul, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Rom xi. 33.

VI.

"OF HIS OWN WILL."—James i. 18.

It is truly blessed, when, under divine teaching, the regenerated child of God is brought to live out of him-

self, and to live wholly upon the Lord; to watch the footsteps of the divine sovereignty in all things, and to follow those leadings of the Lord in all things. It is indeed a science not soon learnt, neither when learnt easily practised. Nay, unless the same sovereignty which directs, gives with it grace to follow, the mind will revolt upon numberless occasions. When the Lord the Spirit, which first quickens, renews, and "directs the heart into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ," and under his gracious unction day by day we learn with the apostle, that "of him, and through him, and to him, are all things;" like him we then learn to offer the same song of praise as he did, and say, "to whom be glory for ever. Amen." Rom. xi. 36.

"Of his own will," becomes a sweet morsel for the regenerated child of God to feast upon, when that will is discovered as the source and fountain of all his blessings. Every dispensation, and every appointment, through the whole compass of nature, providence, grace, and glory, in which Jehovah hath been pleased to make any manifestations of himself to his people, become messengers of sanctification and wisdom, while the mind is engaged in the contemplation of him, "who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will," Eph. i. 11. And there is a certain somewhat, truly satisfying to the soul of every one thus taught of God, when at any time matters are dark and discouraging, if in the season this divine prerogative ariseth to view, and the Lord is heard as speaking by his word to his people, "my counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure," Isa. xlvi. 10. "Be still, and know that I am God!" Ps. xlvi. 10.

And what tends to endear yet more this sovereignty to the child of grace, is the revelation made in scripture, and confirmed in the heart, that this will is one and the same will in all the Persons of the Godhead. For

although the Holy Three in One are distinct in Person, yet that distinction is not, as in creatures by separate existences. One and the same being and essence is in all; and hence one and the same will, purpose, decree, and pleasure forms all! Hence, while we hear the Son of God say, "and this is the Father's will, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing," John vi. 39. We no less hear him say, "Father, I will, that they whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me!" John xvii. 24. And of the Holy Ghost it is as expressly declared, that in the distribution of his manifold gifts, "he divideth to every man severally as he will!" 1 Cor. xii. 11.

When the regenerated child of God, (for it is hardly necessary to observe, that none but such as are regenerated can spiritually apprehend the subject) hath duly pondered these things; if he will take his stand on this ground, by way of viewing and reviewing the several love-tokens of Jehovah's "own will," as hath been, now is, and will be, everlastingly manifested, both to the church of Christ, and personally to every individual member of Christ's mystical body; the contemplation will tend, under the influence of the same divine sovereignty, to impress his mind with the conviction of this glorious truth; how blessed it must be in being brought to live out of ourselves, and to live wholly upon the Lord in all things.

Let the child of God begin the subject where the Lord himself begins it, in those records of "his own will," which are said to be manifested to the church, "according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began," 2 Tim. i. 9. If we trace it to the original source in God's choice of the church in Christ, "to be holy and without blame before him in love," his will is said to be the only cause of this predilection being "before the

foundation of the world," Eph. i. 4. If God is said to have predestinated them "to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself;" the same reason is assigned as the sole cause of this distinguishing blessing, namely, that it is "according to the good pleasure of his will," Eph. i. 5. If we read of the manifestations of his grace, wherein the Lord hath "abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence," the same sweet note chimes through every part; that in the "having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself," Eph. i. 8. And as in the ancient counsels of eternity there could be no motive to influence the divine conduct, but what originated in the divine mind; so in the after ages in the time-state of the church, every manifestation of Jehovah carried the same signature with it, that the whole is the result of "his own will." Is the church redeemed from the ruins of the fall? It is said, "by the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all," Heb. x. 10. Are we regenerated, and "made partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lusts?" 2 Pet. i. 4. This mercy also is traced up to the same cause; "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures," James i. 18. And in all the subsequent acts of grace which follow regeneration, it is ascribed to the same predisposing cause; "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his own good pleasure," Phil. ii. 12, 13.

And if from these general features of character which distinguish the whole church of Christ, in every individual of his mystical body, the regenerated child of God would contemplate the subject personally, as it relates to himself, and mark the gracious manifestations of the Lord's "own will," under the several

bearings of it ; Oh ! what a volume in his own history (which when opened and explained by grace is the sweetest and most melting of all histories) might he find, there to rehearse the righteous acts, or as it is rendered in the margin, “ the righteousness of the Lord,” Judges v. 11. But I must not allow myself, (neither would it come within the limits of this little work) to enlarge on those points. Before I conclude, however, I would affectionately recommend every regenerated child of God to bring this subject home to himself and to his own heart, from the general outlines of it, as suits his own personal circumstances. “ Of his own will,” the man of God under divine teaching will discover, that all, and every minute event in his life of grace hath been conducted and carried on from beginning to end. The place of his birth in nature ; the parents of whom he was born ; the state in point of worldly accommodation in which he was placed ; whether in very humble, or more ample means of living ; whether in narrow, or more enlarged attainments of understanding ; whether in health of body, or sickly frame ; whether in many or few opportunities of ordinances and means of grace ; all these, and every other appointment have originated from “ his own will ;” and so arranged as might best subserve to the one great object of that will, in making “ wise unto salvation through the faith that is in Christ Jesus.” Oh ! for grace to have this always in view ; instead of consulting outward accommodations, to be everlastingly attending to the inward consequences of things resulting from “ his own will.” The welfare of the Lord’s Israel is not, as Moses the man of God beautifully expressed it, from “ the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, nor the precious things put forth by the moon ; but the good will of him which dwelt in the bush,” Deut. xxxiii. 14, 16. Lord ! let it be thy holy will that I may live out of self, and above all creature attainments,

by living wholly upon him who "ordereth all things according to the good pleasure of his will; to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved!" Eph. i. 5, 6.

And to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," Acts xx. 35. And when was it, that the Lord Jesus spake these words, and in what part of the bible are we to look for them? Certain it is, that neither of the evangelists have recorded them, neither are they to be found in any other place but in this, in all the word of God. John, the beloved apostle, hath said indeed, in the close of the gospel which bears his name, that "there were also many other things which Jesus did, which were not written in this book," John xx. 30. and xxi. 25. But words so precious, and of such vast importance, one might have thought, would have been treasured up among the golden sayings of Christ. But I would ask, (let it be remembered that I do not presume to speak decidedly upon it) did not the Holy Ghost purposely overrule this matter, that in the silence of the evangelists, a better opportunity might be afforded, to note this divine aphorism of Christ in yet stronger characters, in this sermon of the apostle Paul's. Surely as the words are now preserved, the church is enabled to have them more frequently in remembrance, than if they had been introduced in the ordinary discourses of Christ.

But we must not stop here. In God the Holy Ghost thus reserving the knowledge of this blessed saying of Christ to the ministry of Paul, and then introducing it in a way of remembrance; how hath that Almighty Spirit, whose office it is to glorify the Lord Jesus in "bringing all things to our remembrance, and taking of his, and shewing to his people;" adopted the most effectual method of accomplishing this divine purpose.

Nor let it be observed, the words of the Lord Jesus which the church is here commended to remember, are not held forth to their remembrance as they relate to the church in our dealings one with another only; but in a much higher sense, and to a yet more important purpose as applied to Jesus himself. The words are indeed very blessed, when accepted, as the Lord's decision, that among men the giver hath the advantage to the receiver; for he certainly hath a double blessing, in not only being enabled to give, but also to see the effects of this gift in making another happy. But if among the common charities of life, such blessings are greater on the side of the giver, what must the upshot be in those immense charities of the Lord Jesus himself given to his people? Who shall calculate here the aggregate of blessedness the Son of God hath in making his redeemed ones everlastingly holy, and everlastingly happy and blessed in himself? And may we not then venture to conclude, that it was on this account chiefly the Holy Ghost was pleased to let the church be brought acquainted with this divine saying of Christ, through the medium of his servant Paul for the church's continual comfort when remembering the words of the Lord Jesus. As if God the Holy Ghost, who indites all the prayers of his people, and brings all things to their remembrance whatsoever Jesus hath said to them, meant thereby, that in all our drawings nigh to his mercy seat, the Holy Ghost quickening our souls in prayer, we should for ever plead Christ's own words for our sure success in those seasons; and tell Jesus what Jesus hath first told us, that "it is more blessed to give than to receive!" Oh the sweetness of accepting this *michtam*, this precious assurance of the Lord Jesus in this way, and when grace is in lively exercise, to act faith upon it. So then, God the Spirit "who searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God," hath here taught us how "to make our requests

according to the will of God;" and thus having the mind of Christ in which he himself hath said, "it is more blessed to give than to receive;" we may come boldly to the throne of grace, being confident of this very thing, that while we have all blessedness from Him, Jesus will have glory by us; and while all happiness is our's, the praise will be all his. The Lord Jesus hath said it, and that's enough for me; may every child of God say, "It is more blessed to give than to receive!"

"Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness and the work of faith with power; that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ," 2 Thes. i. 11, 12.

Having in this, and several preceding numbers, in little penny tracts, gathered from the rich treasury of the word of God, a few sweet morsels, by way of sample for the people of God to feast upon; in this, by way of close, I would serve up, on the same knee of prayer as the former have been offered, this very blessed one, to accompany the whole. And perhaps a more suitable one cannot be found, both for the writer, and the reader, among the Lord's people, to make their daily food in spiritual enjoyment, than what the Holy Ghost hath here given to the church by his servant the apostle. What a blessed prayer for every faithful minister of Christ to be continually offering up for the Lord's people! And equally so for the Lord's people to offer up for every faithful minister! And let not the child of God overlook the gracious design of the Holy Ghost, in teaching this prayer to the church both of ministers and people; namely, that "in directing the heart into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for

Christ;" which are the personal offices of God the Spirit; the Lord makes the calling of God the Father, to be for the fulfilling all the "good pleasure of his goodness, and the name of the Lord Jesus to be glorified." So that it is not as much the good of the church as the good pleasure of God's goodness. His good pleasure is the cause; the happiness of the church the effect; the lesser is included in the greater. The church is made happy; but this is a secondary consideration to the glory of God. And so in like manner, the name of the Lord Jesus Christ is the great object to be glorified in his people; this is the first design: then comes second, namely, the church to be glorified in Him; and all, "according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ." And what a delightful consideration from the whole; that as all is, and must be, for the divine glory, so every thing ministers to this end in the everlasting happiness of his people. Lord! let this prayer be continually coming up before thee under the quickenings of the Holy Ghost, that our "God would count his whole church worthy of this calling; and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness and the work of faith with power, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ."

ANNUAL SALUTATIONS ;

OR,

TOKENS OF REMEMBRANCE,

OF THE

SPIRITUAL CHURCH OF OUR MOST GLORIOUS
CHRIST, &c. &c.

ANNUAL SALUTATIONS.

I.

GOD'S WITNESSES, THE EVERLASTING CONFUSION OF ALL INFIDELS,
AND THE EVERLASTING COMFORT OF ALL BELIEVERS.

IT is no small token of divine love, when from divine teaching, the child of God is enabled to bless God, for what God is in himself; independent of what he hath done, and is doing, and will to all eternity do, for his church and people. Such a frame of mind can only come from God, because it leadeth to God; and manifest great grace given of the Lord. And we are warranted from scripture to say, that God is well pleased, when at any time his children from his sweet influences in their hearts, can and do "bless the Lord in all places of his dominion," Ps. ciii. 22. The Lord takes it kind when they put their hearty amen to his glory. For so the Lord saith himself, "Whoso offereth me praise, glorifieth me," Ps. l. 23.

But the child of God adds another sweet note to this hymn of praise, when in the contemplation of the Lord's goodness to his Israel, he celebrates the love tokens of God in his song, and saith, "the Lord taketh pleasure in his people, and beautifieth the meek with salvation." Hence the children of God in their hallelujahs are said to "sing aloud upon their beds, and the high praises of God are in their mouths," Ps. cxlix. 1, 6.

And yet higher and louder still the note of praise swells in their song, when from the same divine source they are enabled to become witnesses for God, "in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom they shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life," Phil. ii. 15, 16.

Perhaps this is among the highest dignities, to which any of God's children can be exalted during the time state of the church upon earth. And it is as distinguished as it is honourable, when the Lord makes his chosen ones to be his witnessing ones, amidst those pestilent seasons when infidels swarm like hornets in the corrupt atmosphere. (See Exodus xxxii. 26.) And beyond all doubt nothing tends to demonstrate the sovereignty of Jehovah in more striking characters, than when the Lord thus accomplisheth the purposes of his will, in producing great events by slender means, and choosing "foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty," 1 Cor. i. 27. Now this is what in the unequalled majesty of holy scripture is called "taking the wise in their own craftiness," Job v. 13. God is then said to "frustrate the tokens of the liars, and make the diviners mad. He turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish," Isa. xlv. 25.

Holy scripture abounds with instances of the kind, but perhaps in none more than in that sublime part of the word of God where the Lord is represented as coming forth to manifest his self-existence and sovereignty, distinguished from all the creature idols. Under the similitude of a tribunal of judicature, Jehovah appears as convening an assembly and demanding an audience from his creatures. Men have their courts of justice; and God will have his. And as in those transactions among men, the opening of all trials is introduced with the proclamation of Oyez! Oyez!

Oyez! where all persons interested are required to attend: the Lord of Hosts will not be outdone by his creatures in granting both time and opportunity for a fair hearing; but will both summon an auditory and command attention: yea, God will be heard and acknowledged too; for the knee that will not bow to the sceptre of his grace, shall break under the iron rod of his justice.

And the Lord himself thus makes proclamation in open court; "Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears! Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled. Who among them can declare this, and shew us former things? Let them bring forth their witnesses that they may be justified, or let them hear, and say it is truth. Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen," Isa. xliii. 8—10.

Let the reader figure to himself such an assembly! Let his imagination bring before him (if the thought be not too vast for the human mind to grasp) the congregated multitude. Not a chancery of earth, but the chancery of heaven; not a court like that of Westminster, where a few hundreds or a few thousands may sometimes be crowded in together; but where millions upon millions are brought, even all the human race that ever have been, or shall be, in all ages of the world! Let the reader have his mind also deeply impressed with the awfulness of such a scene where every individual is alike interested in the event, and all waiting the solemn decision from God. A tribunal not where man is opposed to man; but where the infidel of every description and character is confronted before God. Not where human opinion hath the least avail, and where bad actions are sometimes varnished over with fair colouring; but where divine judgment becomes the only standard; where every character is fully and faithfully developed and made known; and

where a solemn, final, and irreversible sentence determines the everlasting state of all. Let the reader have his mind fully occupied in the contemplation of these things; and then let him figure to himself the Judge of all the earth proclaiming his almighty purpose in those solemn words as recorded in his scripture, "Produce your cause, saith the Lord; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the king of Jacob. Let them bring forth and shew us what shall happen. Let them shew former things what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them, or declare us things for to come. Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods; yea, do good or do evil, that we may be dismayed and behold it together," Isa. xli. 21—23.

Here then is the proclamation of Jehovah! In the issue of the things here spoken of, the Lord condescends to rest the decision of his own divine character. He subpœneth also by way of confirmation to the whole "the blind that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears;" and saith of them, "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen." Let the reader ponder all these things, and let him receive (for language fails to express) what the final issue will be in the everlasting confusion which must overwhelm the infidels of every age and nation; and the everlasting joy which will burst forth from every heart, in the vast assembly of all true believers in Christ.

And here, for the better apprehension of the subject itself, let us go over, one by one, the more prominent features which present themselves to our view in this proclamation of the Lord.

And first let the child of God observe (for it is to such only I send forth this little love token for the new year) let him I say first observe, what a very blessed testimony by the way the Lord hath inadver-

tently given of himself, in relation to the peculiar mode of his being, as distinguished from his creatures in a Trinity of Persons. This is indeed the first great beauty in his scripture, and merits the closest attention of all the Lord's people. It is strikingly observable that in a proclamation like this, where Jehovah is maintaining his own sole glory in the possession of all divine attributes, which constitutes Godhead; he speaks of himself as existing in a Trinity of Persons, in the unity of the divine essence. Let the reader not fail to observe this. And let him note that the Lord again and again, and within the compass of only three verses, speaks of himself three times in the plural number. Let them (saith the Lord, alluding to idols, and to the followers of idols) let them shew us what shall happen. Let them shew former things that we may consider, and that we may know. Oh! how gracious was it in God, (and I pray the child of God above all things to notice his grace in this act) that while putting to confusion the whole host of infidels, whether blasphemers of the bible, or blasphemers of either of the Persons in the Godhead, (for they are all alike under the same conclusion, as far as blasphemy is concerned) he hath adopted so blessed a method of perserving his people "in the faith once delivered to the saints." The *US* and the *WE*, in this proclamation of Jehovah, decidedly prove this fundamental article of our most holy faith. And let the reader not fail to connect with it the many other scriptures to the same amount. For it is the same *US*, which said at the creation, "Let us make man in our image after our likeness," Gen. i. 26. The same *US* which concerning the tower of Babel said, "Let *US* go down," &c. Gen. xi. 7. The same *US* which our prophet heard in that vision when he saw the glory of Christ and heard the Holy Ghost speak, which said, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us," Isa. vi. 8. For that this was Christ's glory John

declared, John xii. 41. And that the Holy Ghost was the Almighty speaker, Paul testified, Acts xxviii. 25—27. And it was the same US, of which Hosea hath recorded, concerning the Lord's manifestation of himself to the patriarch Jacob at Bethel, where it is said that he spoke with US, "even the Lord God of Hosts; the Lord is his memorial," Hosea xii. 4, 5. And, to mention no more, the same of whom the Son of God himself spake, when he most graciously promised the unceasing presence of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, with his people, for he said, "We will come, and make our abode; and the Holy Ghost shall abide with you for ever," John xiv. 16, 23.

When the reader hath felt the full impression of this glorious part warming his very soul; let him pass on to a second observation on the divine proclamation of Jehovah.

In the Lord's demanding from dunghill idols and their votaries, proofs of fore-knowledge and fore-appointments, he hereby asserts that these attributes which are among the highest testimonies of Godhead, he himself exclusively possesseth; and thus he establisheth his own sovereignty of character. "Let them shew what shall happen. Let them declare the things that are to come," &c.

Now in proof of our God in his Trinity of Persons possessing and exercising this divine prerogative, we need go no further than those scriptures of the prophet now before us. Jacob lived more than seven hundred years before the coming of Christ. And yet under the spirit of prophecy he hath drawn the features of characters, which mark the Person, Godhead, and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, so striking, that they appear more like an history of facts already accomplished, than of events which were not to take place for so many centuries after. I stay not to particularize on the very many statements of the prophet; for in

that case I should have to bring before the reader a great part of Isaiah's writings. One or two instances in point will be sufficient.

The prophet spoke of Christ's miraculous conception, chap. vii. 14. his birth, ix. 6. his ministry, miracles, and their effects, xxxv. he speaks of his ordination and call by the Father, xlii. and xlix. and the meekness and mildness of his character, xl. 11. and the contempt and cruelty offered to his person, l. 6, &c. And whoever compares these prophecies with the events in the life of Christ, will find his mind overwhelmed with conviction in the wonderful correspondence. Had Isaiah stood on the banks of Jordan when Jesus was baptized, and beheld the Spirit descending like a dove and lighting upon him, he could not have expressed the wonderful relation more accurately than he hath done in his eleventh chapter. Had he heard Christ preaching in the synagogues, as related Luke xiv. 18, &c. he could not have described both the divine Preacher, and the substance of his sermon, in more striking language than was done by him in his 61st chapter. And with what astonishment must every enlightened eye read the prophet's narrative of the Lord "Jesus' agony in the garden," chap. lxiii. and his sufferings at the hall of Pilate and hill of Calvary, chap. liii. when he beholds almost word for word, the history of the whole as drawn by the evangelists!

If then it be allowed, (as that it must be allowed) the foretelling future events can only be the prerogative of Jehovah; and we thus see the things predicted by Isaiah, concerning Christ, so fulfilled in his person and offices; who, but the most determined infidel, would venture to call in question those divine oracles of God in the bible, where these records, both of prophecy and fact, are faithfully contained?

But, thirdly, what the prophet foretold, and the

evangelists proved, is but a part, and that a small part of what the apostles predicted should take place in the latter days. Here the Lord manifested his glory, in declaring events to come the most improbable, but which we have lived to see fulfilled, and are fulfilling daily in the earth. The prophet Isaiah lived (as hath been already said) more than seven hundred years before the coming of Christ. And now eighteen centuries have since run out. Let any man look at the world as it now is, and with the bible in his hand, mark well the corresponding features. Had the apostle Paul (to mention no other) lived but yesterday, and written his epistle to Timothy this day, it is impossible he could have drawn characters more faithful. What we now see and what he then wrote are perfect counterparts of each other. "This know, (said he) that in the last days, perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves; covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God," 2 Tim. iii. 1, 5. Were these scriptures indeed written so many ages since, and purposely to mark the present æra? And do we now behold their accomplishment daily in our streets, so that any man, and every man looking on might say, there are the several characters virtually before us? And can there be a more decisive proof both of the authenticity of the bible, and of the Godhead under whose inspiration it was written? 2 Tim. iii. 16. 2 Pet. i. 20, 21. And reader! do observe this one thing. Though it be most painful to witness the blasphemy of some, and the atheism of others, and the general profligacy of all; and though all feeling minds cannot but be tremblingly alive for what must be the eventual consequences to those awful characters living and dying

under such delusions; yet we find cause to bless God for such a testimony to his truth. Without it we should lose one great evidence of our holy faith. They are for witnesses also. And from age to age as they arise, the Lord speaks to them as to those of old, "Behold ye despisers, and wonder, and perish, for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you," Isa. xxix. 14. Habak i. 5. Acts xiii. 41.

But we must not stop here. The Lord condescends to call into court his witnesses also, in addition to his own testimony of himself. "Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears. Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen." That Christ, as Christ Mediator, is both the chosen servant and witness of Jehovah, is too plain to need observation. Indeed it is one of his most precious names; "the amen, the faithful and true witness," Rev. ii. 14. But on this branch of the subject the limits of a penny tract will not admit for me to enlarge. My present province is to speak of the Lord's people as the Lord's witnesses. And here much remains to be said. For although in the first face of things it should seem self-evident, that such only can bear testimony for God, who have received testimony from God; yet it may be proper for the better apprehension of the subject, first to remark who are not witnesses for God before we examine those that be.

And here without going over much ground in the enquiry, it is obvious at one view, that they can be no witnesses for God who are ignorant of God. For as it is said concerning Israel of old, "all are not Israel that are of Israel;" so now, all are not christians which are called christians. Thousands are reputedly so for no other reason but because they were born under the meridian of christianity. And had the same persons

been born in Turkey, from the same principle they would have been born Turks. Such things constitute no real character. It is not the birth of nature, but of grace, not a natural but a spiritual birth, which makes the christian. Christ himself in five words hath decidedly shewn this when he said, "Ye must be born again!" John iii. 7.

It were enough to excite a smile if the subject was not too serious for laughter, to behold the seeming zeal with which numbers in the present day are hastening to convert others, many of whom, it is to be feared, were never converted themselves; and to hear the indignation expressed by many against infidels, who, as far as relates to any saving work of grace wrought upon their own souls, are no less infidels under a different bearing. All such christians are christians only by system. Their creed is derived from their fathers, and is either the effect of habit or of education. Such men act upon similar principles to what is related in history of one of the emperors of Morocco, who said in compliment to our ambassador, 'that if he had now to choose his religion, he certainly would be a christian; but, (he added) every man ought to live and die in the religion of his ancestors.'

I stay not to combat such notions. Indeed I have nothing to do with them. It is too plain to need a comment. None of this description can be witnesses for God, unless it be indeed as in proof of that scripture, "God hath given them the spirit of slumber," Rom. xi. 8. Isa. vi. 9. For being strangers to God, strangers to themselves, and to the plague of their own heart; having never received any manifestation from God, or communion with God; the utmost extent of their testimony, (if they attempted to give any) could be no more than hearsay account, borrowed from another man's knowledge, and not their own. And this in fact is none at all; and not unlike the knowledge our

little children frame to themselves of the world, from the questions and answers of their school books, or from the dissecting of maps, and putting them together again. So that whether men of this complexion write for or against the great truths of God; whether one sends forth what he calls 'the age of reason,' to combat revelation; or another offers an 'apology for the bible,' when no apology except for himself is wanted on the subject; and a third class, who never felt any evidence of the saving grace of Christ upon their own hearts, gather what they call 'evidences for christianity,' for the supposed benefit of others, where none are wanted, all are equally dark and ignorant of all spiritual knowledge; their views are derived wholly from nature, and end in the same. And as (according to their own principles of philosophy) nothing can rise above its level; so the word of God would have told them, could they have understood it, that what begins in man will never lead to God. One verse of scripture silenceth the whole. "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.

But if all such be not witnesses for God, the question is who are? And this, the Lord himself answers, namely, the blind, to whom the Lord hath given spiritual sight, and the deaf, whose ears the Lord hath spiritually unstopped; that is, you, reader, even you, "if so be ye have tasted the Lord is gracious," 1 Pet. ii. 3. The faith of God's elect differs both in cause and effect from all the learning of the world. It is not natural, but spiritual; not learnt by human teaching, but divine; not merited, but given. It is at once the simplest in its effects, and yet the greatest in its cause, of all other principles whatever. As to its cause, the same power which was necessary to raise Christ from the dead, is as necessary to raise sinners which are by nature "dead in tres-

passes and sins." And as to its effects, all its consequences are sure. For when the object of divine love is quickened into the new and spiritual life in Christ, it is as natural for him to live *upon* God, and *to* God, and *with* God by faith, as it is for the new-born child in nature to breathe, and move, and do the actions of animal life. Let the reader ask himself the question, whether such an act of saving grace hath passed upon his soul; which is, in other words, whether the Spirit witnesseth with his spirit that he is born of God." Rom. viii. 16.

Ye children of God, ye that have received his testimony, and can and do set to his seal that God is true, be strong in the Lord, and in the word of his grace, who is able to build you up, and give you "an inheritance among all them that are sanctified." And while the Lord is manifesting to you of his love, do you bear witness to his faithfulness; this will be a most effectual method to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. And nothing will counteract the awful rebuke and blasphemy of the present God-dishonouring, Christ-despising, Holy Ghost disowning generation more, than when a child of God, through the work of the Spirit, is living day by day in the personal knowledge of, and fellowship with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ. Here it is that the true witness for God is discoverable; for it is not the man that talks of God, but he that walks with God; not the mere professor, but the possessor of godliness. Carnal men may, and carnal men will, read of the love of God in the scriptures, and even converse of it one with another; and many also there are that know nothing of Christ personally, who notwithstanding will profess to believe in Christ, and to trust in the blood and righteousness of Christ for salvation. But while men of this complexion take all their creed on trust, the child of God, when regenerated by the Holy Ghost, knows and enjoys both as

living principles in his heart, he daily tastes and sees that the Lord is gracious, "because the love of God is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost," Rom. v. 5. And that love of God diffused over his soul, acts like some rich sweetener, as honey in milk, or spices in wine, which renders the whole most blessed in soul enjoyment. In like manner, the blood of Christ is so graciously sprinkled by the same divine power over this man's conscience, that it becomes what the Holy Ghost calls, "speaking blood;" (Heb. xiii. 24.) for it speaks to God in the sinner's heart of the glorious Person and all-sufficient blood of Christ to cleanse from all sin; and it speaks from God of God's faithfulness in his covenant promises to forgive all sin. And it is of such witnesses God speaks, when he saith, "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord."

And let all the little ones, and the weak ones of Christ's regenerated family, who can, and do bear testimony to the word of his grace in knowing and feeling the plague of their own heart, and the preciousness and all-sufficiency of the Lord Jesus Christ; let them not be dismayed from the weakness of their faith, or the slenderness of their attainments in the divine life; you are no less witnesses for God on this account, for in respect to your attainments, whether they are small or great, whether weak or strong, those things make no alteration as to your spiritual state before God. Being made a "partaker of the divine nature in Christ," you are, to all intents and purposes, a witness for Christ. 2 Pet. i. 4.

The safety of God's little ones doth not ebb and flow according to the tide of what they feel, but what Christ is. He that is taught of God the Spirit his own nothingness, and Christ's all-sufficiency, is as truly a witness of these grand things, as an apostle or patriarch. And like the man we read of in the gospel, who was born blind, and whose eyes the Lord opened,

though you can witness no more for God than this, yet one thing you can and do say, and a blessed thing it is to say, "Once I was blind, now I see." John ix. 25.

Ye ministers of God! Ye who are ministers indeed, "not of the letter," but of the spirit! see that in your ministration to the church, ye do carry with you the true mark of your high calling; and while you insist upon the work of God in the soul of others as the only proof of a real believer, you can bear a true testimony for God in your own soul also. Oh! it is blessed, when, like John, the ministers of Christ can say, "that which we have seen and heard, we declare unto you," 1 John i. 3. With faithful servants sent of God, of divine ordination, and not of human, the church of God expect that they should speak as those that know, and not as hearsay teachers. Thus John taught; thus so Paul; and thus so Peter. 1 John iii. 14. v. 20. 2 Tim. i. 12. (or v. 1.) 2 Peter i. 16.

Reader, farewell! The Lord, in opening a new year, give grace to his people to be his witnesses upon earth, as he is himself "the amen, the faithful and true witness," both in earth and heaven. And though the church of God is encompassed around with foes of all descriptions, though legions of enemies and troops from hell are without the camp, and compass the church on every side, yet had we but power to see spiritually, as the prophet's servant did when the Lord opened his eyes on the mountain, we should behold "horses of fire, and chariots of fire," all engaged for our defence. Salvation hath God appointed for walls and bulwarks, and the whole army within is garrisoned with the divine presence.

Thus the church of God hath ever stood, still stands, and will stand for ever. And when the hand that now writes, and the eye that now reads, shall have both ceased their office, the Lord's proclamations will still

be heard till time shall be no more—"Bring forth the blind that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears; let all the nations be assembled; ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen." Amen.

II.

THE GOINGS FORTH OF JEHOVAH, IN HIS TRINITY OF PERSONS,
IN ACTS OF PERSONAL COMMUNION WITH HIS CHURCH IN
CHRIST; THE SOURCE OF ALL BLESSEDNESS TO THE PEOPLE
OF GOD, BOTH IN THE LIFE THAT NOW IS, AND IN THAT
WHICH IS TO COME.

One of the sweetest employments in the spiritual life, when once the work of grace is begun in the heart, is when, like the prophet, the Lord leads his regenerated children to their watch-tower, and brings them into a waiting frame, for the comings forth of Jehovah, in his Trinity of Persons, to bless them "with all spiritual blessings in Christ." Those renewings of the Holy Ghost are precious things. They perfume the soul with an apprehension of the Person, blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ; and both "shed abroad the love of God in the heart, and direct the heart into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ." They induce similar effects to what was done by the fragrancy of the oil, from the anointings in the tabernacle. They act upon the spiritual senses of the regenerated, as the sun's warmth upon the flower; melting all the finer particles of the plant, and drawing forth and impregnating the whole atmosphere with the odour. But without those renewings of the Holy Ghost "shed upon us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour," we lose all apprehensions of spiritual enjoyment, even in divine things. For though there be an habitual state into which the child of God is brought by regeneration, yet the actual exercises of the soul in desires after the Lord, and communion with

the Lord will be wanting, where the renewings of the Holy Ghost are wanting. Hence, the cry of old testament saints, "O send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead me, let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles. Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy; yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God, my God." Ps. xliii. 3, 4. But, on the contrary, when grace was not in lively exercise, we find the sad complaints of the church. "Lord, hide not thy face from me; put not thy servant away in anger," Ps. xxvii. 9. It was this deadness of soul which made the spouse in the Canticles complain, amidst many love-calls of Jesus, "I sleep, (said she) but my heart waketh. It is the voice of my beloved!" Song v. 1, 2. She knows his voice, and could, and did call him, her "beloved." But she was in too sleepy a frame to enjoy his presence at that time. The renewings of the Holy Ghost were wanting. And such is, and such always must be the state of the church in all ages without the influence of the Spirit.

It is very profitable, when under divine teaching, we are brought acquainted with those things. The Lord passeth and repasseth before his redeemed ones in an unremitting attention to their necessities; and he is for ever pouring out of his fulness to supply their emptiness. But in proof that there is still somewhat wanting to give this spiritual relish and enjoyment of these mercies, how often, in the very moment of receiving the Lord's gifts, are we insensible of the giver? "The Lord openeth his hand (as it is expressed in that beautiful imagery of scripture) and satisfieth the desire of every living soul," Ps. cxlv. 16. But not unfrequently the hand which bestows all is hidden from our short-sighted view in the cloud of his own bounties. The church of God (I mean the regenerated church) can have no question whatever of the Lord's everlasting presence of his people, and of his everlastingly watching

over them for good. He saith himself, in that sweet love-song he sings to his vineyard, the church, "Sing ye to her, a vineyard of red wine! I, the Lord, do keep it. I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day," Isa. xxvii. 2, 3. And very sure must every regenerated child of God be, that his keepings, and waterings, and watchings are as the Lord hath said. But who among the Lord's people, yea, even those among them who walk most closely with the Lord, are alive to the thousandth part of what is thus every moment going on of the Lord's care? I know not indeed what others of the Lord's children may be able to say to this enquiry, but for myself, I am free to confess (though I blush while I confess it) that I am constrained to plead guilty to ten thousand omissions of the kind. Numerous are the love-tokens of my Lord that daily pass by me unheeded. And even those which are seen, too often leave no longer remembrance in my cold and forgetful heart, than impressions made on water. And were it not that God the Holy Ghost, in that gracious office of his, I mean, as the remembrancer of Christ Jesus (an office infinitely precious, but too little regarded) mercifully recalls to my recollection at times what hath before passed between Jesus and my soul, I should have continual occasion to say, as Jacob once did at Bethel, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not." Gen. xxviii. 16, 17.

I have said in the title page of this humble but affectionate salutation, 'Health to the church of Christ, from the fountain of health, Christ!' And what can give health to the souls of the Lord's people but the goings forth of the Lord to his people, in his Trinity of Persons? Acts of personal communion from each glorious Person in the Godhead with each and all of the persons of the Lord's people, can be the only source of blessedness either here or hereafter. For from whence

hath the church her being, and her well-being? Is it not from the Holy Three in One “which bear record in heaven?” Was not the church of Christ chosen in Christ by God the Father “before the foundation of the world?” And did not Christ then betroth the church to himself for ever? And did not God the Holy Ghost then anoint both Christ and his members; by virtue of which the head was called Christ, that is, the anointed; and the church had “grace given to her in Christ before the world began?” And if from this fountain, this ocean of all blessedness, the church hath her being and well-being, from whence, but from this same source, can the church derive health and salvation for her continuance in well-being, either in relation to “the life that now is, or of that which is to come?”

And what a world of attention is shewn in the scriptures of God by the Holy Three in One to comfort the church with assurances of the unalterable love, and grace, and favour which Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons hath towards his church in those councils and covenant transactions which are there related, when going forth for the blessing of his people? The bible is full of them, either in rehearsing what was then said, or since done. We meet with those divine discourses between the divine Persons from the very first opening of scripture. “Let us make man,” Gen. i. 26. “Behold the man is become as one of us,” Gen. iii. 22. “Let us go down,” Gen. xi. 7. And the personal act of each in the Godhead, as if to define Person, and yet no less carry conviction to the people of God, that the works of the holy Trinity are one and undivided; and are so plainly set forth in many parts of the old testament, but more particularly in the new, that like the prophet’s vision, “he that runs may read.” One of the fathers in the early centuries (Gerard) in his comment upon that blessed discourse of the Lord Jesus Christ, John xvi. 13—16. where our Lord hath so particularly

rehearsed the special and personal office of the holy Three in One, calls it, *Sacratissimus confessus Trinitatis*; that is, 'the most sacred sitting of the Trinity.' I admire the expression, for surely it is correct. And it is the most blessed, and precious, and soul-satisfying sitting and discourse, on this momentous truth the imagination can conceive. And it may be added, that when the regenerated child of God is at any time reading it, under the unction of the Spirit, he can and will set his seal to the things there spoken that God is true. He learns therefrom and believes of the common interest the Father with the Son hath in all things. And he is led to behold the Person of Christ as glorified in his view, and to receive the things of Christ, thus shewed him by the Holy Ghost.

I beg indulgence from the regenerated church of God in Christ, for whom this little gift of salutation at the opening of the new year is intended, and to whom with the warmest affection it is sent; to allow me to bring forward from scripture, a few of the more prominent and leading points on this doctrine, from whence, under divine teaching, we shall learn, how essential must be "the goings forth of Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons, in acts of personal communion with his people, both for the happiness of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." And if the Lord the Spirit shall graciously guide the pen of him that writes, and the heart of those that read; the goings forth of the Lord to the souls in grace will be followed with the lively actings of faith in both; and Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, "will in all things be glorified in Jesus Christ!"

And here the first and greatest of every other, and which is never to be lost sight of by the regenerated church of God, is the divine glory. The very purpose for which Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons went forth in acts of creation, could be no other than his own

glory. Here, as to one centre, every line is directed. To this, as in one current all the streams of revelation meet. This is, and must be, the first cause, and final end of all things. And the song which John heard issuing from the multitude round the throne, was in one full chorus to the same. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast made all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created," Rev. iv. 11.

And the second is like unto it, namely, that in the accomplishment of this great purpose, Jehovah's glory, all the revelations which he hath been pleased to make of himself, have been, now are, and everlastingly will be, in the person of his dear Son. For thus it is written, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father he hath declared him," John i. 18. Hence we have authority to conclude, that the Son of God in our nature, that is, God manifest in the flesh, is the only visible Jehovah; and "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," Coloss. ii. 9. And as he is the only visible Jehovah in person, so is he declared to be the only medium of all communication, in all the departments of nature, providence, grace, and glory. For thus stands the words in the charter of grace, "that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him," Ephes. i. 10. This mighty him, therefore, is the glorious Holy One, and medium of all manifestation, and of all communion for ever. And I detain the regenerated church of God one moment to observe the grace, yea, the inexpressible riches of grace, shewn the church, in this plan of Jehovah's "making known the mystery of his will." Had God been pleased to have made a thousand worlds, and in those worlds manifested ten thousand acts of grace daily to his people;

the whole would have been nothing compared to the manifestation of himself in the person of his dear Son. And for this plain reason, all God's works are but the works of God, but here is God himself! John xiv. 7—11.

I pass on to a third particular in those leading points of the doctrines of grace, namely, the relation in which the church stands to God in Christ, being "chosen in him before the foundation of the world," Eph. i. 4. Here indeed, as far as concerns the church, the goings forth of Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons, are eminently sweet and blessed; inasmuch as all acts of personal communion which Jehovah hath with his church in Christ, arise out of this union which the church hath with God in Christ; and is at the bottom of all blessedness to the people of God, both "in the life that now is, and in that which is to come." For the Son of God, taking our nature into union with his divine nature, opened the way for what the Holy Ghost by John calls, "fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ," John i. 3. And in confirmation of this glorious truth of our most holy faith, we have the united testimony of all the Persons in the Godhead. For example; God the Father thus proclaims his fellowship with his dear Son in our nature, when by the prophet he calls him, "the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts!" Zech. xiii. 7. And God the Holy Ghost by Paul, testifieth to the church having interest in the same when he saith, "God is faithful by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord," 1 Cor. i. 9. And God the Son most blessedly gives his sanction to the same, yea, and adds to it this precious assurance; that the love each glorious Person in the Godhead hath to the church in Christ, is not only manifested by this fellowship into which the church is brought by her union with Christ; but also, that it is the good will and pleasure of Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons, that this fellowship

shall be made known, lived upon, and enjoyed, by the Lord's people, when brought into a state of regeneration. "At that day (saith the Lord Jesus) ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you," John xiv. 20. And let it not for a moment be overlooked, or forgotten, that this choice of the church in Christ, is for the express purpose of union and communion, with God himself in his Trinity of Persons, in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. For thus it is written, "Jehovah hath chosen Jacob for himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure," Ps. cxxxv. 4. "But know, that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself," Ps. iv. 3. "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself," Eph. i. 5. Observe, in all these and the like scriptures, the manner of expression "to himself!" Not to kingdoms, or empires; not to worldly wisdom, or knowledge; not simply to ordinances, or means of grace; no, nor even to the happiness and blessedness of heaven; for heaven itself with all the holiness and happiness of eternity, are but the fruits and effects of this choice of the church in Christ by Jehovah, for this is the cause. "This people (saith the Lord) have I formed for myself." Here is the ground-work of all that follows, this is the cause. Then it follows, "they shall shew forth my praise," here is the effect. Oh! how truly blessed the relationship into which we are brought to Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons, from our being called to the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ! And what inconceivable blessedness in those expressions of our Lord, when speaking of this union in his prayer to his Father, he saith, "That they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they all may be one in us," John xvii. 21. Observe, one in us! Not only one with Christ, and one in Christ, but hereby brought into union with the Father; one with us! And that the Holy Ghost is equally included in this oneness is

evident, from what is said 1 Cor. vi. 17, "he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit—your body being the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you," 1 Cor. vi. 19. Hence the union is with Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons in Christ. And as it was observed in the foregoing paragraph concerning the Son of God in our nature, that all revelations are in him, and communications by him; this mighty Him! so here, all union and communion, into which the church is brought from her oneness with Christ, is with this US! this mighty US!

One word more on these leading points of the doctrines of grace, and which should never be lost sight of by the regenerated church of God, namely, that the choice of the church by Jehovah is all personal; that is to say, it is the persons of the Lord's people, not their attainments; it is you, not any thing of your's. Every individual member of Christ's mystical body is such, from being chosen, and personally chosen in him. God the Father himself is said, in his own person to have chosen them. The Holy Ghost by Paul thus states the doctrine. For speaking of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, he saith, "Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named," Eph. iii. 15. And the Son of God under the spirit of prophecy saith in one of the Psalms to the same amount, "In thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned when as yet there was none of them," Ps. cxxxix. 15. Oh! what an overwhelming view of divine love is here opened to the church of the living God, when once by regeneration, and the teaching of the Holy Ghost, the child of God is led to see, and know, whose he is, and to whom he belongs! And this choice of God makes it everlastingly secure, being found wholly in God, and wholly from God, in his sovereign will and pleasure. Hence amidst all other circumstances, this bears up with a "nevertheless, the founda-

tion of God standeth sure, having this seal; the Lord knoweth them that are his!" 2 Tim. ii. 19. This therefore comes in for a part, and that a very principal part in the leading doctrines of grace; Jehovah's choice of his people is personal. It is not from any thing lovely, or unlovely, in them; neither merit nor demerit hath ought to do in the choice. "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious!" This answereth every other enquiry. "Grace was given to the church in Christ Jesus before the world began," 2 Tim. i. 9. As the Lord said to Moses, so in effect is said to all the church in Christ; "I know thee by name," Exod. xxxiii. 17.

From these preliminary observations, which may be considered as so many standards in the covenant of grace, it will at once appear, that the goings forth of Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons in acts of personal communion with his church in Christ, must be the source of all blessedness, both in relation to the life that now is, and of that which is to come. I have saluted the church at the opening of the new year with the prayer of "health to the church from the fountain of health, Jesus Christ;" so now I would follow up that prayer, with shewing under one or two particulars, how Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons is unceasingly ministering to that health in his church, and people, by communications of himself, in all those acts of grace which flow from "fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ," through the Holy Ghost.

And first. In that most sacred sitting of the Holy Trinity, (as one calls it) when in those ancient settlements of eternity, Jehovah purposed to go forth in acts of creation, and to raise up a church for his glory; each divine Person took part in those vast designs, and adopted this most gracious plan of wisdom, of making each Person to be distinctly known, and personally in sweet communion to be enjoyed, by every individual member of Christ's mystical body. And while thus

affording the means for every regenerated child of God to lean upon, and hold communion with each glorious Person, to behold the whole as constituting one and the same infinite and eternal God, "who is one Lord, and his name One," Zech. xiv. 9. Hence we are taught, that God the Father is pleased to be revealed as himself personally "choosing, adopting, and accepting the church in his dear Son, before the foundation of the world," Eph. i. 3—6. God the Son hath personally married the church before all time, and thereby personally endeared himself to the affections of his people; and as his own, he hath redeemed them also from the Adam-fall transgression by his blood, and made them holy in his righteousness, Isa. liv. 5. Eph. i. 7. 1 Cor. i. 30. And God the Holy Ghost hath manifested his equal love of the church, in anointing both head and members, when the Father chose the church, and the Son married the church, before all time; by which the Son of God was called Christ in whom the church was chosen, Eph. i. 4. "And grace was given to the church in Christ before the world began," 2 Tim. i. 9. And the personal province of God the Holy Ghost is yet further known, and proved, in regenerating every individual of Christ's mystical body from the Adam-fall transgression, when dead in trespasses and sins, to a new and spiritual life in Christ. And in proof of those glorious acts of grace from each, and from all, and of the perfect equality in the several Persons in the Godhead, both in divine perfections, and of divine love to the church in Christ; and that Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons would have those acts of grace in the Godhead known, and enjoyed by the Lord's people, he hath appointed, that the church in every individual of Christ's mystical body shall be baptized in the joint name, and be blessed in the joint blessing of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. See Matt. xxviii. 19. 2 Cor. xiii. 14. So palpable a testimony can need no further evidence, than that as

the Holy Three in One are all equal ; have all manifested equal love to the church ; have all taken equal part in the covenant of grace ; and are all equally revealed as carrying on the one undivided work in bringing home the church to glory ; equal praise is due to each and all : and the goings forth of Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons in acts of personal communion with his church in Christ, can be the only source of blessedness to the people of God, both in the life that now is, and in that which is to come.

Secondly. As it is the privilege of the church of God, to be unceasingly brought under the sweet and gracious manifestations of the Holy Three in One, during a whole life of grace, until brought home to glory ; so is it the happiness of the church of God in every regenerated member of Christ's mystical body, to be living in the constant enjoyment of it, and personally to know the Father, Son, and Spirit, in those daily, yea, sometimes hourly acts of grace, and love, revealed to them. I must not indulge myself with entering largely into particulars, but let a few of the manifestations of each glorious Person by way of sample suffice.

God the Father in his goings forth to his people, makes himself known under this tender name of Father. The highest note in heaven, and to all eternity, is, and will be, "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named!" Ephes. iii. 14—15. And during the time-state of the church on earth, this is the highest and most blessed name by which the church can call him, or know him. And hence all the acts of God the Father to his church in Christ his dear Son, are made to the people in this fatherly way. Having first put himself into this relationship in Christ, and become our Father, as a Father he is unceasingly manifesting himself in love. Hence he is specially and personally called "the Father of lights," James i. 17. The "Father of glory," Eph. i. 17.

The "Father of mercies," 2 Cor. i. 3. As if (and which is indeed the case) as a father he begets all these, and every other as his children need; yea, they come from himself, and are part of himself. For he not only communicates every blessing, but is himself the blessing. And having made his chosen in Christ part of himself, from having taken them into union with himself in Christ his dear Son, he hath made himself over to them; and continually is engaged, and doth most blessedly fulfil it, in going forth in acts of communion and fellowship, daily, and all the day, in blessing them "with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

God the Son in like manner, in his goings forth from everlasting, as the prophets describe him, hath been invariably shewing forth in acts of grace and love, that "his delights have been with the sons of men." His very name is mercy, and his whole heart is love. The very purpose for which he took our nature into union with his divine, was to open, and keep open, a continual intercourse, communion, and fellowship with his people. And in that double nature which he hath, God and Man in one person, he is eminently qualified to go forth in acts of personal communion every moment. For as Man, he knows and feels what our nature is by his own. And as God, he hath all the power and grace of God to communicate what is needful for ever. Oh! what a summary is contained in that one description of him by the Holy Ghost; "the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of Him which filleth all in all!" Eph. i. 22, 23.

God the Holy Ghost comes forth with equal glory and equal grace to the church. Indeed, in relation to his manifestations, all, and every act of love from the Person of the Father, and the Son, to the church in Christ, for the full and sweet enjoyment of them, became the immediate work of the Person of the Holy Ghost. He is the great source of all spiritual life; and

those influences of his, the cause of all our enjoyment of all spiritual blessings. He it is which first opens our spiritual apprehensions of the Father's love and the Son's grace; and when he hath warmed our souls with such apprehensions of both, most blessedly doth he lead forth our souls into the enjoyment of what he hath taught; and thus opens, and keeps open, holy communion and "fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." There is a peculiar glory in that verse of scripture, and indeed I cannot express all that I have found of blessedness in it; I mean that verse in which the Lord Jesus, speaking of the Holy Ghost, saith, "he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear that shall he speak!" John xvi. 13. And how very sweetly doth every regenerated child of God prove this, in all the instances of prayer or of praise; pleading the promises, or acting faith upon any of the revelations of God? It is by him that "we know the things which are freely given to us of God!" And I would add, that I have also found a peculiar blessedness in the Holy Ghost's name of Comforter. For in the exercise of this precious office work in the covenant of grace, the church receives all the comforts of the covenant. God our Father is called, and is indeed, "the God of all comfort," 2 Cor. i. 3. And God the Son is himself, and so called, "the consolation of Israel," Luke ii. 25. But he, who emphatically is called "the Comforter," even God the Holy Ghost, is he who makes the whole of the Father's comfort, and the Son's consolation, effectual in the souls of his people by his personal ministry, and is therefore the Comforter; he sheds the love of God abroad in the heart. He takes of the things of Christ and shews to us. He is therefore truly the Comforter.

Thirdly. In addition to those observations of the goings forth of Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons in acts of personal communion with his church in Christ,

as the source of all blessedness ; it is a most interesting point to be well known, and well understood, by the Lord's people; that the whole church of Christ is all equally interested, and all equally blessed, in those acts of grace manifested to the people. However different in age, or stature, however distinguished by various gifts, or attainments; the household of faith when brought into a state of regeneration is one and the same; for "to every one is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." And therefore, as the Holy Ghost by John speaks, whether they are fathers, or young men, or little children, all are equally near and dear to Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons; and they should never lose sight of this, but daily study under divine teaching, to make a right estimate of the Lord's manifestations towards them; not by the largeness of the gift, but by the love of the giver, which is to all the same. I have found it good sometimes to be straitened in myself; that when I am again enlarged, I may the better discover, that this enlargement is of the Lord, 2 Cor. xiii. 9, 13. And I love to trace all blessings, to their fountain head; namely, the eternal love of God which first gave Christ to the church all alike, and all the things in Christ. Such as are enabled to do so, and to behold the link in the golden chain which connects present blessings with eternal designs, are fathers, John speaks of, which "have known him that is from the beginning." Young men, John so calls, are not accustomed, from not being so long taught, of thus tracing present mercies up to their eternal source; and are therefore by Paul, enjoined "to be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." But the little ones, though equally beloved, and who are equally from being regenerated, said to have their sins forgiven for his name's sake; are not supposed by reason of their slender attainments and short acquaintance with divine things, to be equally ready "to give an

answer to every one who asketh a reason of the hope that is in them." But they should remember, that it is not their attainments, but the Lord's grace; not what is wrought in them, but what is wrought for them; the Lord's communications to them, not their's to him. A babe in Christ, like the babe in nature, testifieth his delight in his food, not by reasoning, but by appetite; not by what others talk, but by what he enjoys; and having tasted that the Lord is gracious, he desires to be continually coming to the breasts of consolation, that he may grow thereby! 1 Pet. ii. 3—6. Isa. lxvi. 11.

Health to the church of Christ, from the fountain of health, Christ! May the Lord hail his church at the opening of the new year, with acts of personal grace, in sweet communion in his Trinity of Persons, and the eyes of the Lord be upon it as upon Judea of old, "from the beginning of the year even to the end of the year!" And if the Lord be graciously pleased to give the savour of his love to this affectionate address to his church, and an unction from the Lord accompany the reading of it to his church and people, the end will be abundantly answered, for which it is sent to the Lord's people; and to the Lord's name be all the glory.

The church will forgive me, if before I conclude, I pause to observe that this unction from the Lord to all the labours and ministry of man, is the first and most principal of all things. And never can a child of God be too earnest to discover in all the several means of grace and ordinances he attends, this, which is the crowning point of all the savour of Jehovah in all. It is among the most melancholy signs of the present awful day, that head knowledge is substituted in the place of heart influence. And amidst the increased, and increasing tide of general profession, the waters of Shiloah run low, Isa. viii. 6. There is a way of

preaching Christ, and writing Christ; and in which many of the great truths of God may be delivered; and yet for want of the unction of the Spirit, there is no savour of Christ in them. And the reason is, such knowledge is acquired only in nature's school, and by natural men. And hence however promising they may appear, inward decays manifest the lifelessness of the principles; similar to consumptive persons, who though in dying circumstances, have not unfrequently florid countenances. Let the child of God therefore, never lose sight of this fundamental truth, that spiritual things can only be understood spiritually. Nature, in her highest attainments, is but nature still. And the regenerated child of God, however slender his knowledge of divine things may be, manifests more of the sovereign work of grace upon his soul, by those two simple acts of spiritual life, than all the sermons and writings of unregenerated men; namely, by the incomings of grace being received spiritually, and the outgoings of faith in spiritual enjoyment upon the Persons of the Father, Son, and Spirit, through Jesus Christ! Health to the church of Christ from the fountain Christ! May the people of God "be filled with all the fulness of God! Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end." Amen.

III.

JEHOVAH'S PLEASURE IN HIS PEOPLE, THE CULMINATING POINT OF ALL BLESSEDNESS TO THE CHURCH, BOTH DURING THE TIME-STATE OF GRACE HERE, AND IN THE ETERNAL STATE OF GLORY HEREAFTER: A FEW OBSERVATIONS ON THE SUBJECT, AFFECTIONATELY WRITTEN AND SENT TO THE CHURCH OF CHRIST, ON THE OPENING OF THE NEW YEAR OF OUR LORD GOD, 1822.

"For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people; he will beautify the meek with salvation."—Ps. cxlix. 4.

It was my mercy at the opening of the past year, 1821, in being permitted to send forth into the church

of the Most High God, a small tract, as a token of my affection to the Lord's people; in which, after praying health for the church from the fountain of all health, the Lord Jesus Christ, I endeavoured to shew from the testimony of scripture, that the goings forth of Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons, in acts of personal communion with his church in Christ, is the source of all blessedness to the church, both "in the life that now is, and in that which is to come."

As a renewed offering to the church, and from the same affection at the opening of the present year, 1822, I would seek the same mercy from the Lord, to follow up that subject with another intimately connected with it, or rather a continuation of the same; and to shew, from the like authority, that as all these acts of grace in Jehovah towards his chosen in Christ are the sole result of his will, so are they no less his pleasure. One scripture very graciously saith, "for the Lord taketh pleasure in his people; he will beautify the meek with salvation," Psalm cxlix. 4.—and another scripture, (as if the Lord himself would thereby confirm the former) thus speaks; "Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good; and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart, and with my whole soul," Jer. xxxii. 41—see also Zeph. iii. 17. And it was not without an eye to the same precious truth, that we find the Lord the Holy Ghost, by his servant the apostle, when declaring to the church the love of God, in those acts of sovereign grace, in choosing, adopting, and accepting the church in Christ before the foundation of the world, ascribes the whole to the same source; being "according to the good pleasure of his will;" and again repeating the same, being "according to his good pleasure, which he had purposed in himself," Eph. i. 3—9.

Let the reader pause one moment, and consider the blessedness of such declarations from Jehovah! Surely

from this statement, and given as it is by the Lord himself, it must and will undeniably follow, that all the gifts and graces bestowed upon the church, are but so many fruits and effects resulting from Jehovah's pleasure; hence what we receive is not from any thing in us, but from the Lord's pleasure: for what is wrought in us is from the love and pleasure in him; yea, our happiness is not the first and pre-disposing cause, but his pleasure: and the very effects wrought in our hearts by the Lord, arise out of this cause, in coming from the Lord; so that, "if we love him, it is because he first loved us," 1 John iv. 19.—if we bless him, it is because he hath first blessed us. All begins in his pleasure, and all reverts back again to his pleasure; as the rivers of the earth flow from the ocean, and cease not until they pour themselves into the same bosom. The conclusion therefore is plain; the Lord's pleasure in his people is the sole cause of their happiness in him; and this is the culminating point of all blessedness to the church, both during the time-state of grace here, and the eternal state of glory hereafter.

And if the Lord shall be pleased to give an unction to the word of his grace, (which I most humbly implore) and by the ministry of this little tract, make manifest this divine truth in the heart of any of his regenerated ones, it will open to a subject of the sweetest and most soul-refreshing nature; for by thus learning to trace all our blessings to the fountain-head of blessings, connecting our present mercy, be it what it may, with the source of that and every other mercy in everlasting love, and all blended with Jehovah's pleasure we bring in the divine sovereignty to crown all with his unceasing blessing. And we then discover, that every event, and every minute circumstance connected with that event, in relation to the Lord's people, comes to us from the good will and pleasure of our Lord: so that our being in Christ, and our well-being

in Christ, hath this seal upon it, being founded and formed in the Lord's pleasure. For what the Lord said to Moses, personally considered as to himself, is in effect said no less to all the Lord's people each for himself; "Thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name," Exod. xxxiii. 17. Observe, it is not said that the Lord found grace in Moses; but that Moses found grace in the Lord. Not any merit then, nor any foreseen merit hereafter, to be found in man; but grace found in the Lord, and from the pleasure of the Lord. And the more the wonderful subject is pondered and studied by the Lord's people, under the Lord's teaching, the more palpable and clear will be the conclusion—that all the tendencies of Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons, of grace, mercy, and peace, bestowed upon the church, wholly result from the Lord's pleasure which he taketh in the church; and as the scripture most blessedly expresseth it, all is "according to the good pleasure of his will—and according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself," Eph. v. 9.

And let me add this one observation more before we enter upon the subject itself; namely, if the regenerated child of God be led by the Lord into a scriptural and spiritual apprehension of this divine truth, and be kept in the daily enjoyment of it, as of one sure, invariable, and fixed principle, it will tend to open and keep open a source of unceasing confidence and peace in the Lord, to counteract all surrounding circumstances of evil which the child of God meets with in this sinful, sorrowful world, Isa. xxvi. 3. The principle itself being founded in God, and God's good pleasure, hath nothing depending for its accomplishment in the will of man. It riseth therefore above all created excellency; above any thing and every thing in the mere creature; yea, it transcends heaven and all the felicities of heaven. For this will and pleasure of Jehovah, is Jehovah him-

self manifested in emanations from himself to his church in Christ: and inasmuch, as Jehovah in himself, is greater than all his works; so the pleasure of Jehovah, and which he is said to take in his people, is greater than all the gifts he bestoweth upon his people: his gifts are but effects, of which he himself and his pleasure is the cause. And to this amount is the testimony of holy scripture; for when speaking of the Lord's goodness to his people, it is said, "Thy mercy, O Lord, is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds." But when speaking of the Lord himself, the subject riseth higher; for the same scripture immediately adds, "Be thou exalted, O God! above the heavens, and thy glory above all the earth!" Ps. lvii. 10, 11.

Assuming then for a principle this great and leading truth, which is in itself perfectly unquestionable, I begin the subject from hence, with premising (though the doctrine itself is so plain and obvious as can hardly need the observation) that this pleasure of Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons, which he taketh in his people, ariseth wholly from the relationship into which the church is brought, in being from all eternity chosen, and adopted, and accepted in Christ. The Holy Three in One could find no object of complacency or delight but in himself; or, from being brought into communion with himself. When, therefore, the Son of God assumes into union with his divine nature, that holy portion of our nature, whereby, as God and man, he is one Christ, he is the head of all the election of grace; and he that is fellow to the Lord of Hosts, as God, hath brethren that are fellows to him, as man; and thus he gives in himself, by the union of both, a blessedness to his people; hence, the Lord taking pleasure in him, takes pleasure in them he hath chosen in him; and in loving him, he loveth the church also in him, Zech. xiii. 7. 1 Cor. i. 9. Matt. iii. 17. So that, it is in him the church becomes

the object of Jehovah's delight, "men shall be blessed in him!" Ps. lxxxii. 17. Both the original choice of the church is in him; the gracious acceptance of their persons is in him; and the final gathering of the church and of all things is in him. Eph. i. 10: without him, the church would have no foundation neither for being or acceptance before God. The whole individual persons which constitute the mystical body of Christ, would be but as so many cyphers without this mighty One at their head, giving both being and number to them all. He it is which is the "all in all." And I should not err were I to add, that for him and the glory of his person, and the infinite merit of his work, the whole dispensation in the covenant of grace was founded. Yea, from what the Lord Jesus in the days of his flesh said, it should seem that infinitely more sublime objects than what relate to Christ being head of his church, were among the purposes for which the Son of God stood up from everlasting in this glorious character to assume into union with his divine nature another nature, and thereby become God and man in one person. For beside a great variety of expressions to be found in scripture leading to this conclusion, (see John i. 3.—iii. 12, 13.—Col. i. 16, 17, &c.) we find the Lord Jesus thus speaking to his Father, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was," John xvii. 5. The glorifying Christ by the Father "with his own self," implies an infinitely higher degree of glory than what can be from his headship to his body, the church. And for the right apprehension of this sublime contemplation, let it be observed, that when Christ thus spake to the Father, it was as Christ; that is, as God and man in one person. And let it be further observed, that the glory Christ speaks of, could not mean the glory peculiar to the divine essence only; for then, in that sense, he could not have asked it as a

gift, being his already in common with the Father and the Holy Ghost. Hence, therefore, it follows, that there is a special, peculiar, personal glory, belonging to the Son of God in his double nature, God and man in one, and which he had "before the world was," when, as he says himself elsewhere, "the Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old, I was set up from everlasting," Prov. viii. 22, 23. It is not, therefore, I humbly conceive, too much to say, nor too great to suppose, that somewhat higher than all that related to his church the Lord of life and glory had in view, when he said, "and now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." But be this as it may, certain it is that Jehovah's great design all along hath been, and is, and everlastingly must be, in all the revelations he hath at any time made to his creatures, to glorify and exalt his dear Son, Isa. xlii. 1. And hence, the sole cause for which Jehovah takes pleasure in his people is the beholding them in him, "who is the head over all things to the church, which is the body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all," Eph. i. 22, 23.

Let us proceed to another observation, it is among the most blessed and precious endearments of this love and pleasure which Jehovah taketh in his people, that the whole Persons in the Godhead take equal part and are alike interested in this act of grace.

Of the Person of God the Father, the church is said with special reference to be his; and that of him "the whole family in heaven and earth is named," Eph. iii. 14, 15. And the Lord Jesus confirms the same, when ascribing the gift of the church to the Father, "Thine they were, (saith Christ) and thou gavest them me," John. xvii. 6.

Of the Person of God the Son, he is said not only to have made the church his by marriage, but to have

redeemed her by his blood. Hence, the church is called "his inheritance;" and said to be the "purchased possession unto the praise of his glory," Isa. liv. 5. Eph. i. 7, 11, 14.

And of the Person of God the Holy Ghost, it is expressly declared, that the bodies of the Lord's people are "his temple," and that "he dwelleth in them;" and is "the earnest of our inheritance," 1 Cor. vi. 19. Eph. i. 13, 14.

When, therefore, we read in holy scripture such gracious expressions as these, "for the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance," Deut. xxxii. 9.—and again, "for the Lord hath chosen Zion, he hath desired it for his habitation; this is my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it," Ps. cxxxii. 13, 14.—it should be always remembered, that Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons is meant, and the whole is equally included. As such, it is in the unity of the divine essence the Lord is said "to take pleasure in his people," and each glorious Person becomes specially and unitedly the equal objects of love, adoration, and praise. And in every instance where this is not done, there the person of each, and the grace of each in the unity of the divine essence, is neither known nor enjoyed.

Shall I for a short moment in this place detain the regenerated child of God, and beg him to remark with me the marvellous condescension of Jehovah, in his Trinity of Persons, in this sovereign act of grace? What a world of wonders is contained in this one mystery: that he should make his people his portion, who is himself "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity;" and before whom "the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the dust of the balance?" Surely, it is an unspeakable mercy when the Lord's people are enabled under divine teaching to call the Lord their portion; but by what name shall we distin-

guish that grace, when the Lord calls his people his. Moreover, let the child of God observe what a sweet familiar manner of speaking the Lord of heaven and earth adopts to endear himself to the affections of his people: he calls them, his dwelling-place, his portion, his inheritance, and his rest; in which he delights, and in which he will "dwell for ever!" But in what sense may Jehovah be said to make his people his portion? Simply the same as a man doth his. For as the glory of God is the first cause, and the final end of all things; the blessedness given by the Lord to his people, is reflected back upon the Lord himself in love and praise. So that in the multitude of beings made unspeakably happy, and holy, and blessed in Christ, Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons hath his portion "to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved," Eph. i. 6.

Let us pass on to another view of the subject, namely, that this pleasure which Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons taketh in his people, is solely the persons of his people as chosen in Christ, and distinguished from the world. The word of God is express in declarations to shew that the election of grace is wholly grace, having neither goodness in the objects of that pleasure to constrain Jehovah to love them, nor unworthiness to restrain his affection from them. The Lord loveth because he will love. His language is, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious; and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy," Exod. xxxiii. 19. And that all this is special and peculiar to the persons of the Lord's people, distinguished from the world, is evident from what is said on the subject. For while we read, that "the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein," Ps. xxiv. 1.—the same divine authority declares, that the Lord "hath chosen Jacob for himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure," Ps. cxxxv. 4. "This people have I

formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise," Isa. xliiii. 21. And Moses, the man of God, was commanded to instruct the church in this leading doctrine of special personal love. "Behold, (said he) the heaven, and the heaven of heavens is the Lord's thy God; the earth also with all that therein is. Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day," Deut. x. 14, 15.

No view of grace tends to humble the soul more than personal distinguishing grace; neither any other, to raise the depressed spirits of the Lord's people under soul exercises. And the consciousness, that no motive but what is in himself moved Jehovah to the manifestation of such sovereignty, brings up the poor distressed heart in an hour of sorrow, like an anchor to a ship in a dark tempestuous night, to take confidence and ride out the storm. It is indeed blessed, yea, very blessed, to be enabled to have always in view such apprehensions of the Lord's delight in the persons of his people as chosen in Christ: for this connects in one view, all the events of the time-state we are the subjects and objects of in exercise, with the everlasting love of Jehovah towards our persons in Christ before the world began. And hence the conclusion which follows; if the Lord delighteth in his people then, he cannot cease to love them now; so that his pleasure and not our happiness was the first predisposing cause; and therefore the Lord is more concerned for our welfare than we are for our own.

I will detain the reader but with one observation more in confirmation of this doctrine, of "the Lord's taking pleasure in his people;" namely, that he who chose the church in Christ for his own pleasure before the world began, hath engaged "to confirm them unto the end, that they may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ," 1 Cor. i. 8.

It is highly to be observed and exceedingly to be prized by the Lord's people, that God the Holy Ghost when leading out the mind of his servant the apostle Paul to pray for the church, directed him to use this very argument of the "good pleasure of the Lord," as the security for their perseverance to the end. "Wherefore also, (said he) we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power; that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ," 2 Thess. i. 11, 12.

Let the scope and tendency of this blessed prayer be regarded in all its bearings, and the sum and substance of it will be found to form the leading points of doctrine which this discourse is meant to prove, namely, that Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons are alike engaged in acts of grace to his people; that it is with him "to fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness;" it is his "to confirm the work of faith with power;" his "to count his people worthy of this calling;" and as the whole originated in his pleasure, so the termination is to his praise. Let the reader observe in this short but comprehensive prayer how much the apostle dwells on that grand fundamental doctrine of the whole gospel, namely, the covenant of God in this momentous concern. Twice Jehovah is called in it "our God;" as if to shew, that the whole persons in the Trinity are alike engaged and have guaranteed to each other for the accomplishment. And not content with saying that it is the Lord's pleasure to do so; but that he will in doing it, "fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness;" not only his goodness, but "all the good pleasure of his goodness;" yea, and himself fulfil the whole. And that this "our God would count his church worthy of this calling," refers not to their worthiness, but their worthiness in him; "his

worthy name (as James speaks) by the which they are called," James ii. 7. So that it is not from what they are in themselves, but what they are counted in him ; not what they merit, but what his pleasure is to do for them ; not their calling, but his. 2 Tim. i. 9. And " the work of faith with power," is the Lord's power working faith in them ; not their power working faith in themselves. " Unto you it is given to believe in his name," Philip. i. 29. And the result of the whole proves, that as the Lord's pleasure is the first cause, so his glory is the final end ; " that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ."

And now, reader, pause once more over the whole subject. And under the teachings of the Lord ask yourself whether any doctrine can be more clear than the one here brought before you, namely, that the Lord's pleasure in his people is the source of all his purposes in Christ Jesus towards them ; and consequently, that this must be the culminating point of blessedness to the church, both during the time-state of grace here, and in the eternal state of glory hereafter.

And under such views, what a mystery is the doctrine of grace ! What a mystery is the church of the Most High God ! Yea, what a mystery is every individual of the church to himself, when by regeneration he is made a partaker of the divine nature, having " escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust," 2 Pet. i. 4. That Jehovah, in his Trinity of Persons, who was, and is, and to all eternity must necessarily be so unspeakably blessed and glorious in himself, and to whom nothing in a way of blessedness can be added, and from whom nothing can be taken, should condescend to raise up a church from his creatures for communion with himself, and to call that church his portion ! All which can resolve itself into

no other cause, but the sovereignty of his will and pleasure: "The Lord taketh pleasure in his people!"

Go on one step further, and ponder what is said of the ordination of Jehovah in the accomplishment of it; namely, that it is to magnify and exalt the free grace of God. God the Holy Ghost, in a single verse of his sacred word, hath declared this to be the cause, namely, that "in the ages to come, he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus," Ephes. ii. 7. Hence, it follows, that if this be (as the word of God declares it is) the sovereign, free, and unmerited grace of God; and that this is the motive in the divine mind, for which God hath gone forth in such rich manifestations of it towards his creatures; to derogate from this grace, and to ascribe a single act of merit in any who are the objects of such love as a predisposing or a corresponding cause, can be no other than high treason to the majesty of heaven. Various may be, and various will be, the views and apprehensions of the human mind respecting secondary and subordinate things in religion. We are at the best but in the minority of our being in this life; and as children under education, we know all that we do know but in part; we see but as through a glass darkly; and the medium through which the great objects are seen, very frequently give a tinge of colouring in which they appear. But in respect to grace, this admits but of one and the same complexion to every beholder. All is of grace; all the events of the church from beginning to end can be but of grace! The positive and unalterable language of the gospel is, "ye are saved by grace through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God," Eph. ii. 8. And hence, in allusion to the spiritual temple, it was said in the old testament dispensation, (and the new testament doctrine confirms the same) that the head-stone of the building should be

brought forth with shoutings, crying " grace, grace unto it !" Zech iv. 7. with 1 Pet. v. 10.

One word more, and that according to my view not an unimportant one, namely, the whole church of Christ are all alike the objects and subjects of this grace, are all equally dear and all equally included in this rich salvation, and every one becomes an equally interested and essentially necessary member in the mystical body of Christ Jesus our Lord. There may be, and indeed there must be, a diversity of gifts, in the several members of Christ's mystical body, for the general welfare of the whole, and to carry on the purposes of his government ; but this makes no difference in respect to union with the glorious head, and the communion in all that belongs to him, " the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee." No, nor even the glorious head himself, Christ Jesus, cannot say to the foot, " I have no need of you." For if an atom of the Lord's body was wanting, how would the whole be perfect ? 1 Cor. xi. 21. The little ones, therefore, are as dear to Christ, and as much united to Christ, as prophets or apostles ; and for this plain reason, they are all equally given by the Father, all equally married and redeemed by the Son, all equally regenerated and anointed by the Holy Ghost. True indeed, such of the Lord's family as the Lord hath given larger portions of faith to than others, will have larger enjoyments therein than those of smaller attainments ; nevertheless, in point of salvation, all are upon a level : for as none are saved for any work wrought in them, but for what Christ hath wrought for them, it is by every one in this particular, as by Israel gathering their manna in the wilderness, " he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack," 2 Cor. viii. 15. The faith of Abraham was God's gift, and not the patriarch's merit ; hence, it

added nothing to the soul's safety, no more than the weakest babe in Christ. For it is not what we feel, but what Christ is; not our faith in holding him, but his grace in holding us. Very sweet are those words of the Lord Jesus to this effect, "Fear not, little flock, it is your heavenly Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom," Luke xiii. 32. Observe, what a volume of comfort is contained in the bosom of this short verse, and how it corresponds to the leading feature of this discourse. The little ones of Christ's fold are for the most part fearful ones, but their safety is not in themselves but in the Lord; and it is their heavenly Father's good pleasure to give them the kingdom; not from their deservings, but his gift; and not simply his will in doing it, but his good pleasure. And thus it runs up to the same fountain head as from whence we began; "for the Lord hath pleasure in his people; he will beautify the meek with salvation."

Reader, farewell! I cannot better offer my salutation of the church in the opening of the year than by closing my paper in once more repeating the prayer of the apostle; "wherefore also, we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power; that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ."

IV.

THE DEATH OF THE LORD'S SAINTS PRECIOUS IN THE LORD'S SIGHT.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints," Ps. cxvi. 15.

It may be proper by way of introduction to remark (though the very designation of the title-page should seem to render the observation unnecessary) that it is

the saints of the Lord, and them only, whose death is said to be precious in the Lord's sight; and consequently, for whom only this little work of remembrance is intended. In relation to the world at large, we are taught, and by an authority not to be questioned, that "the whole world lieth in wickedness," 1 John v. 19. Hence, the very reverse of the proposition must be accepted in respect to all such: and that trembling scripture is in confirmation, "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked," Ezek. xxxiii. 11. And who shall calculate the horrors of that state, when men die as they have lived, and as they were born, in the unawakened, unregenerate, unrenewed nature of the Adam-fall transgression? Yea, when in the full ripeness of original sin, inherent in the very essence and elixir of their being which they brought with them into the world, and with which they go out again, only with the accumulation of actual guilt also; falling as grapes of gall from the vines of Sodom, and the fields of Gomorrah; rotten in bitterness, and defiling even the earth that covers them! The mind sickens as it contemplates the prospect. It cannot be supposed that for persons of this complexion this little work is intended. It is the death of the Lord's saints which are said to be precious in the Lord's sight, and to them the consolations to be found in death only can be applicable. And who they are, the word of God very clearly ascertains. They are described, "as called to be saints," and "the faithful in Christ Jesus," Rom. i. 7. 1 Cor. i. 2. Eph. i. 1, &c.—by which is intimated, that in the original state of nature in which they were born they were as all men are by nature, sinners, and "children of wrath even as others," Eph. ii. 2, 3.—but being called by sovereign grace, to the knowledge of the Lord, "they who were sometimes darkness, are now light in the Lord," Eph. v. 8. "They who were afar off, and enemies in their mind

by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death!" Col. i. 23. And hence, in reference to this recovered state of the church, Paul speaks, when he said, "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God," 1 Cor. vi. 11. Hence, "being delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, they are made meet to be partakers of the inheritance with the saints in light," Col. i. 12, 13. To all of this description and character, this love-token of remembrance is affectionately sent, at the opening of the new and eventful year of our Lord God, 1823. An eventful year indeed it may be to the church of God in general, in numberless providences as the Lord shall appoint. An eventful year it must be in particular, if the death of the writer or reader, or both, should be among these appointments. And an eventful year it ought to be to all and every one of the spiritual church of Christ in watchfulness, like the prophet on his watch-tower; that come whensoever our Lord may, at midnight, or cock-crowing, or in the morning, we may not "be ashamed before him at his coming." For if our lives are now hid with Christ in God, our deaths will then be precious in his sight; and "when Christ who is our life shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory."

Having thus premised for whom and to whom the subject of this little token of remembrance is intended, I begin it with observing, that it is the most delightful consideration to the mind of every redeemed and regenerated child of God, in the spiritual church of our most glorious Christ, that the Lord, in whose sight the death of his saints is precious, is Jehovah, in his Trinity of Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. For the death and life indeed of every individual member of Christ's mystical body is both precious in the sight of

God the Father, precious in the sight of God the Son, and precious in the sight of God the Holy Ghost. And it is impossible to be otherwise. For, as each glorious Person in the unity of the divine essence, hath taken an equal part in all covenant engagements concerning the church before all worlds, so doth each continue an equal attention to the church during the whole of her time-state here, and will in all her eternal state hereafter when there shall be no worlds. And I beseech the reader to pause over this view, and ponder well the love, the grace, the tenderness, (what shall I call it?) the infinite and undescribable condescension of the Holy Three in One, which bear record in heaven, thus to reveal and make known what, without the Lord's own revelation of himself, never could have been known to the spiritual apprehension of his chosen, the gracious love-tokens of each, and of the whole conjunction in the Godhead. As if the Lord intended thereby (and which indeed is evidently the design) that beside the general knowledge given in holy scripture of the divine Majesty existing in his Trinity of Persons, his redeemed and regenerated ones might have somewhat yet more near and endearing to lean upon in their personal apprehension of and communion with, day by day, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And what I very earnestly and affectionately beg of every redeemed and regenerated child of God, in the spiritual church of our most glorious Christ, in whose own heart a saving work of grace hath been wrought, that he will remember, and, if possible, never lose sight of what the scriptures of God have taught concerning the united operation of Jehovah, in his Trinity of Persons, in this accomplishment. And I must and will contend, as one that contendeth on scriptural ground for a plain matter of fact, that in every instance of conversion from a state of nature to a state of grace, how unconscious soever of these divine operations the highly favoured objects of

such love may be in themselves, nevertheless, they carry about with them in their own bosom, living testimonies from day to day, of the love of God the Father, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the communion of the Holy Ghost. Men who know nothing of such a work wrought in their own souls, may and will, as all natural men must do, call in question these glorious truths of our most holy faith; and, from a total ignorance of any saving grace in themselves, give no credence to the work of grace wrought in others. But this is not the case with the Lord's people; they are themselves the Lord's witnesses for his truth. And it is an infinitely important consideration with me, I confess, to keep everlastingly in view, and to be as everlastingly living upon the sure conviction of it. And as the gracious acts and manifestations of each of the glorious Persons in the Godhead, are such as none but God can perform, each and all do thereby give the fullest and clearest demonstration of the eternal power and Godhead, in the unity of the divine essence; and consequently it must follow, that as those acts of grace, and those blessings bestowed upon the church, from each glorious Person in the Godhead, are all equally sovereign and Almighty; so are they all equally entitled to the same acts of adoration, love, and praise, to each and to all in the unity of the divine essence. If the reader, through divine teaching, knows these precious things, he will not need my advice, and especially, in the present evil day of rebuke and blasphemy, to be very cheery how he parts with them. For my own part, I desire to do by them, as Moses commanded Israel to do by the Lord's statutes and judgments, "bind them as a sign upon mine hand, and as frontlets between mine eyes," Deut. vi. 8. I will say of them, "they shall lie down with me, and rise up with me;" yea, I will "esteem them more than my necessary food!" And very sure I am, that in every instance of the

Lord's people where those gracious manifestations from the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are spiritually known, spiritually received, lived upon and enjoyed from day to day, there the child of God cannot fail to have the corresponding affections excited in the heart, and there will be the goings forth of the soul in love, and faith, and esteem, to each and to all the several Persons in the Godhead, as the united source of all blessedness there in grace, and hereafter in glory. The preciousness of the saints' death, is equally to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; for the whole Persons in the Godhead take equal interest in all that relates to the church from one eternity to another.

From this foundation as on an immoveable rock, and on which the whole superstructure of the church of our most glorious Christ is built, we may pass to another consideration connected with the same; namely, that the death of the Lord's saints is precious in the Lord's sight from the personal union which every member of Christ's mystical body hath with Christ himself, the glorious head, "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones," Eph. v. 30. Indeed, the church of the Most High God, stands in a double relation to our most glorious Christ: first, in that we are married to his person: and, secondly, in that we are redeemed by him, as our surety and Redeemer. And it is by virtue of this our affinity to him that all we have and all we are, yea, and all we ever shall be, derives importance. It is our mercy when we can and do trace this in all its bearings; the analogy between nature and grace in this particular, is very striking; for as the whole of death, and sin, and condemnation was and is in our original nature by the fall of Adam in which we are involved; so, the whole of life, and holiness, and justification which we have by grace, was and is in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ in whom we are interested.

So, God the Holy Ghost most blessedly teacheth in his statement, "For (saith the Lord) as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation: even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life: for as by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous," Rom. v. 18, 19. Hence it follows, that as by my connection and relationship in nature with the first Adam so called, I am implicated in all that belonged to him in his headship, and sin, death, and eternal misery are entailed upon me by inheritance as my just portion; so equally by my union and relationship in grace to the second Adam so called, even the Lord Jesus Christ, I am interested in all that belongs to him, as the head and husband of his church and people; and holiness, life, and immortality are as truly my inheritance and my just right in Christ, as my condemnation was before in Adam. Hence also, the Lord Jesus Christ, as Christ, and the church, as his church, are never considered separately; they have been from everlasting, and are and must be to everlasting, one in Jehovah's view. The death of the Lord's saints, therefore, is precious in the Lord's sight, from their personal union with Christ, and from their interest in Christ. And in no one point of doctrine is the Holy Ghost more particular than in this oneness of Christ and his church. In his death, his church is said to have "died with him," Col. iii. 3. In his burial, the whole body is said "to have been buried with him," Rom. vi. 3—5. In his resurrection, "to have arisen with him," Rom. vi. 8. And in his ascension, "to have ascended with him, and to be sitting together with him in heavenly places in Christ Jesus," Eph. ii. 5, 6. So that in all that Christ did, he acted as the head and husband of his people. And when death is swallowed up in victory,

he will manifest the same oneness and interest, in raising up his members as part of himself, and "present them to himself faultless before the throne of his glory with exceeding joy," Jude 24. All which tends yet further to prove, that "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

But we must not stop here. The death of the Lord's saints is precious in the Lord's sight on another account; namely, because by death the mystical body of Christ is brought into this conformity to Christ, their glorious head, who died also. In death, as in all things else, he must have the pre-eminence: and he could not have been the "first begotten from the dead," neither "the first fruits of them that sleep," if he had not died, and they his members had not followed him in both. By their death here is a conformity to his death; and by their sleeping in the dust, they are prepared for a conformity to his resurrection. There is somewhat very sweet and interesting in this view of the subject. And the Holy Ghost by Paul hath very blessedly observed on this point, in that striking scripture, where it is said, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren," Rom. viii. 29. The church, therefore, according to the eternal council, will, and pleasure of Jehovah, being in all things to be in conformity to her head and husband, where a resemblance became attainable; she, by the grace of God, was to follow her Lord to the grave; and the dust, which his blood hath so sweetly perfumed, she should lie down in until the resurrection morning. Hence, to the believer in Christ, the very aspect of death and the grave is changed. It is no longer a subject of weeping, it is an asylum, a chamber of soft slumber and repose. It hath been Jesu's own retiring room, where he himself once lay,

and by laying there hath sanctified it. Blessed, therefore, is the church in being here as in other points, predestinated to be conformed to his image. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints!"

Neither must we stop here. For if possible, an higher cause than even our conformity to our glorious head maketh the death of the Lord's saints precious in the Lord's sight; namely, in that it becomes the means in the Lord's hands for the Lord's triumph in his members, as he hath in himself, over death and the grave. It is very blessed for the church, when she is brought into the smallest conformity to her glorious head and husband, Christ: but it is far more blessed when that conformity is made subservient to the promotion of Christ's own personal glory: and it is Christ's own personal glory, his triumphs in the resurrection of his members, of which he is the sole efficient cause. Here, indeed, is the offence of the cross totally taken away. For "he was crucified in weakness;" but what a glory ariseth out of it when, by his own resurrection, "he was not only declared to be the Son of God with power," but raiseth up his own mystical body to the same triumphs by himself. Now it is the death of Christ's body, the church, which lays the foundation for the triumphs of Christ in their resurrection, "when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all that believe." The Holy Ghost by Paul, among other mighty and marvellous events which are then to take place, in this great day of our God, particularly mentions this as eminently striking; at once illustrative of his eternal power and Godhead, and of the blessed alterations made by him on his body, the church; "he shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself," Phil. iii. 21. Imagination fails to form the smallest conception of what will be the glory of our most glorious

Christ, when those stupendous acts shall be performed by him. What a sublime alchymy must that be, which separates the dust of his saints from the common dust of the earth; and gives to each, his own proper body! This day of our God will infinitely transcend every other, but the one in which on the cross "he put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;" and the day of all days, since time began to be numbered, when "he himself arose from the dead." To speak in the language of holy scripture, we may borrow the words of the prophet, and say, "then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of Hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously," Isa. xxiv. 23. And what a refulgence of glory must that be, at which the great luminary of the day, and the bright planet of the night, shall both blush and become pale with dimness, overwhelmed and extinguished as small tapers of the night by the infinite glory of our most glorious Christ. And what wonders of grace, combined with power, will that day unfold! The bodies of all his saints which were sown in corruption, the Son of God in our nature will himself raise in incorruption: and what was sown in dishonour, he will raise in glory: and what was sown in weakness, he will raise in power: and what was sown a natural body, he will raise a spiritual body! and marvellous also, in the exercise of this Almighty sovereignty of our God; the identity of each, and of every individual of his members, the Lord will preserve: so that, though wonderfully changed from corruption to incorruption; and from mortality to immortality; yet, not an atom different, from being the very persons which they were before. Precisely the same, as God the Father from all eternity chose in Christ, and gave to Christ: the same, which Christ betrothed to himself before all worlds; and redeemed to himself from the time-state of the fall: the same,

which God the Holy Ghost from everlasting anointed in Christ, and with Christ; when, as the chosen and betrothed members of Christ's mystical body, they were one with Christ, and knit together in Christ from everlasting and to everlasting. Such in sameness and identity will be the persons of Christ's mystical body, whose bodies the Lord Jesus Christ, their glorious head, will bring up from the dust of death in that day. For it is a resurrection, and not a creation; therefore, identity must be preserved. And the very whom I am in Christ, and the very what you are in Christ, such both will be then; wonderfully changed indeed from dust and corruption, to the likeness after Christ's own glorious body, and all accomplished by himself as the sole efficient cause, and for his own personal glory. Events of such a nature and magnitude, as the mind of man in the present unripe state of apprehension cannot grasp, but which may serve to shew, in addition to what hath been before observed, wherefore it is, that "the death of the Lord's saints is precious in the Lord's sight!"

After contemplating the subject in this sublime point of view, in reference to the divine glory, and for which, above every other consideration, we are warranted to conclude, that "the death of the Lord's saints is precious in the Lord's sight;" it is to descend into minor concerns, when we take into view our interest therein. Yet, if it be seen that our happiness in this particular is combined with the glory of God, we may go on to observe, that the same must be precious in the Lord's sight, both in relation to the souls and to the bodies of the Lord's people.

In relation to the soul, the voice which John heard from heaven declared, "blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." And from that union which subsists between Christ and his members, there cannot be a question, but that at the death of the body, the soul

is immediately with the Lord. Where Christ is, the soul is. Hence, the Lord Jesus himself said to the dying thief on the cross, "Verily, I say unto thee, this day shalt thou be with me in paradise," Luke xxiii. 43. Hence, Paul, in the believing view of the same, expressed his "desire to depart and to be with Christ," Phil. i. 23. Hence also, the church is said to be come "to the spirits of just men made perfect," Heb. xii. 23. And although this is said, and is indeed the case, in relation to the present life, when from a state of nature any of the Lord's people is brought into a state of grace, being then made "fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God," Eph. ii. 19.—yet, it is to be considered in a more enlarged sense, when dropping for a while the body we pass from this outer court into the inner temple of God, for the Lord then takes home the spirit. The warfare with the body, and with all the wiles of Satan, and the workings of sin in the body, and the conflicts of the world, are all over. Faith is swallowed up in open vision. Oh! the vast blessings contained in that one scripture, which saith, "we are absent from the body, and present with the Lord."—"Precious in the Lord's sight is the death of the Lord's saints!"

And in relation to the body; if to be exempt from all the evils, cares, and trials of this sinful, sorrowful world; no more to be the subject either of sickness or of pain, neither head aches, nor heart aches, neither to contend with infirmities in ourselves, nor with the infirmities of others, to be at once delivered from the very inherency both of our original and actual corrupt nature, and to lay down in sleep in the arms of Jesus; his Spirit going with us to the grave, and dwelling in us to the morning of the resurrection, 1 Thess. iv. 14.—Rom. viii. 11.—if these are among the sure and immediate effects of dying in the Lord, can an event, which is so blessed to the Lord's people, be otherwise

than precious in the Lord's sight? And if it be precious in the Lord's sight, ought it not to be so in our's? How very delightfully the patriarch Job expressed himself on this subject, while looking steadfastly as he did to the Lord Christ, and the assurance of his resurrection in him, Job xix. 25—27, "So man lieth down, (said Job) and riseth not till the heavens be no more; they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep. O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave! that thou wouldest keep me secret until thy wrath be past; that thou wouldest appoint me a set time and remember me!" Job xiv. 13.

Who would have thought that the subject of death, whose most distant prospect damps all the prosperity of sinners, and turns every countenance of the carnal into terror and paleness, hath such a sweetness in it to the people of God! Yet, so it is. Like the pillar of the cloud, in the camp of Israel, what gave darkness and dismay to the Lord's enemies, became light and joy to the Lord's people, Exod. xiv. 20. 'The redeemed of the Lord, in his spiritual church, look over the shoulders of death, and behold him who by his own death, "hath destroyed death, and delivered them who through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage," Heb. xxi. 14. So that it is not enough for them to say, death hath no terrors, for they can and do say more. Christ hath "abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light by the gospel," 2 Tim. i. 10. In his death, they find death conquered; and in his resurrection, they see their own secure: hence, at the death of the body they begin truly to live: their death-day is the birth-day of their maturity. All their life-time here they are but in the minority of their being: they are born indeed, or rather new born to an immense inheritance; but, like children under education and trainment for it, they never come to the possession till arrived at full age. In death

their majority is completed. And while, in the sure accomplishment of rising again, their bodies drop asleep in Jesus, their spirits "enter into the joy of their Lord."

And what tends to endear their enjoyments to the utmost extent of endearment is this: that in this inheritance, to which they are begotten by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, all the spiritual church of our most glorious Christ are alike begotten to it: little ones, as well as great ones; the babes in Christ, as well as the young men, and fathers, are equally portioned and included in one and the same blessedness; because, Christ himself is the like portion of all. Each and every one hath a whole Christ as his own, as if there were no other. Hence, in the fullest sense of words it must be said, "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days; for the child shall die an hundred years old," Isa. lxx. 20. In the spiritual church of our Lord Jesus Christ, the new birth brings all the children at once into a ripeness for glory, being alike "made partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust," 2 Pet. i. 4. "Partakers of the divine nature!" there can be nothing beyond this: neither in the spiritual world can there be any advantage in the divine life from any difference of age: here in grace, and hereafter in glory, the whole life is in our glorious head: and all are receivers from him. All holiness, all happiness, all blessedness is in him and from him.

I would very earnestly and very affectionately beg the church of our most glorious Christ to have and keep in remembrance this most delightful consideration. In the circumstances of human life, as relating to the body, the Lord's chosen ones are much diversified; some have larger abilities, others less; some are more elegantly formed, others plainer; nay, many ill formed and dis-

torted : but these distinctions all cease at death. Here, they are by unerring wisdom as best suited at present to carry on the sacred purposes of the Lord's will: there, this distinction of the body is all over; the purposes of diversity will then have been accomplished. And at the resurrection morning (as hath been before observed) the whole mystical body of Christ in his members will arise all alike glorified in Christ, nothing of their former construction but in identity of person being preserved. But in relation to the spirit, there never hath been nor can be any diversity in Christ's spiritual church. At creation, we read that "the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground." Here was the original dust out of which the body was formed. But respecting his spirit, we read in the same scripture, that "the Lord God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul," Gen. ii. 7. Hence, where there was no pre-existent matter, but the soul proceeded immediately from the Lord himself, and without any intervening medium; thus all alike flowing from the same Almighty fountain, all of consequences were alike equal. And, as in creation, so in redemption; all were equally redeemed, and with the same price: and all are equally regenerated, and by the same Spirit: all are equally united to the glorious head: all formed with equal capability of happiness: all equally near and dear and equally important to form their respective membership in completing the whole of Christ's mystical body, the church. The view of the subject is most sweet and consolatory.

And while I say thus much in a request of remembrance, concerning the oneness in equality in the Lord's spiritual church, I would yet further beg the little ones, and the weak ones in faith no less to remember, that the whole of what we have both here in grace and hereafter in glory, is all in Christ. It is the Lord's Person, and the Lord's incommunicable work, which is the sole

cause, and the whole sum and substance of all blessedness. There is not an atom in any one of Christ's members, neither of what is wrought in them, neither by them, that in the smallest degree contributes to their safety, or to their furtherance in salvation. It is the grossest of all possible mistakes to suppose, that we are more or less in divine favour from any supposed attainments of our own; or from our greater or less degree of apprehension of divine truths: all these are but effects. I will be free to confess, that it will give a greater or less degree of enjoyment in our faith respecting those divine truths, in proportion as we are enabled in a greater or less degree to receive them; nevertheless, the desire after Christ is as truly an act of faith in Christ, as faith which gives an enjoyment of Christ: for both are alike God's gift. And if the little ones in faith feel this desire, the Lord is as truly glorified in those desires, as he is by others of his people to whom he hath given the faith of enjoyment. If, as our Lord saith, the looks of lust in carnal men is to all intents and purposes actual adultery, shall not the look of faith, when a poor creature desires enjoyment of Christ but cannot obtain it, be construed by the Lord as actual oneness of affection to Christ? Matt. v. 28.

And now what shall I say more? If the Lord the Spirit be pleased to accompany what is here delivered with the unction of his grace and the savour of Christ, (as far as the things themselves are agreeable to his most holy truths) my new year's salutation of the spiritual church of Christ will be as kindly received as it is affectionately sent. For myself, (if it be worth a moment's thought after this solemn subject, to speak of it) at my advanced years I can only say, that walking as I now am daily on the confines of time, and on the look-out for eternity, I am in expectation of soon realizing in open vision what I now live upon by faith. And in thus greeting the church of our most glorious

Christ, on the entrance of another year with this subject, I would with all thankfulness to God, and unfeigned humility of soul desire grace to make use of the apostle's words, and say, "that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you." The bread which I eat, and find good for food, I may safely recommend to others: the stream from which I have slaked my thirst, when blessed by the same Almighty Giver, cannot but be found salutary to all who drink of it. The Lord of all spiritual life and health open the new year to his whole spiritual church, and prepare every individual of his whole mystical body, for what he is preparing for them, that "whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's," Rom. xiv. 8.

V.

DEATH ABOLISHED, AND LIFE AND IMMORTALITY BROUGHT TO LIGHT THROUGH THE GOSPEL. A TRACT, AFFECTIONATELY WRITTEN AND SENT TO THE CHURCH OF CHRIST, AT THE ENTRANCE ON THE NEW YEAR OF OUR LORD GOD, 1824.

"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; but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel," 2 Tim. i. 9, 10.

Verging as I now am on the confines of eternity, and well aware, that every step I take in the present time-state at my advanced age, the world is receding more and more from me and I from the world, I gladly avail myself to catch the passing moment as it flies, that it may bear on its wing at this era my salutation of the church. I esteem it indeed no small mercy that, since the Lord hath spared me to behold the close of the past year, through the same gracious indulgence I am favoured at the opening of the new, "to greet the brethren which are in Christ Jesus;" and once again

(peradventure, it may be the last) to send them my annual love-token of remembrance, "before I go hence, and be no more seen!" And I persuade myself, that every truly redeemed and regenerated child of God, who with me feel and know "the plague of their own heart;" and no less also know, "that all the promises of God in Christ Jesus are yea and amen," will give me credit when I say, that I rejoice in the blessedness of my situation. So much of my eventful life being over, through the whole of which abounding undeservings in me have only been exceeded by more abounding grace from the Lord; in the overwhelming view of such goodness in the past, I find the greater confidence to trust the Lord for all that is to come. I can and do say with Paul, and from the same well grounded faith as his was, "I know whom I have believed; and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day," 2 Tim. i. 12. I am, therefore, as he was when he so expressed himself, "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." And I know, as he did, that it is indeed a blessed hope; and it is a sure hope; an "hope that maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us," Rom. v. 5. And being now almost come within the reach of it, I already anticipate the possession: by faith I bring it near. And like the traveller returning from his journey, and being nearly arrived home, to whose longing eye his habitation, in which are lodged all that is dear to him, begins to open before him, and a thousand tender images of delight arise to his imagination; so to my spiritual senses, the many glorious things which are spoken of in scripture concerning my eternal home, come in full prospect before me, and fill my soul with a joy unspeakable as I approach the precincts of that blessed city, "whose

builder and maker is God." The gates of the new Jerusalem already appear in view; they magnify to my apprehension every time I behold them; and the glorified inhabitants, amidst their shouts of praise, seem as if looking over the battlements of heaven, and calling upon their kindred relations here below in the animating language of scripture, "Be ye not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

Under these impressions I desire to salute the spiritual church of our most glorious Christ here on earth, while I bless his holy name for that part of it which he hath taken to himself in heaven: for the both are indeed but one and the same; and though at present in different worlds, yet not differently beloved or differently related. Jesus saith himself, in his love-song to his church, "my dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her," Song vi. 9. And when the purposes are fully answered for which the Lord in his unerring wisdom keeps any of his church here below, he will take the whole home to join the church triumphant above; for, as the Lord hath said, there shall be then as there is now, "one fold and one shepherd," John x. 16. In the mean time, with what words can I gratulate the Lord's redeemed and regenerated family who are waiting for the Lord's coming to take them to himself? What shall I say, yea, what can I say, except what the Holy Ghost hath said and left upon record for the perpetual consolation of the church until the Lord come? Our most glorious Christ hath "abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

This is a proclamation indeed, which ought to be made not only at the death of every old year and the opening of every new; but every day, and month, and year, and in every place of public concourse where the

Lord's people assemble, and more especially among those of them "who through fear of death are all their life-time subject to bondage," Heb. ii. 15. There is a beautiful correspondence between this proclamation, and that of the mighty angel which John saw in vision come down from heaven, "clothed with a cloud and a rainbow:" and he said, "that he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot upon the earth; and lifting up his hand to heaven, he swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, that there should be time no longer," Rev. x. 1—6. This destruction of time, and the abolishing of death, are to the same amount. And it may be said of both, as Joseph taught of God said of the vision of Pharaoh, being doubled, "because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass," Gen xli. 32. The spiritual church of our most glorious Christ is highly interested in these immense events. "Death abolished, and life and immortality brought to light through the gospel," are the precious privileges of every truly redeemed and regenerated child of God to know now, and to live in the full assurance of by faith. "And in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound," and the mystery of God is finished, then will be followed the consummation of this mighty angel's oath, all will be eternity, "and there shall be time no longer!"

Let me only by the way observe, that the perfect conviction of these momentous truths, and in the triumph of our most glorious Christ over death, hell, and the grave, as the Almighty Head of his church and people, now received by faith into the spiritual mind and understanding and conscience of every redeemed and regenerated child of God, and under the testimony and unction of God the Holy Ghost lived upon and enjoyed day by day, in the personal knowledge of and communion with the Father and with his Son Jesus

Christ, these blessed and divine properties realize and bring home to the soul things of a spiritual nature however remote in time, and afford an instant and abiding possession, and become what the apostle prayed for respecting the church, when he said, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost," Rom. xv. 13.

In saluting the spiritual church of Christ at the opening of a new year on this soul-animating subject, nothing can be more highly suited for the purpose than in what the scripture holds forth, both in relation to the person and to the almighty acts of him "who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." There is a vast comprehension in the sentence; and at the same time, the grand truths are fully expressed: it is a sentence in which every word tells, and the glorious events declared to have been accomplished are greater in magnitude than the creation or destruction of a thousand worlds. The infinite nature and dignity of his person, to whom alone is ascribed such stupendous acts; the acts themselves, which are beyond the grasp of all created power, and incapable of achievement by any arm less than God; the eventful consequences involved in the mystery, first, in abolishing death, not simply killing death (if the term be admissible) but annihilating death, and destroying its very being and remembrance for ever; and secondly, bringing in life and immortality to light through the gospel, by which the whole redeemed and regenerated church of God are recovered from all the tremendous effects of sin in the Adam-fall transgression, and brought to the everlasting enjoyment of salvation in and by Christ: these are the trophies of him, and the result of his own personal and incommunicable work when, as the prophet describeth, "his own arm

brought salvation unto him, and his fury it upheld him," Isa. lxiii. 5.

In following up the subject under the leading particulars contained in it, I propose, as the Lord shall be pleased to enable me, primarily, and in the consciousness of its first and highest importance, to beg the attention of the spiritual church of our most glorious Christ to the contemplation of his Almighty Person and character by whom the destruction of death, and the restoration of life and immortality were accomplished. And secondly, of the mighty deeds themselves, and of the blessed and auspicious consequences resulting to the spiritual church of Christ from them, as the free gift and sovereign grace of God through the gospel. And if the Lord, who gives the subject, will mercifully accompany our contemplation of it with his divine teaching and unction, the savour of his name and his salvation will not only open to his redeemed and regenerated people the new year in grace, but daily become a source of unspeakable joy and comfort through the whole of our time-state upon earth, until faith is lost in sight, and hope consummated in glory.

But before I enter upon those distinct branches of the subject which I have proposed, I would gently take each reader by the hand, and request a momentary pause at the threshold just to impress the mind with one or two observations for the better entering upon it. And let me first remark, that the spiritual understanding must be enlightened of the Lord, or there will be no saving apprehension or relish in the heart for the Lord; for though our most glorious Christ hath wrought and accomplished all that is here said of him, and is himself divinely suited alike for all his people, including the most desperate cases and the most ignorant cases of sinners, as sinners; yet without divine instruction, both the knowledge of his Person, and the belief of his

finished salvation, are not attainable by all human learning. That single scripture (and there are many others to the same purport) throws to the ground all the presumptuous reasoning of men, and all that philosophy, falsely so called, can invent—"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. Observe, it is not said that the natural man *will not*, but he *cannot*. Such is the physical impossibility of the thing itself!

And let me at the same time further remark, that this objection against mere natural powers, for the attainment of divine knowledge void of instruction from the Lord, is so far from discouraging the humble and the timid, that it tends on the contrary to give the strongest hope. Among the absolute and unconditional promises of the old testament scripture, this stood eminently conspicuous, "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord," Isa. liv. 13.—and our adorable Lord, under the new, brought it forward by way of proof that his people had this very teaching, "It is written in the prophets, (said Jesus) and they shall be all taught of God; every man therefore that hath heard and hath learned of the Father cometh unto me," John vi. 45. And what can be more soul-satisfying to every child of God? Are you come to Christ? Do you believe that "he hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel?" Then is it plain, according to the tenor of the Lord's own words, that you have been taught of God; for a science like this was never learnt in nature's school.

And thirdly, to add no more, (for I will hold the reader's hand no longer from entering upon the subject itself) let it not be supposed, that the attainments in this divine knowledge "which maketh wise unto salva-

tion" are in all, which are divinely taught alike. It is in this particular in the Lord's household, as it is in a man's household; all the children are not of equal age, of equal stature, of equal apprehension: some are highly favoured with "the spirit of wisdom, and revelation in the knowledge of Christ;" they have enlarged conceptions given them both of the glories of his person, and the infinite fulness, suitability, and completeness of his salvation; they lay in his bosom as John did, and sit with him at the table as Lazarus sat: others are weak and timid, and go lean, and are often in bondage fears: and there are not a few of the Lord's tried ones who are the subjects of pity from infirmities of body which, like Paul, they groan under being burdened. But amidst this diversity of character, which are as various in the mind as are the features of the body, the question is, are they children and taught of God? Are they made acquainted with the plague of their own hearts? out of love with themselves and in love with Christ Jesus? These are the standards of character, and which testify how divinely suited he (with whom they are in love) is for them, and they for him; his is the grace to give, and their's the blessedness to receive. And as all alike, in the whole election of grace, when taught of God have "the sentence of death in themselves, that they should not trust in themselves, but in him which raiseth the dead," the glorious view of our most glorious Christ here proposed for the contemplation of his spiritual church at the entrance on the new year, is equally suited to all. Oh! for an enlarged spiritual apprehension to the whole of Christ's body, the church, that we may look steadily and steadfastly to him "who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

I begin as I proposed, namely, in the first place, as of the highest importance in the subject, to call the attention of the spiritual church to the contemplation

of his Almighty person and character by whom these stupendous acts were wrought; for in the proper apprehension of his Person we can only have a proper apprehension of the greatness of the acts themselves, and the infinite suitability both of his Person and works to our circumstances.

And here I think it not necessary on the present occasion, to run back any further into the scripture history concerning the eternal design of Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons, on this mysterious subject relative to the church, than merely to observe, that while each glorious Person in the Godhead took part in those infinite transactions, it was the Son of God in our nature, that by that union of God and man in one Person, became the executor and administrator of all those vast designs in the accomplishment of the divine counsel! And how infinitely suited he and he alone was for this work, will at once appear if we contemplate the almightiness of his Person under those two points of character when combined in one, "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily!" Col. ii. 9.—"And on him the Lord hath laid the iniquity of us all," Isa. liii. 6. Such an union meeting in one and the same Person dazzle the spiritual eye to behold, and without adding a single observation more compels the mind into the most palpable conviction of the competency of him by whom those sovereign acts ascribed to him were wrought, "And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh," 1 Tim. iii. 16.

But we must not stop here. The Son of God in our nature, coming forth for the salvation of his people (as the prophet described him, Habak. iii. 13.) came with all that infinite fulness and suitability, being divinely fitted for all the purposes of his mission. His essential and eternal power and Godhead being his own, in common with the Father and the Holy Ghost in the unity

of the divine nature, gave infinite dignity and infinite value to all he said, to all he wrought, to all he suffered. All indeed were the combined acts of the indwelling Godhead in the body of flesh which he assumed, when (as the Holy Ghost hath been pleased to express the marvellous relation by the pen of the apostle) “the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we (said John) beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth,” John i. 14. Hence, therefore, we behold somewhat (when our spiritual apprehensions are excited, and called forth by sovereign grace to spiritual discernment) of the Person of our most glorious Christ: and although all we can see and know in the present twilight of our being is but as through a glass darkly, yet, through divine teaching, we can and do trace the stamp of Godhead in all the manifestations of our Lord Jesus Christ. They bore every one of them the current coin of heaven: they were all pure, like the richest gold, without the least alloy: and so infinitely precious and invaluable, when ascertained in the divine balance, as to weigh down even the possibility of equal remuneration to his body, the church, to all eternity!

I stay not, in this place, to gather from the holy scriptures the statement there given of the marvellous plan by which the Lord of life and glory accomplished the vast purposes for which he became incarnate; this, however blessed and interesting as it is in itself, cannot be brought within the limits I am constrained to observe in a little work of this nature: but one part of it, however, must not be overlooked, because it is indeed the very part on which the basis of the destruction of death, and the introduction of life and immortality as relating to the church rests all her security; I mean, that in all those mighty works of grace the Lord Jesus acted not as a private person, but as the public Head and surety of all his people. The very assumption of

our nature implied as much, and the volume of both testaments of scripture decidedly confirmed it: hence, when it is said, that "he put away sin by the sacrifice of himself," Heb. ix. 26. the sin he put away were the sins of his people, "for he was made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," 2 Cor. v. 21.—when he redeemed us from the curse of the law, it was in "being made a curse for us," Gal. iii. 13. Both the sin and the curse were charged upon Christ as the head and surety of his church and people; and being laid on him, consequently they were taken from us, for on both they could not be chargeable. This is the very sum and substance of the gospel; it is the ground work of faith; it is the nail fastened in a sure place by the "master of assemblies," on which the whole of salvation hangs: and in the perfect conviction and assurance that our most glorious Christ personated all his people in every act both of doing and suffering, all our high hopes of salvation and happiness are bottomed. And hence, in all his triumphs we triumph, in all his victories he giveth us the victory: in consequence of our union with him we are virtually considered as one with him, and in all he hath wrought for salvation, as though we had wrought the same ourselves; for as the church in every individual, as well as collectively considered, are said to be "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones," Eph. v. 30; so is he said to be "the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all," Eph. i. 22, 23.

I proceed now to the prosecution of what was proposed under the second branch of the subject, namely, of the mighty deeds themselves wrought by our most glorious Christ, in his having "abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

We shall enter with greater accuracy into the spi-

ritual apprehension of those glorious achievements of our most glorious Christ, if we previously analyze the several distinct features of death (taking the light of holy scripture for our guide) so as to have a clear view of what is contained in this very blessed declaration, that Christ "hath abolished death." Now there are three separate characters of death as stated in the word of God, which, though all alike the consequent effects of man's original apostacy from God at the fall, are yet differently marked and distinguished from each other. There is the natural death of the body, which takes place in the whole and every individual son and daughter of Adam, when the soul takes her departure from the mere animal life of flesh and blood: the Holy Ghost, by his servant James, hath defined this in a few words, when saying, "the body without the spirit is dead," James ii. 26. And there is a spiritual death, which Adam sustained in the day of his transgression, and in which the whole of his posterity were involved: this also is defined in strong characters by the Holy Ghost, when it is said, "they are dead in trespasses and sins," Eph. ii. 1. and this is the effect of man's original apostacy from God; for as the soul is the life of the body, so Christ is the life of the soul: and since the Adam-fall transgression until quickened into a new and spiritual life by regeneration, every man by nature is spiritually dead before God. And there is an eternal death, which consists in a total separation from God both of soul and body for ever; and this, in the alarming language of scripture, is called the "second death," Rev. xx. 14. and hence, in the same chapter, and in allusion to the reign of grace by the recovery of the redeemed of the Lord through him "who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel," it is said, "blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection, on such the second death hath no power," Rev. xx. 6.

How our most glorious Christ wrought out a full and complete deliverance from such tremendous evils for all his people, it will be our next point in the prosecution of the subject to state, confining every iota of what is advanced from what is clearly discoverable on scripture ground. I have already observed, in the former part of this little tract, that while each glorious Person in the Godhead took part in this stupendous mystery of godliness, it was our most glorious Christ who became the visible Jehovah, for the public executive part of it, "No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father he hath declared him," John i. 18. I then remarked to you, that the infinite dignity of his Person, of underived Godhead, in common with the Father and the Holy Ghost, carried an infinity of value to all the thoughts, and words, and actions wrought by the indwelling Godhead in his human nature: and I further desired you to connect with it, in your spiritual apprehension of those statements, that in and through the whole the Lord Jesus Christ acted not privately for himself but for his people. I would hope that through the unction of the Holy Ghost, in his glorifying the Lord Jesus to our hearts, such views may be kept alive in our remembrance, while we now go on to prosecute the subject further, under those features of character in which he is here described as having "abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

Now the Holy Ghost, in reference to the very point we are more particularly dwelling upon, namely, Christ's "abolishing death," hath thus stated the special and personal fitness of our Lord for this mighty work, when saying by his servant the apostle, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of

death, that is, the devil ; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage," Heb. ii. 14, 15. The accursed foe of God and man having by his subtlety enticed our first parents into sin, and which involved in it death, is very justly and properly said to have the power of death ; for as the same Almighty God the Spirit by another apostle saith, "for of whom a man is overcome of the same is he brought into bondage," 2 Pet. ii. 19. Hence, though the devil possesseth no power over our lives, yet, in the eventual consequence of things by having made us sinners, he virtually accomplisheth the same, and was and is, as our adorable Lord described him, "a murderer from the beginning," John viii. 44. The Son of God, therefore, by his sovereign and almighty acts "in putting away sin by the sacrifice of himself," and by destroying him that by the introduction of sin had induced death, most effectually accomplished the purpose of both : he entered the territories of this "strong man armed," (so scripturally designated, Matt. xii. 26—29.)—"the hand-writing of ordinances which was against us, and was contrary to us, he took it out of the way, nailing it to the cross ; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it," Col. ii. 14, 15. He had said before under the spirit of prophecy by another of his servants, in allusion to this immense work, several generations before he tabernacled openly in substance of our flesh, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave ; I will redeem them from death. O death ! I will be thy plagues ; O grave ! I will be thy destruction ; repentance shall be hid from mine eyes," Hosea xiii. 14. Here within a brief compass is stated the full and complete victory of our most glorious Christ ; for he hath not only abolished death, but destroyed him that had the power of death ; not only redeemed his people from the power of the grave, (or,

as the original word is, hell) but redeemed them from death; from all the penal effects of natural death, spiritual death, eternal death: for by sustaining in his own divine Person all that was due to sin, and all that by sin his whole body, the church, had justly incurred, he vanquished hell; fulfilled the law; made an end of sin; silenced all the accusations of Satan; and brought in everlasting righteousness; “abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” And most blessedly hath our most glorious Christ in the close of that sweet scripture added, “repentance shall be hid from mine eyes;” for never, never, will this Almighty Saviour repent of his peerless grace in the accomplishment of this great salvation; neither will Jehovah, in his Trinity of Persons, repent the eternal decree, productive of such infinite glory to God and good will to men. Rev. v. 1—10, with Psalm ii. 6, 7.

If it be demanded, by what process of operation the Son of God in our nature wrought out this mighty deliverance, and what those sufferings of our most glorious Christ were; what agonies the Lamb of God sustained in the garden and on the cross; what were the horrors he endured in the accomplishment of his church’s deliverance, both from the pangs of the first death in nature, and the endless torments of the second death in hell? If questions of these and the like kind be proposed, the best answer, yea, the only answer I apprehend to be given, is to refer to holy scripture where the statement is made, according to what the Lord hath thought proper to reveal, and as far indeed as is essential for us to know “to make wise unto salvation,” but by no means calculated (for so it was never intended) to gratify curiosity. For my part, while desiring grace to contemplate the mysterious subject with increasing intenseness of mind, so as to lay low in the dust daily before God; and there receive increasing grace to bless God “for his unspeakable gift,” I would

retire from every other statement of this stupendous mystery with the most awful and profound reverence ! What “angels desire to look into,” conscious of their incompetency to apprehend, cannot be the province of man ; I presume not to fathom, neither to add an atom of mine to what the sacred scripture hath stated. Here I find enough to satisfy the most capacious desires of my awakened soul. Here therefore I rest ; on him would I beg for grace to fix and feast my ravished eyes, “who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”

Neither will it be said, I hope, that our Lord’s complete victory in abolishing death hath any difficulty of apprehension, in that the bodies of his redeemed ones in common with mankind go down to the grave and see corruption ; for this, in fact, is their mercy, and not their misery : by a voice from heaven they are declared to be “blessed who die in the Lord !” Death in nature is more a privilege to the Lord’s people than an evil ; for the sting of death is sin : and that the Lord hath taken out, when “he put away sin by the sacrifice of himself ;” and surely, neither the serpent or the bee deprived of their sting can injure. Nay, sin being removed death ceaseth to be death ; it is but a sleep, where, after the example of our most glorious Christ, the dead in Christ retire, as into their chamber of repose, until the resurrection morning. In death they are for ever freed from all the sorrows, pains, and toils of life : they sleep in Jesus. And as it was by their glorious head, so will it be with them, his members, from their participation in his triumphs. The prophet Jeremiah, when looking into gospel-times, and contemplating the Lord Jesus in his resurrection morn, described him as thus speaking ; “upon this I awaked and beheld, and my sleep was sweet unto me !” Jer. xxxi. 26. Precious Jesus ! and was that interval between the cross and thy resurrection sweet to our most

glorious Christ when arising from the grave, in that thou didst behold the fruit of thy finished redemption extending to all thy members? And will not the whole and every one of thy mystical body feel their proportion of blessedness, when arising from the grave from their triumphs in thee, and say also, my sleep was sweet to me!

One word more, and I will relieve your attention; "life and immortality brought to light through the gospel," opens to a subject as endless as eternity, and as full of blessings as it is endless. The prophet Isaiah contemplating the glorious Person of our most glorious Christ in the bringing of it in, and the wonders which would follow, thus expressed in a comprehensive way the vast subject of both, "He will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations: he will swallow up death in victory; the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces, and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth, for the Lord hath spoken it," Isa. xxv. 7, 8. There is, indeed, by nature, in the fall of man the face of covering, and a vail of ignorance, blindness and corruption which now obscures our perfect vision: and this was symbolically represented in the Jewish temple, in the vail that separated between the most holy place and the outward sanctuary for daily services; but in the moment that our most glorious Christ by his death, abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through his gospel, "behold! (saith the evangelists with one voice) the vail was rent in twain from the top to the bottom!" The separation was for ever removed. The Son of God had now opened "a new and living way by his blood." He was now to enter into the temple "not made with hands, but into heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of God for us," Heb. ix. 24.

And his whole body, the church, is said to have "boldness to enter in by the blood of Jesus, by this new and living way which he hath consecrated for us through the vail, that is to say, his flesh: and having such an high priest over the house of God, we are commanded to draw near with true hearts in full assurance of faith," Heb. x. 19—22.

The Lord in his infinite grace open the year to all his redeemed ones while upon earth, as the Son of God hath now abolished death, and hath opened life and immortality to them in heaven. My brother, I would say (I would speak it to every redeemed and regenerated child of God into whose hands this salutation may come) let you and I beg for grace, and frequently in meditation take wing, and in the warmth of the most animated faith and joy light down near the tomb, from whence on the resurrection morn our most glorious Christ arose to shew us the way to his glory: from thence the first clear and distinct views were taken of the future abode of the blessed: from hence, I would say (as in imagination I beheld the sepulchre where my Lord had once lain) our glorious Lord opened the path which no vulture's eye had seen, Job xxviii. 7. to life and immortality: from hence, he arose to shew all the members of his mystical body the certainty that they shall assuredly follow him, "that where he is, there they shall be also." And in the daily contemplation of this most sure and blessed hope, I would sing in the same triumphant notes as the apostle, and with the same strength of faith, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" 1 Cor. xv. 55.

VI.

WATCHMAN! WHAT OF THE NIGHT? A TRACT, ADDRESSED TO THE CHURCH OF CHRIST, ON THE OPENING OF THE YEAR, 1825.

“ Watchman! what of the night ?” Isa. xxi. 11.

Still in the body, and favoured by the Lord to number my days in the arithmetic of human life in closing the old year, I avail myself of the privilege to send my gratulations to the church of our most glorious Christ at the opening of the new health from the fountain of health, Christ Jesus, “ to all that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.” Amen.

Every new epoch in the calculations of time hath been uniformly the custom of mankind in all ages to observe in their memorials. The period of a new year with most men is made a festival; with the spiritual church of Christ it is eminently so: and in the present era of impending events, every redeemed and regenerated child of God is supposed to be, like the prophet, on the watch tower, Habak. ii. 1. In the love-token of remembrance, with which I now desire to salute the church, I beg indulgence to preface what I have to offer with a few preliminary observations.

And first, I venture to assume as a fixed, certain, and unquestionable principle, denied only by infidels (with whom I have nothing to do), but admitted by all who name the name of Christ, that the interests of Zion are at the bottom of all the dispensations of the divine government in the world; for however diversified the church of Christ may be in opinion on minor subjects, arising from the infirmity of nature, and the weakness of faith, yet here there can be but one and the same conviction in all that are taught of God: through all the departments in the divine administration, from the falling of a sparrow to the rising or overthrowing of states and empires, every minute or greater event is wholly directed, or made subservient to the accomplishment of this one glorious

design; as the final issue of all, namely, "to make known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord," Eph. iii. 10, 11. I cannot, therefore, hesitate, to make this the *datum* of all the Lord's proceedings through the earth. The glory of God is, and necessarily must be, the first and ultimate cause of all things, and the happiness of his church the sure effect. The Lord's own decision is to this amount, "This people have I formed for myself, they shall shew forth my praise," Isa. xliii. 21. And amidst all the various occupations and pursuits of men, and in the seeming contrarities of human actions; some, apparently opposing the divine will; others, indifferent about it; some blaspheming the Lord; others, persecuting the Lord's people; yet all under the divine controul, and like the vast machine the prophet saw in vision, wheel within wheel, the whole to his view complicated and entangled, yet each accomplishing the various purposes the Lord appointed; "howbeit (as the scripture most sublimely states it) he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so," Isa. x. 7. Hence therefore, the whole of what we behold going on in the circumstances of mankind, how humiliating soever it may be to the pride of human life, all are by the overruling power of God what they are to minister to his church; and when the carnal world shall have accomplished this purpose, like the scaffolding to a building no longer useful when the building itself is completed, will be taken down and destroyed; and the church of our most glorious Christ will be brought forth, "with the headstone thereof, and with shoutings, crying, grace, grace unto it," Zech. iv. 7.

Secondly. Assuming the former statement for a principle perfectly incontrovertible, and arising from thence as from a well secured bottom on which to rear up a superstructure, I go on to observe, that as it is for the

everlasting welfare of the church of our most glorious Christ all the events of the present time-state both of men and things minister, so the holy scriptures of God, in all their revelations and records, have reference to the church, and to the church only: from the first dawn of prophecy to the meridian of the gospel, every prediction given, every ordinance instituted, every sacrifice offered, had respect only to the church, as she had her being and her well being in Christ. His glorious Person became the one great object of the whole scope of prophecies, types, and ordinances, to delineate by shadowy representations: and the infinite fulness, all-sufficiency, and suitableness of his mighty salvation for his church, the one great subject of accomplishment: and when, in what is called in holy scripture, "the fulness of time," the Lord of life and glory came in substance of our flesh, "to seal up the vision of prophecy, and was anointed as the Most Holy:" (according to the language of the prophet, Dan. ix. 24.) then it was, "by the one offering of himself once offered, that he perfected for ever them that are sanctified," Heb. x. 10 to 14: then it was, that "he put away sin by the sacrifice of himself," Heb. ix. 26. and from the cross, as from the high altar of his own divine nature, by the infinite dignity of his Person and the infinite merits of his blood, he washed away all the iniquities of his people: so that by the efficacy of both, in this mid-day of time, the Son of God finished redemption; reaching back to the first morning of the church in time, and extending to the latest period of the world before the opening of eternity. And all the remaining prophecies of scripture, from the death of Christ to the consummation of all things, which since have been fulfilled, are now fulfilling, and hereafter to be fulfilled in the earth, have an eye to Christ and his church, and to him only. Under the similitude of seals opened, trumpets blown, and vials poured out, the several ages

of the church and the events in them are spoken of in the book of Revelation, with which is closed the sacred canon of holy scripture. And for the joy and comfort of the church, the last of the wonderful events by which it will be known that all the enemies of the church are finally subdued, and herself triumphant in Christ, is to be when the seventh trumpet shall sound; for thus we read, "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever," Rev. xi. 15.

Thirdly. Advancing cautiously and with great reverence upon a subject so profoundly deep and mysterious, not presuming to make one step but within the sacred inclosure of holy scripture, I proceed to observe, that it hath been the uniform practice of the church, with the saints of God, in all ages, and especially among such as are appointed of the Lord to minister in holy things, to watch the Lord in the dispensation both of his providence and of his grace towards his church, and notice from time to time with particular regard the fulfilment of his prophecies, as they have been in ages past, and as they are now opened and unfolded by the Lord to his people. We hereby discover, through divine teaching, how the Lord hath rendered the ministry of the fathers profitable to the children, and thus becoming helpful towards the generations yet to come; thus Peter speaks of the old testament saints, from the spirit of Christ which was in them ministering to the new testament believers; and thus while the scriptures of the prophets were blessed to the apostles, the same almighty God which blessed both, now renders the prophecies of the apostles blissful to us by his own divine interpretation of them; see 1 Pet. i. 10 to 12. The same spirit of Christ, which was in the saints of the old dispensation, was no less in the new; and it is from the same almighty

Lord the Holy Ghost, that any spiritual apprehension of his scriptures can be discovered. Among the many sacred predictions of the Lord with which the inspired writings of the apostles abound, we are arrested to behold, with the most marked attention, what is said of "the last days," and "the perilous times." I stay not to make quotations, this would make my subject too diffuse; neither do I think it needful. That man can be but little conversant with his bible, neither with what is daily passing every where around him, not to see the striking coincidence between the things foretold and the things themselves. Had Paul, or Peter, or John, or Jude, delivered their predictions but yesterday, nothing could have been more accurately designated than the portrait pencilled by the apostles to the features which were to mark the original. In those scriptures great events are recorded which were delivered by the apostles under the spirit of prophecy, and have since in many instances been fulfilled: greater still are contained in them, which remain to be accomplished. Not to mention any other in this place than one, the slaughter of the "two witnesses," Rev. xi. 7. And whenever that event takes place marvellous consequences we are informed will soon follow: it hath pleased the Lord to throw a veil over the subject; so that at this hour none who are supernaturally taught of God (and all not so taught can know nothing of it) have been led to discover who those witnesses are, neither time when they are to be slain. Some of the wisest and the best of men, since the apostle's days, at the reformation, were of opinion that the time when the witnesses would be killed would be before the close of the seventeenth century: but we of the present hour have lived to see the end of the eighteenth century, yea, and a fourth part of the nineteenth finished, and the event hath not taken place. By so much, however, as the world is getting older, by so much are we

admonished to be more earnest on the look out, assured as we are, that "we are they upon whom the ends of the world are come!"

With these preliminary observations in view, I beg, in my new year's token of affection to the church of Christ, to salute the Lord's people, taking for my motto the well known words in the prophetic writings of Isaiah, "Watchman! what of the night?" To the lovers of biblical study they will not need being told, that the words themselves form a part of what is contained in the burden of Dumah! Dumah, according to the ancient statements in geography, is said to have been in Arabia, Gen. xxv. 14; but, I rather think that in all the scriptures where the sacred writers are speaking of the burden of one and of another, (and there are many of the like kind; Isa. xv. 1. xvii. 1. xix. 1. &c.) that the prophet rather speaks of persons than of places; and if so, he connects in one and the same subject the whole carnal descendants of the patriarchs, not interested in the election of grace. The prophet saith, "the burden of Dumah;" but he immediately connects with it one that calleth to him out of Seir, when he saith, "Watchman! what of the night?" So that, while we know that Ishmael was the father of Dumah, Gen. xxv. 14; and that Esau was the son of Isaac, who with his descendants "dwelt in Mount Seir, for Esau is Edom," Gen. xxxvi. 8; it becomes no violence to scripture, but rather according to the analogy of divine truth to suppose, that by Dumah and Mount Seir the prophet intended to represent "the children of the bond-woman," in all ages of the church, as distinguished from "the children of the free," see Gal. iv. 22. to the end.

By the term, burden, we are taught, and that in various scriptures, is meant somewhat to follow in the discourse of the prophet that is exceedingly weighty and important. The prophets frequently used the expression, but always with a marked discrimination

between that which is from the Lord, and that which belongs to man; for what is a burden and a weariness to the ungodly, is light and life to the Lord's people, Zech. ix. 1 to 4. Mal. i. 1 to 5. The one from Mount Seir is evidently the cry of the ungodly, "Watchman! what of the night?" And as one panic struck at some more than ordinary events, which at the time he probably beheld in the world, full of portentous signs and apprehensions of impending judgment, the Edomite repeats his question, "Watchman! what of the night? Watchman! what of the night?"

I detain the reader at this part of the subject to make a short application. It is impossible to figure to the human mind (for the utmost grasp of the imagination cannot pourtray them) the horrors of a guilty conscience in the trembling prospects of the divine judgments: sacred scripture gives the only finished representation; and that, though in the strongest colouring of words, yet, cannot but fall infinitely short of the reality. Under the era of the sixth vial, the inspired writer saith, "And I beheld, when he had opened the sixth seal; and lo! there was a great earthquake: and the sun became black, as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood: and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind: and the heaven departed as a scroll, when it is rolled together; and every mountain, and island, were moved out of their places: and the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?" Rev. vi. 12 to 17. And no wonder,

when the forebodings arise as they sometimes will arise, when storms, or hurricanes, or lightnings, or depserate sickness beset the sinner like another Felix before Paul, while the apprehension of the judgment to come is in full view, that he anxiously puts the trembling enquiry to any one and to every one that he thinks can answer the question, " Watchman! what of the night? Watchman! what of the night?"

But what I particularly admire and desire to bless my God for, is to observe upon the occasion of any alarm by which infidels are roused to a sense of impending danger, how the Lord of all lords extorts from the very hearts of those that have before scoffed at his sovereignty, (saying with those of old, " where is the promise of his coming?" 2 Pet. iii. 3, 4.) the acknowledgment of their fright in their fearful looking for of God's wrath. In the history of Persia, we have a notable instance of the Lord's harrowing up the guilty conscience of atheistical men in their hour of danger, and compelling them to acknowledge the divine government which in their profanity they had denied. One of their writers, Æschyles, gives this statement: " When the Grecian army were full in pursuit of us, (said he) and we had no escape, but over the great river Strymon, which was then frozen; and when had it thawed every soul must have perished; many a one (said the historian) did I see with my eyes, and hear with my hears, which before had denied the being of God, now crying to him for mercy, that the ice might hold until they were gotten over." And the case of those infidels in those days is not without parallel in our's. Were the Lord to come forth by some national visitation of an earthquake or pestilence, or sword, Oh! how many of the Christ-despisers would then tremble to the very centre of their souls, and turn into paleness and horror in the apprehension of divine judgment! And none more so than those, who in the full blaze of gospel truths,

“deny the Lord that bought them!” He, who by whose upholding power “bears up the earth!” Ps. lxxv. 3. The prophet hath described such, in lively but alarming characters. “The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites! Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?” Isa. xxxiii. 14.

I shall here drop the subject, as in reference to Dumah, or the man out of Seir, in order to consider the question as it may be rendered profitable to the present day and generation of the church. The Holy Ghost hath taught us by Peter, “that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation; for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,” 2 Pet. i. 20, 21. In all the predictions of the Lord, though apparently speaking of Dumah, or Seir, or Moab, or Babylon, it is to the church and for the church, as so many modes of instruction, the gracious subject is directed. And if, as the Lord here most blessedly states, this (as well as all other prophecies) is of no private interpretation, but is given for the edification and comfort of the church; and cannot be interpreted, as other books of man’s wisdom may, by man; but the Lord that gives it, is the same Lord only that can explain it; I shall be led to hope, the same Almighty God which moved holy men of old to write, will direct our spiritual understanding to apprehend as we read, “that we may know the things which are freely given to us of God,” 1 Cor. ii. 12.

I begin the subject with observing, that the enquiry, “Watchman! what of the night?” becomes abundantly interesting upon numberless occasions, in the common intercourse of society, man with man; and if from the lesser circumstances of the present life we rise in the investigation to the greater and more momentous, in

which are involved all the infinite interests of another, the subject increaseth in magnitude as we advance, and the mind, if taught of God, becomes most solemnly impressed in the contemplation. I have often found a train of reflections awakened within, when at any time the silence of the night hath been interrupted by the watchman's call without, all is well! Yes, I have said, all is well indeed if we are at peace with God and at peace with man. But is all well where sin and Satan reign? The watchmen which go about the city consider all to be well, as long as no fires from within or robbers from without disturb the peace of the inhabitants: but what, if every species of sensual depravity is at the midnight hour going on; and in the aggregate of human apostacy, millions of transgressions, noiseless and inaudible, are coming up before God? Shall the unconscious watchman's proclamation, "all's well, alter the very nature of things where all is so ill? Is all well in the prison which the watchman passeth, from whence perhaps the morrow brings forth the felon or the murderer for execution? Is all well in the countless hospitals and dying chambers throughout the world, where deep groans and inexpressible agonies, agonies of body and mind speak louder than a thousand voices, that the whole earth is but as one great lazarus-house, into which "sin hath entered, and death by sin; and so death passeth upon all men, for that all have sinned," Rom. xv. 12.

If we pass on from hence to the more open transactions in life, and especially as connected with the great principles of religion, the question meets us in more awakened language, "Watchman! what of the night!" And if the answer was to be given by the mere professor of christianity, who is ignorant in himself of any change of heart by regeneration, and consequently ignorant of the necessity of it in others for the possession of vital godliness, like the watchman of the city,

for the preservation of the mere police from outward violation, such would be his statement of inward purity, all is well! Yea, he would enlarge upon the flourishing state of religion among us: he would point to the many new churches that have been lately built, and are building: he would speak of the universal philanthropy by which the world is now influenced, instead of that narrow and contracted system of faith by which our fathers were known: he would dwell with delight in the enumeration of the many societies which are formed, where men of the most opposite tenets in theology now meet and amalgamate, having made a sacrifice of all party spirit to the liberal principle of converting the world, and being determined that the doctrine of election shall be for ever buried in the common grave of superstition, and universal redemption be carried throughout the whole habitable earth.

And it is worthy the closest attention of the Lord's people, while it is yet more immediately meriting their thanksgiving to God, how every feature which designates the portraits of those persons hath a correspondent testimony in the word of God. Paul, in several of his epistles marks their more prominent characters; Peter follows in the same delineation; but John and Jude, who both lived to see them spring up before their ministry ended, have given a large statement of them in the close of their inspired writings; 1 John and Jude throughout. And as the highest and most unanswerable proof to what age of the church those sent servants of the Lord referred, and the very persons to whom their predictions pointed, it is remarkable, that they have dwelt more fully on those great and distinguishing doctrines of our most holy faith which those men despise, namely, the Godhead of our most glorious Christ, and the Person and ministry of God the Holy Ghost. And yet more, as if that not a single shade of their character should be wanting, the apostle Jude in particular describes them

as great sticklers for morality and the precepts of the gospel, while making light of him and his finished salvation by whom alone the church is saved; "their mouth (saith Jude) speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage." And he sums up at once their description, in declaring them "sensual, having not the Spirit!" This last mark, is a decisive mark for the clear discrimination of character, which, while it acts like fire, to prove the faith once delivered unto the saints as the pure gold in the furnace, it becomes such an ordeal as no tinsel of the unregenerate can bear. Hence, all professors of what denomination soever among men who enter not by this door into Christ's sheepfold, but climb up some other way, shrink from the doctrine of our total apostacy by the fall, and aim to set up a righteousness of their own before God: they substitute the form of external holiness for the inward regeneration of the heart by the Holy Ghost, and as the Lord himself described the pharisees in his day, (and they are the same in our's), "they make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within are full of extortion and excess." And the same divine authority assigns the cause, "all their works they do for to be seen of men," Matt. xxiii. throughout. Hence the pompous statements of alms-giving and alms-gathering, for the supposed calling of the Jews, and the conversion of the heathen. Matt. x. 9. Hence the apparent zeal of more love to mankind than God himself, in attempting to save whom God hath not saved, and even the people against whom the Lord hath said "he hath indignation for ever!" Malachi i. 1—4. And hence also, by an anomaly peculiarly descriptive of the present day, not a few go forth and compass sea and land to make one proselyte, of whom, without a breach of christian charity it is to be feared, who are not in the true regeneration of the heart proselyted themselves.

But if the statement from the mere professor void of vital godliness, would be to this amount in answer to the question—"Watchman! what of the night?" what would be the information given by those whom the Lord himself hath stationed as watchmen on the walls of Zion? Isa. lxii. 6. Happily for all such who desire to be found faithful, the Lord hath already furnished them with words of his own, so that they cannot err. "What (saith the prophet) shall one then answer the messengers of the nation? That the Lord hath founded Zion; and the poor of his people shall trust in it," Isa. xiv. 32. Here then is the never-failing security, which the Lord hath made for every situation of his church and people, during the whole time-state of their continuance on earth, and under the most desolate circumstances that any redeemed and regenerated child of God can be placed in. First, "that the Lord hath founded Zion." Here is an everlasting assurance, against which "the gates of hell can never prevail." And secondly, the "poor of his people shall trust in it:" so that the Lord undertakes both for himself and his people. As the Lord said by Jeremiah ages since, "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my fear in their hearts that they shall not depart from me," Jer. xxxii. 40. I beg the church of our most glorious Christ not to lose sight of this almighty promise, in which Jehovah saith, "I will not;" and the same Almighty Promiser saith, "they shall not;" while I now, in presenting my new year's love-token to the Lord's people, proceed to answer, and upon scripture ground, what appears the truest that can be made to the question—"Watchman! what of the night?"

If ever a period existed since the reformed church through sovereign grace emerged from popery, marked with peculiar and aggravated circumstances of night,

the present is the one. In the supposed meridian of gospel light, the land in relation to divine truth is as Job (in his language of emphasis) hath stated it, "a land of darkness as darkness itself, and of the shadow of death without any order; and where the light is as darkness," Job x. 22. The glorious doctrines of grace, in the defence of which our forefathers shed their blood, and sacrificed the dearest earthly friends rather than suffer an *iota* of them to be called in question, are now seldom heard from the pulpits, and equally disregarded in the society even of those who profess the gospel. Not a few of those of whom it might have been hoped "better things, and things which accompany salvation," have not found courage to stem the torrent; and seem to have forgotten, that in standing up for the faith it is God's cause, and not their own only, in opposing the tide which is running through the land against it. And while these glorious and momentous truths, in which the stability of the church, and the present and everlasting welfare of the people are combined, are thrown into the back ground as obsolete and unnecessary, new fangled opinions are arising daily, and the press is made to groan under the burden of publications, which threaten to exterminate the pure and discriminating doctrines of the gospel from the earth. I have now before me the proposal of forming a novel institution to pass over the grand mysteries of faith, and 'to estimate the truth of christianity by the standard of reason only.' And one of those champions for human intellect, who blows a louder blast from his horn of contention than his fellows, hath asserted in a recent pamphlet, that 'Paul had no such commission as he professed; that his enterprize was a scheme of personal ambition; and that his system of doctrine is fraught with mischief.' Had the prophet Jeremiah, when directed by the Holy Ghost to write the fifth chapter of his prophecy, an eye to such a day as the present, (I pray the regenerated

child of God to read it throughout, and under divine teaching to judge for himself) had he, as a prophet, ordained unto the nations, (Jer. i. 5.) such a prophetic perspective to “the last days and the perilous times?” And if he had under such impressions, could he have said more to the solemn purpose than he hath said in the close of that chapter? “A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; the prophets prophecy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means, and my people love to have it so; and what will ye do in the end thereof?”

But one enquiry more yet remains to be considered as involved in the question, “Watchman! what of the night?” And with some of the Lord’s people, who will perhaps have followed me in a general consent to all my former statements, this will be as important as any, namely, what time of the night is it in the present hour? And how near are we, in the opening of the new year, to the completion of the prophecies, which respect the killing of the two witnesses? Rev. ii. 7, 8. Indeed, indeed, this is a question I have no ability to answer; neither do I believe that the Lord hath communicated it to any one of his people. Carnal, unenlightened men there have been in all ages of the church who, from the presumptuous reasonings of the human mind, have formed their own conclusions from the political hemisphere of the world, and not from the state of the church; and many of this complexion have confidently stated the exact period, yea, some of them mistaking the form for the power of godliness, (2 Tim. iii. 5.) and calculating from the general profession of the day, that this is the golden era of the church, have leapt over the solemn event in “the slaughter of the witnesses,” as a matter of small moment, or already passed, and in the vanity of their mind have declared that the millenium is begun. But blessed be God, the taught of God have not so learned Christ. Very solemn

events according to holy scripture, must take place before the millenium, (be that millenium what it may,) “and that day shall not come (as God the Spirit declared by Paul, 2 Thes. ii. 2, 3.) except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition!”

From this statement, the spiritual church of Christ whom I now address will perceive, that however gratifying it might be to us to be let into the *arcantum* of the divine counsel on this subject, our province of duty is to be distinguished from the carnal by not presuming to “be wise above what is written.” In answer, therefore, to the question—“Watchman! what of the night?” and in reference to what part of the night the present hour of the church is, I shall only bring before the church the prophecy of Daniel on the subject, explained in some measure as it is by corresponding passages in Ezekiel’s prophecy, and the Revelations, on the same; and then leave the church to her solemn meditations thereon under the grace of God.

The prophet Daniel closeth the eleventh chapter of his prophecy, with describing some great earthly potentate, “which shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many. And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palaces between the seas, in the glorious holy mountain, yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.” Nothing can be plainer than that it is the church, and not any worldly power that this prophecy refers to, where and when these events are to be accomplished. “The glorious holy mountain,” is Mount Zion. Ps. lxxviii. 2.—and “between the seas,” as plainly defines the place, an island: and the time when, had before been marked, Dan. xi. 6, namely, “in the end of the years.” And by a comparative statement of Daniel with Ezekiel, chap. xxxviii. 8—16. we find a further light thrown

upon the subject. Then follows in the 12th chapter a fuller statement, to which for brevity I refer. And if the reader will mark the prominent parts in this close of Daniel's prophecy, particularly the 1st, 4th, 8th, 9th, and 10th verses of the 12th chapter, and compare them with modern events, he will discover a marvellous coincidence. That the prediction had a further aspect than to the siege of Jerusalem by Vespasian (though that might also be included, as is no uncommon thing in scripture) is evident from several of the leading points. Christ, the great Prince standing up for his people, could not be so suitably applied to that season of his humiliation: neither could it be said, "that then the delivery of his people," was manifested, "in their names being said to be found written in the book," Rev. xx. 15. But waving these considerations, the siege of Jerusalem could not be meant in those verses, where it is said, "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased;" neither could it be a suited reference at that time of what is said at the 10th verse, that "none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand." But take this prophecy of Daniel in your hand, and compare it with the present day! Behold! "how many are running to and fro, and knowledge is increased!" And connect with this missionary spirit, the decision of the Lord, none but the people of the Lord "that shall be found written in the book shall understand!" And then let the reader (for I refer it to his own decision, under the Lord's teaching) judge for himself. And to suppress all irreverent curiosity, let him recollect that this highly favoured servant of the Lord was not gratified in his request to know more, who, when he had heard these things, but understood them not, said, "O my Lord! what shall be the end of these things? And he said, go thy way, Daniel, for

the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end!"

And now, brethren, farewell! In thus addressing you on the entrance of a new year, I send my salutation, accompanied with prayer for each and for every one of the spiritual church of our most glorious Christ, that both in the opening and in the progress, the Lord whose we are may graciously prepare us for what he is preparing for us. Who shall say in the revolution of time what a month, or a week, nay, even a day, or an hour may bring forth? And with many of the Lord's antient ones (and peradventure the writer) before the sun shall have finished once again his annual circuit, that blessed scripture in the fullest comprehension of it may be realized, on which the Lord saith, "the year of my redeemed is come!" Isa. lxiii. 4. I commit all to the Lord in those sweet words of his grace, "Unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."



VII.

WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST? THE GREAT QUESTION OF THE GOSPEL: AS PROPOSED TO HIS DISCIPLES BY CHRIST HIMSELF: THE SUBJECT HUMBLY CONTEMPLATED, IN A SALUTATION TO THE SPIRITUAL CHURCH OF OUR MOST GLORIOUS CHRIST, ON THE ENTRANCE OF THE NEW YEAR OF OUR LORD GOD, 1826.

"What think ye of Christ?"—Matt. xxii. 42.

I begin in those sublime words of the Lord by the prophet, "Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One; to Him whom man despiseth; to

Him whom the nation abhorreth! Isa. xlix. 7. What Him is this whom man despiseth? And who is He whom the nation abhorreth? Nay there can be but one to whom the words are in the least applicable, even Him of whom the patriarch Jacob when dying spake, and under the spirit of prophecy declared "to whom the gathering of the people should be," Gen. xlix. 10. That mighty Him of whom, in after ages by the same spirit of prophecy, it was said, "That in the dispensation of the fulness of time he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him!" Eph. i. 10. And as if this was not enough to define both the infinite greatness of his Person and the infinite completeness of his salvation, the same Almighty Spirit, who inspired both the patriarch and the apostle thus to speak of our most glorious Christ, added another scripture to the same amount, and thus described Him, "Having made peace through the blood of his cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto himself, by Him I say (repeating the mighty Him with the strongest emphasis) whether they be things in earth or things in heaven," Col. i. 20.

But who is the man that despiseth Him? And what nation is it that abhorreth Him? Nay, every man, and all men; not one, or two, or ten million, but every son and daughter of Adam, who are all alike by nature involved in the same universal corruption, and while continuing in the unregenerate state of the unrenewed mind. Nations and individuals must necessarily follow the bias of their depraved nature, which the sacred word of God in one sweeping clause decidedly declares to be "enmity against God," Rom. viii. 7. so that it is not this man or that nation, a single person or a community, but man himself, his whole nature, the inherent delinquency of sin in all his members, himself rotten at the core, and as impossible to create love

towards God in his unregenerate heart as to create a world. The Lord's statement cannot but be correct, when he saith, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil," Jerem. xiii. 23.

And the glorious gospel of the blessed God is founded on this very principle. Man is considered, as he is in himself, utterly lost, helpless, and hopeless: the Lord makes provision for his recovery in the incommunicable and complete salvation of God. Man's ruin is wholly in himself; his restoration is wholly in God. It is not what man can do, for he can do nothing except sin; but what God can do, and will do, yea, hath done for him. By the Adam-fall transgression, man is "dead in trespasses and sins:" by rich, free, sovereign grace he is "quickened together with Christ," Eph. ii. 1—5. The "mystery of iniquity," and the "mystery of godliness," are thus opened and explained by the Lord himself to his spiritual church: and in the Person of our most glorious Christ, who, by taking into union our human nature with his divine, became the visible Jehovah, to make known what without such a gracious revelation could not have been made known, namely, man's fall by Adam, and his recovery by Christ. Thus, (as is said by the apostle) in his times shewed, "who is the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, or can see," 1 Tim. vi. 15, 16. Hence, therefore through that union with our nature, this became the medium of visibility. He is the whole efficiency of salvation. His was to do away all the injury of the fall for his people. His the sole work to bring for them redemption. His, as the Holy Ghost described him by the prophet, "to build the old waste places, and to raise up the foundation of many generations." And hence among the numberless, glorious names by

which he is known, these are strikingly descriptive of his Person, "the repairer of the breach, and the restorer of paths to dwell in!" Isa. lviii. 12.

The great question of the gospel, therefore, and proposed by our Lord himself, ariseth out of those views of the subject:—"What think ye of Christ?" What have you been divinely taught concerning him? For, until we have a knowledge of his Person, we can no have knowledge of his works, no knowledge of ourselves, and of our lost estate by nature before God; neither knowledge of our want of salvation, and of the fulness and suitability in Christ for salvation; much less of our own personal interest in that salvation. The language of holy scripture on these momentous points is, "They that know thy name will put their trust in thee," Ps. ix. 10. But none can trust an unknown God; though, through grace, we have faith to live upon an unseen God. Hence, it is said, speaking of our most glorious 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. 8, 9. And let it never be forgotten, that there can be no real true apprehension, either of the Person of Christ, or of the salvation by Christ, but spiritually: and until we are regenerated we have no spiritual life, and without spiritual life there are no faculties for apprehension. The Holy Ghost hath stated this solemn truth, in terms so plain and clear, as cannot be mistaken, "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. Observe, it is not said, that the natural man will not receive them, but that he cannot; he hath no spiritual faculties alive to receive them: and hence the mighty act of God in regeneration, in which the people of God, who by nature are "dead

in trespasses and sins," are quickened into a spiritual life in Christ. "God, who (at the old creation) commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shineth (in this new creation) in the heart, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," 2 Cor. iv. 6.

In proposing the question to the church—"What think ye of Christ?" I am not going to give in before them a statement of the Person of Christ, or of the glory of Christ. I consider, that I am addressing the spiritual church of Christ, with whom those things are in their familiar life and conversation. It cannot be necessary upon the present occasion to go over the scripture ground to remind the Lord's people of what they are supposed to be in the daily enjoyment of, namely, "communion and fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, through the anointings of the Holy Ghost." I take for granted, that every truly regenerated child of God, by which he is brought into an apprehension of being a member of Christ's mystical body, and belonging to the spiritual church of Christ, (and it is the spiritual church for whom my new year's gift is meant) hath been divinely taught of Christ, and by divine power is living upon Christ. He will know that our most glorious Christ possesseth, and hath possessed from all eternity, in common with the Father and the Holy Ghost, all divine attributes and perfections: and when, as one of the Persons in the Godhead, he came forth for the salvation of his people, he assumed our nature into union with his divine; and he it is, as the apostle describes him, "whom as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all God blessed for ever. Amen." Rom. ix. 5. The question, "What think ye of Christ?" is specially and personally addressed to every one of them, and for them and them alone is it calculated. To ask the world of unrenewed men, in the ignorance of nature, their views of Christ,

would be not unsimilar to that of desiring the deaf to describe sounds, or the blind colours. My present address is of a very different tendency. In the awful and portentous signs of the present times, the spiritual church of our most glorious Christ are supposed not only to be on their watch-tower, like the prophet of old, looking on with the most lively apprehension for the eventual consequences of things, but marking the footsteps of the Lord in the design of those dispensations towards his church : in the multiplied and multiplying systems of infidelity, arising every where around, they cannot but discover that the Lord is carrying on his own holy purposes : and though, like the vision of Ezekiel, the machine he saw of wheel within wheel was too vast and complicated for the prophet to unravel, yet, when he beheld the mighty One above the firmament on the throne guiding the whole, the man of God was sure that all was conducting with unerring wisdom, and that order would finally arise out of all seeming confusion, Ezek. i. 26. Such are or ought to be the views of the Lord's people, in what is going on in this nineteenth century of the church. And while the word of God is confirmed by the very dispensations themselves, which forewarned the church "that in the last days perilous times should come," the reason in part, as far as it concerns the people of God, is also stated, "that there must be heresies (saith the apostle) among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you," 1 Cor. xi. 19. The momentous question, therefore — "What think ye of Christ?" seems to meet the Lord's redeemed ones, at every renewed account of blasphemy which they hear of, or with which their eyes or ears are assaulted. Scarce a month passeth without some new production against the distinguishing doctrines of our holy faith : the press teems with them, and each is directed to outstrip his fellow. The prophet saith, "The Lord's voice crieth

unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it!" Micah vi. 9. And I know not if I mistake, but in my apprehension there is a great sweetness in the question of our most glorious Lord, if considered as personally directed to each of his chosen—"What think *ye* of Christ?" Jesus is regardless what others think; but he takes great interest in all *they* think of him, and all that concerns his people.

I am inclined to hope that I shall be doing no unacceptable service to the Lord's people under the Lord's teaching, if we trace the pestilential disease of the present times to its source; and mark a few of the more deadly symptoms, which, more or less, made their appearance in the world even from the days of the apostles. They who are acquainted with ecclesiastical history cannot but know, that an aberration from "the faith once delivered unto the saints" took place, and blasphemies of the most daring kind against the Person and Godhead of our most glorious Christ, sprung up immediately after the inspired apostles had fallen asleep in Jesus; yea, the old disciple John spake of antichrist being then in the world before his departure, 1 John ii. 18. I can only propose, however, to notice a few of the more striking; the limits I must observe, will not tolerate many. But before I enter upon this service, I earnestly and affectionately beg the spiritual church to mark with me, how graciously the Lord in every age did then, as the Lord doth now, watch over the interests of his people, and rendered that which the enemy meant for evil the instrument of good. The church hath been all along, and is now, and will continue to be to the very end of time, garrisoned with the divine presence. Beautifully and blessedly the glorious Lord is described as being unto his Zion, "a place of broad rivers and streams, wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ships

pass thereby." O no! what line of battle ship would venture to make war, where God himself is the very sea, into which that ship must pass to annoy God's people? What fleet would approach against him "who gathereth the winds in his fists, and hath bound the waters in a garment?" Isa. xxxiii. 21. Prov. xxx. 4. Arise what may, let infidelity abound, let the enemies of our God and of his Christ rage; the event is not doubtful: the Lord hath founded his church, "and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Among the earliest heresies from the days of the apostles, the first seems to have been that which was directly levelled against the Person and Godhead of Christ. It is noticed by the apostle John, but whether in a way of prophecy of what would soon come, or whether as the relation of what had begun to appear, is not said: the sacred writings describe it, as the spirit of antichrist, which "confessed not that Jesus Christ was come in the flesh," 1 John iv. 3. Here was at once an attempt to annihilate the very fundamental principles of the gospel; for the grand and distinguishing character of the gospel was and is, that "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us," John i. 14. And this implied his prior being and existence, and consequently his eternal power and Godhead: and his coming in the flesh, as plainly proved his having assumed for that purpose our nature, and by the union of both, that he was and is what he was prophesied to be, "Immanuel, God with us." And consequently, the compound of the human nature with the divine rendered him the real, and true, and the only prophet, Christ.

And much about the same time there was forged as another link in the same chain of heresy, the awful doctrine that the Holy Trinity, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, was in reality no Trinity of Persons, but only names of office; and only meant literally

and numerically one Person. So that, while the former denied the Person and Godhead of Christ, the latter would have rooted out the very being and testimony of the Holy Three in One, "which bear record in heaven;" and thus, if admitted, have reduced the gospel of salvation to a mere system of ethics.

I stay not to remark the many and various opinions which those leading heresies gave birth to. If we may credit history, numberless spurious professions of gospel arose about this time to harass the people of God; for when once a departure from the straight line of what is right hath taken place, there will always be as many semblances to counterfeit the truth like tinsel to gold, as there are persons to diversify each following his own imagination. I stay not to enquire further concerning this diversity. But I beg to call the attention of the spiritual church to remark with me, the watchful eye of our God over his church at that time, and the gracious method the Lord took to counteract and defeat those daring heresies. It was not later than the year of our Lord God, one hundred and ninety, that the Lord rose up Tertullian, a glorious witness for the truth. This man of God contended for the Godhead of Christ, and the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and under the divine blessing he was made the honoured instrument of reviving both; and again placing them as they had been in the days of the apostles, the basis of the common faith.

I pause here to remark the same gracious superintendance in the present hour. In a country like our's, where the national establishment is Trinitarian, and where the temporalities of the church in point of revenue are so munificent, could it be supposed possible, yea, could it be believed, if matters of fact did not put it beyond the reach of question, that in the face of those who are paid so amply for watching over the spiritual interests of their solemn charge, bare-faced infidelity

should come forth at noon-day to deny the Godhead of Christ, and to impugn the sacred doctrine of the Holy Trinity? Blessed be our God, he hath not left us without a witness! There are yet a few names in Sardis; a few like Tertullian, even now, who can and do maintain the truth against all opposition. And what is still more in testimony of the faithfulness of the faithful God, the souls of the Lord's people are upheld by the Lord himself, and that "bread is handed to them in secret which none knoweth, saving he that receiveth it!" I appeal to the many of the choice of the flock in the spiritual church whom I am addressing, whether those gracious promises of Christ which he left his church are not in their daily receivings? Doth not Jesus prove his Godhead to your souls by his being with you, and manifesting himself to you otherwise than he doeth to the world? And doth he not as fully prove the being and love of the Holy Trinity in that of his coming, and the Father's coming, and making abode with you, and the Holy Ghost abiding with you for ever? Are these in the common and ordinary love-tokens of his grace? And do they not prove what I remarked before, that in all ages, however in outward dispensations the love of many may wax cold, the Lord hath a seed that serve him, over which the Lord himself watcheth, and doth and will preserve them from the general corruption and apostacy of the times?

There was a period in the succeeding century (or the following) to that of the age of Tertullian, in which the general profligacy in the contemning divine truths was so universal, that it is said but one single solitary individual could be found, in the person of Athanasius, that ventured publicly to contend for the pure gospel: no doubt there were many in private hid away, when Athanasius, like another Elijah, thought himself left alone: and the same is the case in all periods in which,

like the flowers on the mountain, whose beauty and fragrancy are unseen and unnoticed, but by him who seeth in secret. The promise is absolute; the Lord hath in the worst times "a generation that call him blessed—the Lord knoweth them that are his." And when the Lord writeth up the people, many will arise from the east and from the west, and from all the periods of the several successive ages, to glorify the salvation of the Lord!

And if we come down to the time of the reformation in this kingdom, and from thence to the present era; every record in history carries but the same testimony, namely, the banner of scepticism and heresy unfurled through all the several generations as they succeeded each other; and the Lord's chosen few selected from the throng under him whom Jehovah, in his Trinity of Persons, hath "given for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people." But as the Holy Ghost taught the church to expect in the latter age more than ordinary opposition to the truth of the gospel, so we find it: the atmosphere is now clouded with the thick columns of darkness, which the several systems of infidelity have risen: and, like the locusts of Egypt which prevented seeing the face of the earth, none but the true Israel of God can see through the density: and that our land should be made the seat of war for the great enemy of souls to form his theatre upon more than any other, scarce needs to be explained. Here is the meridian of the gospel; here in the scriptures of eternal truth God is truly known: here therefore, also, Satan will raise a fog to blind the eyes of them which believe not, "lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." It is said by naturalists, that the largest reptiles are found under the tropics: whether this be so or not, I stay not to enquire, but certain it is, that the greatest foes to the gospel are living where the Sun

of righteousness sheds his warmest and most beneficent beams. And as the church was admonished, that the adversary would come down "with great wrath, because he knew that he hath but a short time," we may expect that his last efforts will be his greatest; and, as it is in the natural world, so in the intellectual, the darkest part of night will be before the break of the everlasting day.

And what is the security of the Lord's people? Nay, it is the Lord himself; they have no other, they need no other; he is "as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land," Isaiah xxxii. 2. And when under divine unction the spiritual church of our most glorious Christ is enabled to preserve in remembrance who and what Christ is, the glories of his Person, the greatness of his salvation, the infinite fulness, suitableness, and all-sufficiency of himself, and his finished work for his people, and their suitability for him, they to get righteousness in him, and he to get glory by them: under such spiritual views of our most glorious Christ, while through grace faith is in lively exercise in the believing enjoyment of them, his conquest over sin, death, hell, and the grave is felt in the soul; and the regenerated and redeemed child of God lives in the holy triumphs of his Lord, as though all things that offend were (and in which in truth they are) taken out of Christ's kingdom, Matt. xiii. 41. The apostle Paul blessedly expresses this (and so may every one like Paul, when having learnt the same) when praying to be brought more and more into the "knowledge of Christ, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings," Phil. iii. 10.

True it is, that without an eye to our most glorious Christ, if we look into what it is called by an unac-

countable misnomer, *the religious world*, we behold a marvellous assemblage of things : and even among many from whom, according to their profession, we might have hoped to have found somewhat better, yet here we discover no less *evangelical piety* (so called) without gospel ; and the religion of the bible without Christ. It is a day of masquerade indeed ; and where, amidst an hue and cry for the conversion of the whole world, shall we look to find combined in one, the form and power of godliness ? Under such existing circumstances the Lord plainly speaks to all his of the present hour, as the Lord did to his disciples of old when in the prospect of their exercises, “in your patience possess ye your souls,” Luke xxi. 12—19. For my own part, without aspiring to a greater insight into what is going on in the world than others, I see a needs be for the state of things exactly as they are : the Lord hath said, “I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve ; yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth,” Amos ix. 9. Here I rest with full assurance of faith ; and am no more apprehensive for the blasphemies of one class, and the contumely of another, than “when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.” Yea, I find the opposers of the faith not unfrequently the means of doing good, in calling forth into action the graces which might otherwise lie dormant : and as the Israelites went down to the Philistines to sharpen their weapons when fighting the Lord’s battle, the same is now. 1 Sam. xvi. 20. It is well to brighten our armoury by collision with the enemy’s when going forth in the strength of the Lord, and when “that strength is made perfect in our weakness.”

And now, brethren, I greet you in the Lord on the entrance of a new year ! The Lord make it gracious to his people, and it will be blessed. Great events are

pending, and marvellous are to be the forerunners (as taught us in scripture) by which will be ushered in the latter day glory: but amidst all the convulsions with which the Lord will shake the earth, the church is impregnable; and this voice through all may be heard by every regenerated child of God, "Say ye to the righteous, it shall be well with him," Isa. iii. 10. Keeping in remembrance the eternal, inherent, essential, and underrived perfections of our most glorious Christ, which are his own, and which he possesseth in common with the Father and the Holy Ghost, nothing of this time-state arising from the temptations of men or devils, while upheld by the Lord, can stagger for a moment my faith. In him I behold a sovereignty competent to all the purposes of his church. The infinite greatness of his Person stamps infinity upon all he wrought in his human nature; every act, every word, every thought, was the act, the word, and thought of God, in the man Christ Jesus. Through grace I never suffer myself to lose sight of his oneness, in all that constitutes Godhead, with Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons. And in all my approaches to the mercy-seat, I approach to the one undivided Jehovah through the mediation of Christ, "in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," Col. ii. 9. And as the Godhead of the Holy Three in One is alike inaccessible, the mediation of Christ, as Christ, (that is, God and man in one Person) is as necessary to approach the divine nature of the Son, as that of the Father, or of the Holy Ghost: this may be considered a solecism in the world's vocabulary, but the word loseth its meaning when applied to the glorious truths of God; there are no solecisms in scripture: the Lord enables his spiritual church to receive the Lord's manifestations spiritually. And then, while carrying about with us this charter of grace, the precious question of our most glorious Lord put by him-

self and opened by himself in all its beauty and fulness, will be like an anchor to the soul in the darkest night of heresy, silencing all the blasts of a Christ-despising generation—"What think ye of Christ?"

VIII.

THE SOLEMN DEMAND OF CHRIST: THE SUBJECT HUMBLY CONTEMPLATED IN AN AFFECTIONATE SALUTATION OF THE SPIRITUAL CHURCH OF OUR MOST GLORIOUS LORD, ON THE ENTRANCE OF THE NEW YEAR, 1827.

"When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" Luke xviii. 8.

Under deep humblings of soul, in the contemplation of divine goodness for the preservation of my unworthy life to the present hour; and under the impression of warm affection to the people of God, whom the Lord hath also preserved alive to this day; I desire to congratulate the spiritual church of the living and true God on the entrance of a new year. Grace, mercy, and peace be with you, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, through the anointings of the Holy Ghost.

In looking back on the events of the past year, the days of which are gone to be numbered with the generations before the flood, while I see enough, in all that relates to me, to lay low in the dust of self-abasement before God, I behold no less, in all that relates to the divine dealings of the Lord towards me, abundant cause to raise a voice of praise, and to say with one of old, "surely goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life!" I can and do, therefore, "set to my seal that God is true." And amidst all the reproaches of my own faithless and unbelieving heart, I arise by sovereign grace above all that I am the subject and the object of in myself, to live upon him and his unchangeableness, who is the same faithful God, "yesterday, and to-day, and for ever!"

But while calculating the revolutions of time, and beholding the beautiful order of things in the divine government, I cannot but connect with the view, the dying state in which our nature stands. True it is indeed, the sun of this lower world occupies the same place in the heavens as he did on the first day of the last year: the regular return of seasons are the same: and the Lord hath said, "while the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease," Gen. viii. 22. Yea, and the Lord hath further promised, that those ordinances of heaven and earth become the sure pledge of his everlasting covenant, in the higher department of grace with his people. Jer. xxxiii. 25, 26. but not so man, in his present being of nature, his life is but "a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away," James iv. 14. "As a flower of the field so he flourisheth; for the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more," Ps. ciii. 16. "Your fathers (said one of old) where are they? And the prophets, do they live for ever?" Zech. i. 5. Our lengthening shades lengthen as we go, and amidst the zenith of the great luminary of the day as he is in himself, to us he becomes a setting sun, indicating continually the approach of night. Blessed will it be, if, while under the conscious sense of his declinings, we are brought under the divine shinings of "the Sun of Righteousness, which ariseth with healing in his wings," Malachi iv. 2. And amidst all our changes, while passing from one tropic to another here below, we live under his influences, "with whom is no variation, neither shadow of turning," James i. 17.—happy will it be our own declining state, if, while lessening in ourselves, we are growing up in him; and, like the moon, whose waning is increased in proportion as she draweth nearer to the sun, so the church dwindles in self, and all self-attainments are for ever

lost and swallowed up, when brought within the sphere of his orb, who is to his people "an everlasting light, our God our glory," Isa. lx. 19.

And amidst these circumstances of fluctuation in the natural world, the church lays exposed to great changes in the spiritual. There are seasons when the waters of the sanctuary run low : times when as things appear to the child of God, the Lord seems inattentive to his bitterest cries, and answers neither by Urim nor Thummim : yea, and what tends to aggravate the sorrow to the brim full cup of affliction, Zion herself is threatened to be ploughed as a field. The present day is an awful epoch in this history : the nineteenth century hath advanced the church into a period fraught with peculiar exercises : every thing around us in this our insular situation, and the state of things on the Continent in reference to religion, bespeak some mighty convulsion at hand : add to these, the scriptures themselves in relation to the present era, unite in teaching the people of God to be on the look out "for a time of Jacob's trouble." The last days are foretold as perilous days : great events are said to be pending over the church of the Most High God : and we are admonished, that a vast struggle for a while will be maintained by the kingdom of darkness against the kingdom of Christ. It is very gracious in our God that before the conflict commenceth he hath assured us the issue is not doubtful : the termination shall be to the church's glory, and her enemies destruction : for when the seventh angel shall sound his trumpet, the triumphs of the church shall be complete, "the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever," Rev. xi. 15. Nevertheless, during the conflict there will be "a time of trouble such as never was, since there was a nation even to that same time," Dan. xii. 1.

We have already beheld the preparations of the

enemy for the war; we have seen the several armies marshalled under their respective leaders. Popery, which at one time was paralyzed in this land, now, like the frozen serpent, brought by the incautious husbandman into a warm atmosphere, hath emerged from her benumbed state, and is endeavouring to recompence the kindness by biting our children: she hath unfurled her banners, and more than once attempted to gain again a legitimate footing in this kingdom: while with equal earnestness, but with more craft and subtilty, infidelity with her hydra heads, hath been at work to sap the very foundation of the christian church altogether by digging up the first principles of our holy faith. I stay not to take notice of those various auxiliaries of *nondescripts*, which have shewn their hatred to our common cause, and are only waiting the sound of the war-whoop in joining the phalanx to form the battle of Armageddon, Rev. xvi. 16. What will further appear before the dreadful crisis, as preludes to the slaughter of the two witnesses, is not revealed; only in general terms it is said, that "men shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils," Rev. xi. 7. 1 Tim. iv. 1.

In the mean time, there is a stillness in the confederate powers which augurs not good; a seeming suspension of hostilities, as if repeated disappointments had dashed the hopes of the aspiring parties: but it is rather to be suspected, that though apparently inactive they are at work: from their very principles they cannot give over; like the mole of the earth, they are beneath the surface throwing up the ground in various heaps; and, by and by, as pioneers, their entrenchments will be opened, and the garrison of God attacked. The present stillness, therefore, is not to be considered favourable. Naturalists have observed, that a more than ordinary quietness in the elements precede an earthquake: and burning mountains give no symptoms

without of the combustion working within, until the volcano bursts forth from the crater with the fiery lava to desolate the region below. Sudden events, whether of mercy or of judgment, have no heralds. The prophet's servant saw nothing but an unruffled surface on the waters when first sent to behold them; but when at the command of his master he went the seventh time, the cloud, which then appeared though no bigger than a man's hand, carried with it the tempest in its womb. 1 Kings xviii. 44.

In a moment, like the present, the solemn demand of Christ becomes a matter big with the weightiest consideration, in the prospect of impending judgments; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching — “When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” The question is infinitely appalling to the most faithful among the Lord's people; but to every one, unconscious of an interest and safety in Christ, the enquiry is calculated to ring through all the chambers of the heart in a peel like thunder. And what answer can be given, in the millions of instances of such as “have the form, but deny the power of godliness?” What an alarming subject to all such of painful reflection? It were almost needless to observe, that those words of our glorious Lord, though put in a way of question, do not carry with them an idea as if the matter was doubtful, but rather as a thing already known. It is that kind of question which answers itself: it is, as if the Lord had said, shall he find faith? No, he shall not. I have thought the subject, contained in the bosom of a scripture so truly awful, might be profitable in leading to profound meditation of enquiry under divine teaching: and with those alarming prospects in view, which are predicted by the apostles to distinguish the latter days; and which, the corresponding signs of the times seem to intimate as if at hand; I have conceived, that the words themselves of

our most glorious Christ will form a basis, suited on which to build my affectionate salutation of his spiritual church on this entrance of a new year; the Lord accompanying our meditation with the gracious influences of his Spirit!

Let it not be supposed, however, by the reader, that when the Lord Jesus speaks on this momentous enquiry, concerning the want of faith as extending to the whole earth, that I am about to trace the footsteps of the Lord in the search so far. My little tract must be bounded within very narrow limits; I cannot explore the subject beyond the skirts of our own land. What continental researches might discover on this ground, I know not: but if rumour be correct, the greater part of Europe is sunk into a state of apathy to divine truth; or subjugated to any thing, and to every thing that is inimical to the "glorious gospel of the blessed God." Where the papistical government doth not reign, infidelity hath erected her throne in the minds of the people, and to her sceptre all bend submissively except "that little band of men whose hearts the Lord hath touched," 1 Sam. x. 26. It is my mercy, that I have never been called to behold the countries of such daring hostilities to the majesty of heaven: and it is an additional mercy, that I know nothing of them but from report. The most considerable part of my life hath been spent in the duties of a parish, and little of this great world can I speak from personal knowledge. A few observations on our Lord's question, as may attach itself to the kingdom to which I belong, is all that I have to propose; and if they are as kindly received by the spiritual church of Christ, as they are affectionately offered, my congratulations of the Lord's people on the entrance of the new year, will be, I hope, accompanied with the Lord's blessing.

If we bring the solemn demand of our Lord to bear upon that system of religion, called the church

of England, as by law established within this realm; and the enquiry begins here—"When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" The answer may be direct; yes, if the articles by which the church of England is professedly known, and supposed to be governed, are made the standard of decision; for as long as those distinguishing doctrines, which constitute the grand principles of our holy faith, form the leading points of those articles, and are proveable from the word of God, the system itself (however exceptionable in numberless instances the conduct of professors who stand within the pale of the church may be) cannot be found but in perfect conformity to "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." Let me not be misunderstood; by the articles of religion, as by law established, I mean those among them which are essential to vital godliness, and which are in the spiritual apprehension of all that are taught of God, namely, faith in the Holy Trinity; original, or birth sin; justification by faith, predestination and election; obtaining salvation only by the name of Christ, &c. &c. And where those glorious and fundamental truths are inwrought by God the Holy Ghost in the living tablets of the regenerated heart, "the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirits that we are the children of God," Rom. viii. 16.—then may we say, with the apostle John, and from the same divine authority as he did, "when he shall appear we shall have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at his coming," 1 John ii. 28.

If from the doctrines themselves, as set forth in the articles of the established church, we prosecute the subject yet further, and enquiry be made whether they are continually brought forward by the ministers of the word, and insisted upon in terms equal to their importance? here I pause; for this is not my province to answer: and this will be fully ascertained by the

Lord himself in that day when he comes to make his own question, "will he find faith on the earth?" It can belong to none but him who hath reserved to himself this divine sovereignty, when he saith, "I, the Lord, search the heart; I try the reins; even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings," Jer. xvii. 10. But, let it be observed, that while the discernment of spirits is the Lord's sole prerogative, all that can be done on the part of man to enforce their obligation hath been done: the same legislature, which framed those articles on the divine authority of scripture as the rule to guide all preachers and ministers of the establishment in their daily ministration, took the most effectual means human wisdom could devise to have them faithfully obeyed: and if there are any so daringly presumptuous as to act contrary to their statement, the matter must rest between God and their consciences. For every one that offers himself a candidate for admission into holy orders, is bound by law previously to his introduction to the sacred office, to sign his full and unreserved conviction of their truth: nay, more, in the solemn hour of his ordination, lest through haste or inadvertency, or from any other motive whatever, he had been led to seek an entrance into the ministry without having first received an unction from the Lord to qualify him for it, the bishop is directed by law to put this heart-searching question individually to every one, one by one, in the moment of presenting himself for ordination; and his answer is supposed to be unequivocal, unreserved, and from the convictions of conscience. 'Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you this office and ministration, to serve God for the promoting of his glory, and the edifying of his people?' What a trembling of soul will take place, if, in a single instance, any should be found who hath lost sight of these solemn declarations, and from motives

of filthy lucre have rushed into the ministry like the unthinking horse into the battle! And how will the demand of Christ one day sound through all the lengthened aisles, and high vaulted roofs of cathedrals, chapels, and churches, "When the Son of man cometh, will he find faith on the earth?"

And let it not less be considered, that the same or similar demand will attach itself, as well to those that are ministered unto, as to those that minister: both priest and people are included in one and the same responsibility: true, indeed, the congregations which follow the establishment do not subscribe with hand to the articles, as the ministers are required to do; but they are supposed to consent with heart, to the leading doctrines contained in them; for otherwise, why are they found within the pale of the church? It hath been said indeed (and perhaps, it may be true in many instances) that the rubric doth not in all points correspond to the articles. But what objection shall be made on that account? We do not in common life reject the whole because incomplete of certain parts: the building taken in one great pile, may have in several departments its defects, (as what structure among men is without them) for all human institutions must more or less partake of human infirmity. Such is the establishment; it is an old building, but not without some parts of great usefulness: the formulary of her daily services incorporates the uniform confession of original, inherent, and actual sin; the necessity of salvation, and that wholly by the Lord Jesus Christ; the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is kept everlastingly in view, in a repeated doxology; and in relation to the large portions of the sacred scriptures which are daily read, no form of worship I believe hath more. Let me not here again be misunderstood; I am not advocating the cause of the establishment; if it cannot defend itself, let it fall; but I am simply stating what that establishment is,

and chiefly in relation to the solemn demand of our Lord. Here I humbly conceive, as truly with the people as with the priest, the question will be put, "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"

From the church, if we pass on to the universities, the supposed nursery for raising plants for the ministry in the Lord's vineyard, here we may expect the closest investigation will take place, to see that they are "trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified," Isa. lxi. 3. That trembling sentence which the Lord Jesus hath left on record being in the minds of all, "every plant (said Jesus) which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up," Matt. xv. 13. Time was, when in zeal for the Lord's glory and the weal of the reformed church, the several heads of houses in the colleges used such caution in receiving youth intended for the ministry, that none were allowed to matriculate but such as not only could give an answer to every man that asked him a reason of the hope that was in him, but also could shew a well-grounded hope no less of a call to the ministry from the Lord. And I remember to have read in that diurnal paper, called, 'the Spectator,' a remarkable statement to this amount, of a youth who was first questioned as the most important point of enquiry, how long he had been a partaker in grace? The writer of that paper, being himself ignorant what grace or the new birth meant, condemned the measure: but, however unintentional on his part, he hath thereby proved the attention at that time paid in the universities to this most essential point of all learning in preparing for the ministry. How matters are conducted now in our universities on those momentous things, I know not; but as in both universities the same articles become the same standard of religion, and the same subscription is enjoined, common charity leads to the

hope that they are closely followed up, and the same discipline observed. Time will shew here, as well as in all other places—"When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"

As I prosecute the subject, I come now to consider this solemn enquiry of the Lord as it relates to our dissenting brethren. I am well aware, that in referring to the state of faith among this very numerous and highly respected class of professors, I am treading on tender ground; and I shall walk over it most gently: but I should justly merit the reproach of the dissenter from the establishment, instead of conciliating his favour, if, in an address of this kind, I was wholly to pass him by in silence and inattention: so large a body as taken in one aggregate the dissenters form, certainly demand this respect. I have been taught to believe, that the preachers only within this little kingdom, according to the most moderate calculation, are not less than fifty thousand: such a phalanx, with their many congregations, cannot be uninterested in the great question of our Lord. And however diversified by the different shades which mark one class from another, all and every one acknowledging the doctrines of gospel must, ultimately, be brought to the decision of the Lord's standard, "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"

And what a door of enquiry would it open, when passing over the scrutiny both of the establishment and dissenters, we could look in and make a calculation of what is going on by the amalgamation of both in the vast enterprise their joint forces are engaged in of converting the whole world. The question of our Lord must have an especial bearing to this extensive work, "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" And the Holy Ghost no less hath given his divine statement on these, as well as all other matters, that "whatsoever is not of faith is sin!" Rom.

xv. 23.—so that if the act, be it what it may, is not done with a single eye to Christ, it is sin. Perhaps, it may be said, that according to this statement, all the high sounding deeds of thousands, which have filled the world with their praises on the score of charity, will come to nought! No doubt they will, if, when examined by this standard, they are discovered to be unfounded in the faith of Christ: nay, it is not enough to say that they will come to nought, for they will be considered as done in sin; for “whatsoever is not of faith is sin!” And on this issue what a reverse of circumstances will then take place! When many who have given largely to the various charities around, because a bountiful God hath first given to them largely of the good things of his providence, but had given without an eye to Christ, and therefore their very alms came under this character, “whatsoever is not of faith is sin:” others, who had nothing but the prayer of faith to give, will be considered as the poor widow in the gospel was by Christ, as having given a costly offering, Luke xxi. 2. The solemn demand of the Lord comes home here, as before, enforced by every consideration, “When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?”

I shall not offend, I hope, if in presenting my new year's offering to the spiritual church of Christ, I venture to suggest to my brethren in the Lord, that, in the expectation of the Lord's coming, and especially in the uncertainty how soon the Lord may come, would it not be well to keep aloof from all controversy with each other on all parts of doubtful disputation? Such is our imperfect apprehension of divine things in this twilight of existence, that in a very general sense of the word, what the apostle said on one occasion may for the most part be applied to all, “if any man thinketh he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know,” 1 Cor. viii. 2. and yet, I

fear, if all the pamphlets with which the press teems in one short year furnishing subject for controversy were collected into one view, might not the regenerated child of God finish life before he had finished the perusal of half of them? And is it not to be feared, that the great enemy of souls seeks hereby to draw off the minds of the Lord's people from subjects of an higher nature, while alluring them to things that are not essential?

We know that he hath been studying our nature for nearly six thousand years to discover the part that is most vulnerable in every character of the Lord's people: and we know also, from an authority that cannot be mistaken, that "while men sleep, the enemy soweth tares!" And is it not he that raiseth a dust to becloud their minds that they may draw the saw of contention over one another, which can neither bring glory to God, neither comfort to themselves? And is it not, to speak the least of it, a sad interruption to those sacred hours which through divine unction might be spent in retirement and abstraction from men to enjoy communion with the Lord? Is it not in such a frame every follower of the Lord would desire to be found at the Lord's coming, and not in unprofitable controversy at the grave when falling into it? I crave pardon for this freedom. Perhaps, as an old man going out of life, and the confines of another world now daily enlarging to my view, as I am losing my steps in this, the subject becomes the more interesting to me. And yet, I think, few among the Lord's chosen ones would desire to be found engaged in subjects of a controversial nature—"When the Son of man cometh to find faith on the earth!"

Brethren, farewell! Through grace we have entered the new year: but where is the sure proprietor of the morrow, to know that he shall live to finish it? And in the prospects of impending judgments, what is the se-

curity of the Lord's people? Here it is, and here alone it is, and made known by God the Holy Ghost, namely, in the election of grace. When John, in vision saw that beast coming up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and it was given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, it was proclaimed, "that all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," Rev. xiii. 1—8. When, therefore, God ariseth to judgment, and the decree goeth forth, "begin at my sanctuary!" the limitation of destruction resteth here, "come not near any man upon whom is the mark," Ezek. ix. 6. Here "is the holy seed which is the substance thereof!" Isa. vi. 11—13. Here is the cause of joy beyond the subjection of men or devils, Luke x. 17—20. Here is the day when "the branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious; lo, every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem!" Isa. iv. 2, 3. The prophet thought himself a solitary individual, when the Lord had at the same time reserved unto himself "seven thousand in Israel;" even so now, said Paul, in his days (and we may say the same in our's) "even so now at this present time, there is a remnant according to the election of grace," Rom. xi. 1—5. Amidst all the cataracts to be poured out, and the storms and tempests every where gathering around, there is a nevertheless which bears the church through all, "Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his," 2 Tim. ii. 19. And the answer which the Lord gave the prophet to his anxious enquiry, when, and how, and where these things should be, is in effect now given to the whole election of grace, "go thou thy way, Daniel, till the end be; for thou shalt rest and stand in thy lot at the end of the days!" Dan. xii. 13.

IX.

TO THE SPIRITUAL CHURCH OF CHRIST, GREETING!

A pamphlet was put into my hands a few days since, entitled, ‘ the Twenty-sixth Annual Report of the Religious Tract Society, 1825.’ Prefixed to the title-page was the following advertisement, ‘ In consequence of several enquiries having been made to ascertain whether the Religious Tract Society is connected with the Gospel Tract Society, the committee of the former deem it necessary to state distinctly to the public, that there is no connexion whatever between the two institutions.’ And this notification bears the signature of Legh Richmond, Joseph Hughes, and C. Scholl, secretaries.

On the perusal of this paper, it immediately struck my mind that some more latent principle than the ostensible one assigned had given birth to this marked production: and from the singularity of the measure, I felt impelled not to take for granted a reason, which, had there been no other, would not have required such a mode of publicity; but to look further than the mere surface for the discovery of the real cause. And the result of my investigation hath been, from a comparative statement of the two societies with each other, that they are not only void of all connexions whatever, but in all their bearings, tendencies, and designs they are wholly dissimilar: they are utterly unlike in feature, in their origin, progress, pursuits, and their proposed issue and termination; and though in name and title there are apparently but a few shades of distinction between them, yet, in reality, there is not an atom of congeniality in their principles: nay, more than these, from their very *stamina* being formed in characters diametrically opposed to each other, they are naturally so unaccommodating, that, like the iron and the clay

which the eastern monarch saw in vision, it is impossible they should ever coalesce, but necessarily act repulsive to one another, according to that well-known axiom in common philosophy, namely, 'where the sphere of attraction ceaseth, that of repulsion begins.'

As the committee of the Religious Tract Society have 'deemed it necessary to state distinctly to the public that there is no connexion whatever between the two institutions;' they can have no just cause of complaint, if the committee of the Gospel Tract Society, modestly following their steps in this particular, endeavour to state as distinctly to the church (for it is the spiritual regenerated church of Christ, and that alone, with whom they have to do) the real cause of disunion, and wherefore it is, that there is indeed, and must everlastingly continue, no 'connexion whatever between the two institutions.'" And the relationship in which I stand to the Gospel Tract Society, both as the founder in the original formation of it, and as the final editor of the several publications which have issued from it to the church, it becomes my province to bear the brunt of reproach if justly due; and no less to contend against contumely if unmerited; and on both accounts, the service is rendered peculiarly mine. Indeed, under the view of the high trust reposed in me, and the solemn responsibility annexed to that trust, such considerations imperatively demand that I ought not to remain silent upon the occasion. I venture, therefore, unsolicited to assume this task. I volunteer to speak in the name of the committee in their defence; and I very humbly and affectionately address the spiritual church of Christ on this ground, for in such transactions between men they are the only fit jurors of spiritual things, that they may form right judgment. A few of the more luminous points which discriminate the two societies will be sufficient, when brought forth in a tangible shape, to shew with whom the sacred scriptures of God decide

in favour ; and, of consequence, with whom should be the cause of regret, that ‘there is no connexion whatever between the two institutions.’

In point of precedency, the first claim of investigation concerning the party with whom “the truth as it is in Jesus” is, will be the Religious Tract Society. And their design and plan of operation is fully developed in the title-page of this very report : they say, in the motto of their title-page, ‘Religious tracts should consist of pure truth : by pure truth (say they) when not expressed in the words of scripture, the committee refer to those evangelical principles of the reformation, in which Luther, Calvin, and Cranmer were agreed. On this large portion (say they) of *common ground*, which the churchman, the dissenter, and the foreigner jointly occupy, they conceive that *christian union* may be established and strengthened ; *christian affection* excited and cherished ; and *christian zeal* concentrated and rendered proportionably effective.’

Such is the statement of the committee of the Religious Tract Society in their own words, and by which they profess to be guided in the formation or selection of their own tracts. In the name of the committee of the Gospel Tract Society, I beg to observe upon it, that, excepting the first line which is an unquestionable postulation of the necessity of pure truth, there is nothing by which this statement of their’s can be made a standard to ascertain pure truth by. Holy scripture is the only unerring criterion : they say, indeed, that by ‘pure truth when not expressed in the words of scripture, the committee refer to those evangelical principles of the reformation, in which Luther, Calvin, and Cranmer were agreed.’ But, wherefore refer to men of like passions with ourselves, when we have the word of God to go by ? Is not this word at hand upon every occasion ? And is not the command of inspiration to this express purpose, “that we may know the things

which are freely given to us of God ; and not to speak in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual?" 1 Cor. ii. 12, 13. But to admit the statement in all its force ; let us suppose those men of old were agreed in those important truths the committee refer to : the next enquiry is, what were those evangelical principles of the reformation, in which Luther, Calvin, and Cranmer agreed? Were they not the glorious doctrines of the gospel of the ever blessed God? Were they not the grand discriminating doctrines "of the faith once delivered unto the saints?" Were they not of the Unity of the divine essence in a Trinity of Persons? Were they not of the election of grace ; the everlasting love of God the Father to his church which he chose in Christ ; the inherent, essential, and underived Godhead of the Son ; the redemption of his church from the Adam-fall transgression, solely by himself in his own blood and righteousness ; the Person, Godhead, and divine operations of the Holy Ghost on the church and people ; the indispensable necessity of regeneration for an entrance into the kingdom ; the true conversion of the heart to God ; the final perseverance of the saints ; and their unchangeable safety in Christ? Were not these the leading doctrines of the gospel, which our reformers embraced with ardour, and braved death in all its terrifying forms rather than relinquish? And are these the evangelical principles of Luther, Calvin, and Cranmer to which the committee of the Religious Tract Society refer? Is it on those standards of eternal truth they form the models of their tracts, and suffer no departure from them in any of their publications sent forth into the world? Can the committee — can Messrs. Legh Richmond, Joseph Hughes, and C. Scholl, who have here given in their names, that when the pure truth they publish, or are supposed to publish in the religious tracts of their So-

ciety, are not expressed in the words of scripture, they are expressed in the language of those evangelical principles of the reformation, in which Luther, Calvin, and Cranmer were agreed? Can they, do they, appeal to the great Searcher of hearts that these things are so? that their own personal creed, and the sum and substance of the tracts they issue, through the medium of this Religious Tract Society to others, are in perfect conformity to the faith and lives of those illustrious reformers? If so, wherefore this renunciation of any connexion whatever with the Gospel Tract Society? when it is notorious, that all the publications which have emanated from this humble and despised Society are formed, or attempted to be formed, on the same plan as at the reformation.

But we must not stop here. The committee of the Religious Tract Society go on to observe, that 'on this large portion (as they term it) of common ground, which the churchman, the dissenter, and the foreigner jointly occupy; they conceive that christian union may be established and strengthened; christian affection excited and cherished; and christian zeal concentrated and rendered proportionably effective.' What large portion of common ground this is on which persons so diversified by character may meet and harmonize, I am at a loss to know. If, by the phrase is meant, the ground on which Luther, Calvin, and Cranmer stood, when agreeing as is here stated in the doctrines of the reformation; and these men were faithful to God and to souls; the matter becomes inexplicable, and staggers credibility, to suppose that one and the same creed can suit all! How the churchman, who believes in and subscribes to the articles of the church of England; the dissenter, who from the denial of them takes his very name of dissenter; and the foreigner, whose tenets for the most part differ from both—how these characters shall cordially meet for religious purposes on this

large portion of common ground, these things are so enveloped in mystery, as surpasseth, I confess, my apprehension! It must be a most accommodating spirit indeed, which shall remove all the acute angles at present intersecting between them, and render the peculiar doctrines of each so palatable and inoffensive, as to gather the whole mass by one sweeping clause into one net. And how the gracious effects of which the committee speak are to follow, of 'christian union, christian affection, and christian zeal'—how these are to be induced from the joint occupation of this large portion of common ground, the committee have not stated, but certainly have no warrant from scripture to support it: and indeed, what christian union can that be which begins not *in* Christ, and is not founded from an union *with* Christ? What christian affection can form a cement of love between the members unless from the head, even Christ? Is it not said, that it is from him, "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?" Ephes. iv. 16. And what christian zeal can be concentrated and rendered proportionably effective by the amalgamation of principles so hostile to each other? Such may act for the moment, as the collision of the flint with the steel will elicit the spark; but there can be no fire to keep alive any true zeal which is according to knowledge, and which is kindled no where but at the divine altar. What begins not in grace, can gather no stability from nature. And however specious the philanthropy which may be supposed to subsist on this large portion of common ground between man and man, there will be nothing in it solid and substantial to appear in before God. The whole is a spurious kind of godliness, which, however amusing

among men, can afford no grounds of consolation in those momentous concerns, the salvation of the soul.

But it is time now to examine into the leading principles of the Gospel Tract Society, and to scrutinize the tenets by which their committee profess to be guided in their publications. Having given precedency in the investigation of the *one*, it will be proper to bring to the same ordeal the *other*. In the accomplishment of which purpose, after what hath been already stated (though incidentally) in relation to this society, my labours will be limited within a narrower compass. I shall only have to shew, that the Gospel Tract Society takes her stand on the opposite ground from the Religious Tract Society; for while this latter-mentioned treads over the large portion of common ground, with all the world of heterogeneous characters jointly occupied by the churchman, dissenter, and the foreigner—she forms her plan of action, within the sacred enclosure of the word of God: and every operation by which she is guided differs more or less from all around: the universal offers of general salvation come not within her mode of proceeding, being taught by the infallible authority of scripture, that all such can find no warrant there to make the offer, or power to perform it when made. The Gospel Tract Society is instructed, to consider the chosen of God as constituting the church of God; to whom alone the invitations, promises, and blessings belong: hence, with whomsoever she hath to do, whether professor or profane, her language is qualified, like that of Paul, “Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, (Gal. iii. 29.) and whosoever among you feareth God, (Jer. xxxii. 39, 40.) to you is the word of this salvation sent!” Acts xiii. 26. And looking wholly to the Lord both for direction and support, she fearlessly causeth her feeble productions (as far as her finances enable her) to be dispersed in every

direction to be helpful in the Lord's cause "in gathering in the children of God which are scattered abroad." Sending them forth on the knee of prayer, she confidently looks forward that ultimately under the Lord's blessing, prayer will be followed with praise: hence with her, there is no regard to human attainments, but the divine favour; not from what man can do for himself, but what the Lord can do and will do for him: and her tracts are simple and plain, "not with the enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that their faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God," 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5.

Agreeably to this prospectus, the first overtures of the Gospel Tract Society were made in the same words as God the Holy Ghost directed Peter to address the church, "To the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, (for the words are equally suited in the present hour to all the Lord's scattered ones throughout the earth) elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ," 1 Pet. i. 1, 2. Thus bottoming the whole of the gospel, where Jehovah himself hath founded it, in the gracious facts of the Holy Three in One towards the church in Christ. And the Gospel Tract Society in all their subsequent labours have followed this plan; and by supplication and prayer for the Lord's blessing on the Lord's own cause, they have all along waited, and still wait in hope, that the superstructure of the spiritual building will correspond to the almightiness of the foundation, and that the Lord himself "will bring forth the head-stone thereof with shoutings, crying, grace, grace, unto it!" Zech. iv. 7.

I would pause for a moment over the distinct statement of those distinct societies! The difference between them is incalculable. The Religious Tract

Society, considers all mankind as alike salvable : the Gospel Tract Society, acknowledgeth none but the election of grace. The *former*, conceives that the common ground which the churchman, dissenter, and foreigner jointly occupy, will bring about those evangelical principles in which all are agreed ; the *latter*, limits according to scripture, "the remnant of Jacob in the midst of many people, as a dew from the Lord, and as showers upon the grass," Micah v. 7. The *one* Society, professeth that the most opposite principles may amalgamate into christian union of a general mass ; the *other*, observing the divine command, desires to act instrumentally only in the Lord's hand, "to be as his mouth, and to take forth the precious from the vile," Jer. xv. 19. The Religious Tract Society contend, that there is a somewhat in every man by nature, by which he may be helpful to himself, and become instrumental to his own salvation ; the Gospel Tract Society, following the unalterable declarations of scripture, considers every man by nature "dead in trespasses and sins," and incompetent to a single act of spiritual life, but by regeneration. The *one*, therefore, is for ever leaning upon some supposed goodness in the creature ; the *other*, hanging wholly upon the righteousness of God. *This*, sacrificeth to the unhumbléd pride of human nature, in the merits of the free-will of man ; *that*, gives the sole glory to the free grace of God. Hence, while the *one* goes only in search "of the lost sheep of the house of Israel ;" the *other*, cherisheth the hope from an hypothesis of his own creating, that on the large portion of common ground jointly occupied by mankind he shall ultimately convert the whole world !

Brethren of the spiritual church of Christ ! bear with me, I beseech you, in this address. If I know any thing of my own heart, (and deceitful and desperately wicked as it is by nature, I think I know this) I write in the affection of the christian. It is with me a sub-

ject of grave importance, a matter of solemn consideration, yea, of eternal moment. And while analyzing the principles of both Societies, I have endeavoured to keep in view the holy scriptures of God, as the only standard of decision: and if there be one sacred truth of God more fully made known in the word of God than another, it is this; namely, that God's designs all along, in every revelation of himself in his Trinity of Persons to his church, is to magnify the freeness, and fulness, and riches of his grace: to this end and for this purpose, he hath reserved an whole eternity for the display of it, "that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus!" Ephes. ii. 7. How far the mingling of any thing of the creature with this militates against the divine sovereignty, it will be well for all men, and especially such as minister in the word and doctrine, to consider. The statement Paul made of himself on this ground cannot be wrong for every one to follow, "I do not frustrate (said he) the grace of God; for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain!" Gal. ii. 21.

I trust in God that there are many, yea, very many among those, both of the committee and patrons of the Religious Tract Society, (for the great majority, compared to our handful of the Gospel Tract Society, is with them) who, though at present unconscious of the original and eternal purpose of God's electing love towards them, are of the remnant of grace: and if so, they will be brought out and brought home, in the Lord's own appointed time and way, notwithstanding the present opposition they are making to those distinguishing truths of the gospel. The same man that said, "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth," in the after stages of his life, when better taught of God, said, "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 !" Acts xxvi. 9. Phil. iii. 8, 9.

Brethren, farewell ! I shall have to trouble you but with few more, if any, of my addresses. The hour glass of my life is nearly run out, and the last sand will shortly fall : but through grace, my warmest and most earnest prayers, as now, will be then, for the prosperity of the Lord's chosen. Those divine words are in my heart, and will hang on my lips with my latest breath, "Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion ; build thou the walls of Jerusalem !" Ps. li. 18.

Your's in Christ,

Plymouth, Sept. 19, 1825.

ROBERT HAWKER.

X.

ON THE STATE OF THE CHURCH. A LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF
THE GOSPEL MAGAZINE.

SIR,

A correspondent of your's, under the signature of ' J. R. ' and who dates his letter from Shepton Beauchamp, hath made a request to me so personally and with so much courtesy, that, independent of higher motives, I cannot but feel constrained to make answer to it. And though, I confess, it is not congenial to my feelings to notice any of the controversial writings of the present day, yet sometimes there is a needs-be for engagements in things not very pleasurable. I am in a great measure now retired from the bustle of active life, and got into winter quarters: and I am too old, and too much worn out, to enter upon a new campaign. I can, therefore, look on to the several parties that are using the saw of contention on each

other, and say in the words of the prophet, "Behold! is it not of the Lord of Hosts, that the people labour in the very fire; and the people weary themselves for very vanity!" Habak. ii. 13. And what is it but both labour and vanity, the hope to persuade natural, unrenewed men to believe those divine truths, which the Holy Ghost declares can only be "spiritually discerned?" 1 Cor. ii. 14. Moreover, the apostle had it in command to tell the church, that "if any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words: from such withdraw thyself," 1 Tim. vi. 3—5. And add to these, and above all, the infinite resources which the faithful in Christ Jesus have in a throne of grace, when, leaving "the profane and vain babblings of men," they draw nigh to God. Here may be found a *requiem* from all the contests of the world. While sitting at the feet of Jesus we hear not the clamours of the distant multitude; or, if hearing, regard them not but as the noise in which we have no concern. When we can and do leave all with the Lord, we may "be careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving make our requests known unto God; and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus," Phil. iv. 6, 7.

Your correspondent, Mr. Editor, it should seem by the nature of his request, hath taken a more than ordinary alarm at one symptom of disease threatening the church with infection, while overlooking the gangrene, which, by its pestilential effluvia, appears about to pervade the whole body. The professing church, under the cover of what is called *evangelical piety*, is content with a name to live, while in reality respecting vital godliness is dead before God. Like the church of

Laodicea, as stated by our Lord himself, she saith, "I am rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing; and knoweth not that she is wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked," Rev. iii. 17.

I have now on my table before me several curious specimens, in confirmation of the awful state of religion in the present day, all of them sprouting from one and the same root; and, like a polypus, sending out branches to spread in every direction to bring forth a like deadly fruit. There have been such things in every age of the church; but those are peculiarly characteristic of the nineteenth century. One of them hath come forward to public view, and by way of attracting the greater attention, hath assumed the appellation of 'THE CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE SOCIETY.' And it appears from the statement given, that a meeting was to have been held about the middle of the last month, for the discussion of the doctrine of the 'Resurrection of Christ.' And the secretary of the society, with a modesty peculiarly his own, proposed on this occasion to repeat an oration, which had been delivered by him before; and which, he said, had carried the almost unanimous verdict of a full and respectable assembly that 'such an event had never happened.'

Another paper is also on my table full of many sugary things, of the capability of raising human nature to a dignified situation in society: for which purpose, an Infantine School is to be established through the land, with the intent of taking very little children, before that they have received any impressions of evil, and by nurturing them in temper and disposition, in their latter lives they may be ripened into every virtue which adorns human nature. Had Pelagius bee alive, he would have been an admirable president for this institution; for, as he totally denied original sin, this would have corresponded to the forming the infant

mind, by its purity and pliability to every thing good ; and, as Pelagius declared that ‘ as mankind are bound to God for nothing by reason of it, all the harm that Adam did was by example ;’ this early prevention, according to this plan, would have removed at once the effect of imitation. One of the advocates, at the meeting of this society, professed himself a friend to the institution on account of the liberal principles in which it was to be conducted. ‘ The conductors (he said) had that day, he understood, given a pledge (here one of them bowed assent) that while the children sent to those schools were to be educated religiously, they should not be taught any particular catechism or creed.’ This speech, it is said, was received with great cheerings. ‘ I anticipate (said another at the meeting) an elevation of the human character and condition solely through these extensive changes.’

But a yet more extraordinary sample of the state of religion in the present day I have on my table, wherein two high in rank in the establishment, fellows of college in one of the universities, have proposed, yea, and contended for the propriety of the measure, that the Apocrypha should be printed in our bibles. They are supported in this decision with the signatures of twenty-four others, Masters of Arts, and most of them possessing benefices in the church. Under the hope of proselyting the world they have asserted, that the bible can never circulate freely over the continent, without this fabulous mixture with the word of God. And thus in human policy they hope to accomplish divine ends ; and by inverting the order of things, and in open contradiction to the holy scriptures themselves, they would make man the first mover and God the last.

You have another specimen, Mr. Editor, of the present state of things in religion, in your own Magazine for the last month, in the instance of a Mr. William Brown, a class leader, as he designates himself, of some

society at Manchester. It is impossible to define the line of sanity, or to mark the precise boundary where an aberration from it begins; but with all christian charity, we would hope that some direliction on this man's mind hath given birth to the awful statement which he hath made of himself, and the twenty-seven men and women of the same complexion in the society to which he belongs; for otherwise, he is in the state of the "strong delusions" spoken of by the apostle, 2 Thess. ii. 11. According to the account of himself and them, 'he hath not committed a single sin in thought, word, or deed for four years.'—Whereas, the Holy Ghost saith by Solomon, that "there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not," Eccles. vii. 20. Mr. Brown adds, 'I am as holy now as God himself.' Whereas the holy scripture statement is, "there is none holy as the Lord, for there is none beside," 1 Sam. ii. 2. 'Christ cannot make intercession for me now,' saith Mr. B. thus contradicting God who declared the priesthood of Christ to be an everlasting priesthood, Ps. cx. 4.

But while these, and many others of a like nature, are among the portentous signs of the present times, your correspondent hath passed them all by in attending to the one on which he founds his request to me, namely, "of the indwelling of God in his saints as he doth in Christ." That Jehovah, in his Trinity of Persons, dwells in his people as they are in Christ, by his gracious divine manifestations otherwise than he doeth to the world, is among the most precious and blessed truths of the gospel; but, that God (if by God be meant the Father) dwells in his people as he does in Christ, is a direct contradiction to the declaration of Christ himself, whose express words are, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me," John xiv. 6. The contrary assertion, of manifestation *from* or communion *with* the Father,

except *in* and *by* Christ, is but an old error revived; and hath so much of the spirit in it of the present Christ-despising generation, that let it be analyzed and sifted to its original principles, and a system of refined deism will be discovered at the bottom of the crucible. Let your correspondent, Mr. Editor, do by this, as I have done by all departures from "the faith once delivered to the saints," bring them as we are commanded, "to the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them," Isa. viii. 20.

Every error in doctrine begins from a want of spiritual and scriptural apprehension of the Person of Christ. I stay not to remark, what I hope is too plain and obvious to need the observation, namely, that until by regeneration or a new birth a man is rendered capable of discerning the truths of scripture spiritually, "he cannot receive 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. Now, a spiritual, scriptural apprehension of the Person of our most glorious Christ, becomes the inlet to the regenerated child of God for the attainment of divine knowledge: hence, our Lord's own statement of it, "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also. He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father," John xiv. 7—9. "I, and my Father are one," John x. 30. Now this oneness, this union, which hath a full relation to the divine nature of our most glorious Christ, at once proves, that in the essence of Godhead, in all the perfections and attributes of Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons, Christ, as God, possesseth, in common with the Father and the Holy Ghost, equal sovereignty, eternity, and all the distinguishing properties, which, according to holy scripture, constitute Godhead. And the spiritual and scriptural apprehension of this leading truth of the gospel, being received into

the spiritual mind by divine teaching, gives the regenerated child of God clear and full views of the Person of Christ, that in his essence and nature in the Godhead, all is inherent and underived, being one with the Father and the Holy Ghost, "over all God blessed for ever. Amen."

Laying this, as scripture hath lain it, the foundation for all that follows, in relation to the Person of Christ, and for all the glorious work of Christ; the spiritually taught of God is led on to observe, in going over scripture ground, that when it was determined in the council of Jehovah, in his Trinity of Persons, that one of the sacred Three which bear record in heaven, should come forth from the invisibility of his dwelling, to make known the vast purposes of his will in relation to his church and people, this Holy One became the only one; and by assuming into union with his Godhead that holy portion of our nature, whereby in that compound, God and man in one, he might accomplish all those purposes revealed in the sacred scripture; he and he alone came forth the visible Jehovah, according to that statement, "no man," or, as the word (*oudeis*) ought to have been rendered, *no one*, (as well angels as men) "hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, (not only *was*, but *is now*, agreeable to that other scripture, John iii. 13.) he hath declared him," John i. 18. Hence, therefore, we read that "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," Col. ii. 9. Hence also elsewhere, "God was in Christ," 2 Cor. v. 19. And all scripture concurs in testimony, that all the Persons in the Godhead are in Christ. "Believest thou not (said the Lord Jesus to Philip) that I am in my Father, and the Father in me?" John xiv. 10, 11. And God the Holy Ghost is in Christ; not as in his people, in gifts and graces, and making our bodies his temple for the communication of his divine influences; but personally

in Christ, as the Father is in Christ; so that Christ, from the infinity of his essence as God, and his suitability as man, and both blended in one, becomes the Mediator, and the only Mediator between God (in his Trinity of Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost) and man; without whom, there can be no communications either here in grace, or hereafter in glory. And is it possible, for any one in the face of these scriptures, to say or believe, that God the Father dwells in his people as he does in Christ? Yes! it is possible, for all natural unrenewed men both to say and believe, because scripture asserts that "no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost," 1 Cor. xii. Their saying or believing, therefore, is not the result of divine teaching, but the presumptuous reasoning and head-knowledge of the unregenerated mind.

But we must not stop here. The further we go in traversing the sacred ground of holy scripture, on the investigation of this subject, the more enveloped would the mind of the regenerated child of God be in blindness, on the supposition that our communications in grace or glory are not in and through Christ, but the indwelling God is with us as he dwells in Christ. In this case, what is become of that throne of our most glorious Christ, which in contradistinction to all creatures, was proclaimed to be "for ever and ever?" What is gone by of the adoration of angels, who, at the bringing in the first begotten into the world, were commanded to worship him? What are we to understand of the personal glory of our Christ which he had with the Father before the world was, and which Jesus expresseth in terms so infinitely sublime, when he saith, "glorify thou me with thine own self?" John xvii. 5. Do the advocates who would persuade us, that when they say God dwells in his people as he does in Christ, we have the inhabitation

of God, mean God in his Trinity of Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? If so, ought they not to explain how this indwelling is without the Mediator? Can he, "who dwelleth in that light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen or can see," make a manifestation of himself in a way contrary to his own declaration, when he said, "there shall no man see me and live?" Exod. xxxiii. 20. And is it possible for any man to conceive that Jehovah, in his Trinity of Persons, will make known to his creatures the revelation of his attributes, which all scripture proclaims to be incommunicable? We can and do, through the medium of our most glorious Christ, spiritually enter into some apprehension of that sublime scripture, in which it is said, he is above all, and through all, and in you all," Eph. iv. 6. His being and essence of a nature "above all," not only infinitely transcending all, but differing from all, as the distinction between the Creator and created. And when it is said, "through all," here again we can conceive that the Lord may and doth so be through all, that while distinct from, he may as the air, fill all. And when it is added, "and in you all," here, by the gracious influences communicated from the Holy Three in One, through Christ, we have day-light let in upon the soul to give apprehension. But when the Lord challengeth for his own distinguishing prerogative his omnipresence, and saith, "Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord?" Jer. xxiii. 24.—how the advocates for God's dwelling in his people as he doth in Christ will explain this, I believe they have never considered. In Christ, as both God and man, here was power for this communication: he that was "fellow to the Lord of Hosts," was capable of all fulness; but our fellowship is with him, that was, and is, "the Lord's fellow;" and if we lose this sole medium of all manifestation, what part

can we have in this incommunicable perfection of Jehovah, belonging alike as it doth to the Holy Three in One, his immensity?

I must not trespass further. But I hope I have said enough under the Lord, to convince the spiritual church in Christ, (and it is for such I labour) that all communications to the church both here and hereafter, can only be in and through the glorious Person of our most glorious Christ. And very sure I am, that all that are regenerated and brought into an apprehension of the Holy Trinity, into what Paul calls, "the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ," will discover also under the same divine unction, that our Christ is (what he called himself) "the Alpha and Omega; and in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

I must not conclude, Mr. Editor, until that I have first admonished your correspondent not to be moved by what is going on in the present day. The whole prophecy of scripture is directed to prepare the church for it. And we are expressly told by John, that the way whereby we are to know that it is the last time, is, because it was foretold "that antichrist should come," and there are now many antichrists. The Lord be praised that things are as they are: if they were not, I should want another bible. Let the whole church of Christ comfort themselves with this assurance; "the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his," 2 Tim. ii. 19. In due time, the Lord will appear for Zion: and the promise is absolute, "when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit Jehovah shall lift up a standard against him," Isa. lix. 19.

Your's to serve in the Lord,

ROBERT HAWKER.

XI.

A FAREWELL EPISTLE TO THE SPIRITUAL CHURCH OF OUR MOST GLORIOUS CHRIST, FROM ROBERT HAWKER, D. D. ON CLOSING IN HIS SEVENTY-THIRD YEAR.

Brethren, beloved in the Lord!

It hath been long in my intention of addressing you in a letter of love, as a small token of my affection before "I go hence, and be no more seen!" And being arrived at an age, in which, according to the nature of things, the time of my departure cannot be very far remote, and may be near indeed, I avail myself of the present moment, that I may have finished my letter before that I have finished life, and that well-known voice, (though never so heard before) shall graciously sound through all the chambers of my heart, "the master is come, and calleth for thee!"

I had written thus far, when an event took place which seemed to forebode, not only that my intended letter to the church was over, but with it all human correspondence for ever. The year had opened most gracious and lovely with the Lord's day, and I was enabled to be found at my post as usual. It hath been my custom for many a new year in succession, to make proclamation to the church on that text of scripture, Deut. vii. 9. "The faithful God." But whether on this occasion from a debility of which I myself was then unconscious, or whether from a more than ordinary exertion—when the public service of the holy day was over, I found myself in a state of undescrivable weakness: since which I have been the Lord's prisoner at home, without once being able to go up to the house of the Lord.

This will explain to the church the cause of my omission; the very account of which I had not strength to have communicated, but by an amanuensis. There is

a beautiful passage in the book of Job, which gives a comprehensive statement, how "the purposes of men are broken off by death!" Job xvii. 11.

The letter I had intended for the church would have savoured I hope of divine things, suited for one to have sent to the church who is himself on the eve of departure from things temporal to enter on those which are eternal: but, perhaps, there would have mingled with it much of egotism, such as belongs to the talk of old men. Be this as it may, the intention is superseded, and most probably will never be revived. But is it not likely, that the hand of the Lord is in this appointment? And while my intention was to have said somewhat to the church of my affliction, and the regard I have for their love, the Lord hath called off my attention from so unimportant a matter as hath any reference to myself, to look at higher subjects connected with the manifestation of his glory.

I apprehend the spiritual church of our most glorious Christ to be at present much agitated, with the appearance of a recent publication, entitled, 'Zion's Banners:' and indeed, the novelty of the work carries with it much plausibility to attract attention. The singularity of the dedication with which it opens first arrested my notice, for it is such as I had never seen before. The words are in an address to God, 'Most beloved and adored Sovereign and Sire.' I have heard that in the pageantry of earthly courts, sometimes in a way of greater adulation the word Sire is substituted for Sir; but these things lose all meaning, when considered in relation to Jehovah: the word of God furnisheth not a single instance to countenance the appellation. And what should we have thought, if among the patriarchs, prophets, or apostles we had found them using such words when laying low in the dust before God, they had so prefaced their supplications, in addressing "the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy!"

But if the mode of dedication appear so singular, how much more did the motive call forth my astonishment, which the author assigns in the body of the work that he had in view on writing the pamphlet. The one direct object he fearlessly declares to be in his design, is to shew, ‘that the glorious name of Immanuel is essentially written upon the whole spiritually baptised body, in conjunction with its glorious head,’ (this he saith. page 7): and in the following page (8), he adds, ‘What I intend chiefly to investigate, and I hope scripturally to establish, is, that the regenerate church in conjunction with her glorious head, is really and essentially Immanuel.’ And marvellous to read, in a subsequent part (page 30), he observes, that ‘God, with the *individual humanity* of his Son, could not possibly save and glorify us, if it did not result in God with our individual humanity:’ and he adds, ‘the blessed name, Immanuel, however, does in itself correspond with all the other scripture testimony, as to the church being destined to the same vital union with Godhead as himself; for as before observed, it does not signify *God with him*, as though this great glory were intended to be confined to the head of the church, but it is, *God with us*.’

I pause, and while I pause I tremble, in the contemplation of what is here advanced! When the author saith, ‘it is not God *with him*, but God *with us*,’ I ask, what God doth he mean? He will hardly venture to say, the person of God the Father only; for what is then become of the other persons in the Godhead? And if he saith, he means Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, then will it follow that he cannot but mean also, that all the Persons of the Godhead were and are in Christ, “for in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily!” Col. ii. 9. Had our author for a moment lost sight of that fundamental truth, that Christ himself is God,

and eternal life? 1 John v. 20. How then, and in what sense can it be said, not God *with him*, but *with us*? Is He, who is alone, “the way, the truth, and the life—and none cometh to the Father but by Him”—is he passed by in this view of our union with God?

Our author hath brought forward a great number of very beautiful portions of the word of God, in proof of God dwelling in his people, and they in God; and he might have brought forth as many more, for they are among the plainest truths of the gospel: but unhappily, he keeps in the back ground, the whole and sole cause wherefore these scriptures are in the interest of the church, namely, because the church is in Christ. There is not one of them belongs to the church, but as the church is in Christ. The charter of grace runs in these words; “men shall be blessed in Him.” There is not a blessing out of Christ, for one of the fallen race of Adam: hence, “all the promises of God are said to be in Christ Jesus, yea and amen, unto the glory of God by us,” 2 Cor. i. 20. And hence, when Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons blesseth the church, they are said to be “blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ,” Eph. i. 3.

The author of this novel system appears to be very fond of argument and reasoning, and makes an appeal to certain portions of scripture, which in his apprehension, are unanswerable in support of his hypothesis. But argument and reasoning are not divine teaching. Isa. liv. 13. One line as of old, when Jehovah taught his people to avoid error, throws to the ground all the wisdom of men, “thus saith the Lord!”

It is very highly observable, what attention God the Holy Ghost hath shewn towards the church, in giving his redeemed and regenerate family, clear, scriptural, and spiritual apprehensions of the glorious Person of her Lord, under this name and character of Immanuel. He marks it down, in terms not to be mistaken, when

saying by Paul, "And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh," Tim. iii. 16. And the divine statement he himself hath given of this mysterious event is such, as is impossible to be mistaken, by the truly regenerated spiritual church of Christ, when they receive the glorious truth; "Not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual," 1 Cor. ii. 13.

Brethren, attend I beseech you to this statement of God the Holy Ghost; and observe the infinite grace and condescension in the Almighty Teacher. When the time came for revealing to the church the marvellous doctrine of God incarnate, we read that the intimation was made by the ministry of an angel. The almighty agency of God the Holy Ghost, was the first in the account given of this divine ministry. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God," Luke i. 35. Observe what is said, "that holy thing," not that holy person, for it never had been a person; it never was intended for a person; for it had no subsistence of itself to be a person; but in the moment it was brought forth, the same moment God the Son assumed it into union with himself, and that holy portion of our nature called in this scripture, (*to gegnomenon agion*, the nearest translation of which is, that holy begotten) being now united to the divine in the Godhead of Christ, became one glorious person, Emanuel, God with us!"

Brethren, remember that this is not my statement, but the divine statement of God the Holy Ghost. And now attend to another of a similar kind: a thousand years before the incarnation, we read in scripture, God the Son speaking to God the Father in these words, (compare Ps. xl. 6. with Heb. x. 5.) "Sacrifice and

offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me." Observe here again as before, a body, not a person, it never had been a person, but a complete, entire human nature, consisting of body, soul, and spirit.

For thus we read, speaking of God manifest in the flesh, "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren; and forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same," Heb. ii. 14, 17. So that this body, prepared by God the Father, our complete nature, but not a person, was assumed by God the Son in the moment of the incarnation, and thus we are taught how each glorious person took part in this mysterious transaction!

But we must not stop here. Of the Son of God it is said, that in this assumption (which let it be remembered was his own personal act, and consequently full proof of his Godhead) it was our nature he assumed, and not any other. For thus we read, "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham," Heb. ii. 16. Here observe again what the Son of God is said to have taken, namely, "the seed of Abraham." Not a person from among the children of Abraham, but the seed of Abraham: thus in exact correspondence to the former statement of a body, an entire whole human body, but which never had personality being only the seed of Abraham. Had it been a person then taken into union with the personal Godhead of Christ, there would have been two persons in Immanuel, which would have been not only foreign to divine truth, but repugnant to common sense and reason.

Neither do we stop here. For as in this stupendous work we are taught to behold the agency of the Father and of the Son; so no less the Holy Ghost is express in teaching the church the precise statement of time

when this gracious act of the incarnation was accomplished. For thus we read, "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a woman," Gal. iv. 4. Observe, "the fulness of the time," not a moment before could it have been accomplished, neither a moment after. In the precise period all along determined from all eternity, that "holy thing," not a person, was to be miraculously brought forth; and the self-same moment was to be assumed by this one glorious person of our most glorious Lord, in the Godhead of his divine nature, and by the union of our nature, in a complete subsistence of humanity with the divine nature, thus become unitedly one glorious Almighty Person, "Emanuel, God with us," God in our flesh!

I stay not to enter into the stupendous subject of the infinite and eternal causes connected with this mystery of godliness, and for which "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us," John i. 14. I am now confining myself to the subject of the incarnation simply as it is in itself. I am wholly looking to the divine statement which God the Holy Ghost himself hath given of this mystery of mysteries; and under the sanction of his almighty authority, I am constrained to conclude, that there never was nor ever can be any other Immanuel than our most glorious Christ: for unless a similar process was to take place (which is utterly impossible) of one of the persons in the Godhead assuming a portion and not a person of our nature as he did, into union with the divine, there cannot be another. He was, and is, and eternally will be, Immanuel, God and man in one person. The Almighty name of Emanuel therefore is solely his; and as incommunicable to any other, as is the incommunicable name of Jehovah, which never hath been, nor ever can be assumed by or applied to any creature, being the distinguishing character of Godhead, implying self-existence,

eternity, independence, underived, and alike belonging to the whole persons in the Godhead!

I am at a loss to conceive the meaning of our author's expressions; when speaking of the church, he saith, 'What I intend chiefly to investigate, and I hope scripturally to establish, that the regenerate church, in conjunction with her glorious head, is really and essentially Immanuel.' (page 7.) He cannot reason by analogy, or shew the smallest conformity on this ground between the head and the members. Christ, as hath been shewn by the divine statement of God the Holy Ghost, took not the person but the nature of his people; for that "holy thing" was not a person; but we are identified as persons; and every individual of Christ's mystical body when chosen by the Father in Christ before the world is said to have been identified, and "their names written in the book of life." And so well known are their persons, that it is said when the flocks come to be made up, they "shall all pass again every one under the hands of him that telleth them, saith the Lord!" Jerem. xxxiii. 13.

Here, then, if we are to be Immanuel, it cannot be in any way or manner similar to our Lord. I cannot for a moment suppose our author means that that identity of our persons will undergo a change; much less that the identity will be lost, or a double person be in each, for what he calls our being essentially Immanuel: for in that case, what becomes of the beautiful symmetry in Christ's body his church? And how are we ultimately to come "in 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?" Eph. iv. 13. But I prosecute the subject no further. I bless God, "that I have not so learned Christ!"

Brethren, it is with me a matter of grave consideration. But I am constrained to say, that every hour I

live serves but to convince me more and more, that the person of our most glorious Christ is not generally known among his people, in his own inherent, essential, eternal, underived, and self-existing power and Godhead, which he possesseth in common with the Father and the Holy Ghost, of all divine attributes and perfections. And if his own infinite and eternal excellencies be not known, it is impossible that his headship and suretyship to the church can be apprehended. To this one source may be traced, in the varied and multiplied forms of it, every instance of departure "from the faith once delivered unto the saints."

I need not go about to establish a truth which forms the basis of the whole church: neither need I insist upon a doctrine which is all over the bible: to you, as a spiritual church of Christ, it is enough to refer you to those numberless portions in the word of God, where the glorious incommunicable name of Jehovah is equally and alike applied to Jehovah, in his Trinity of Persons and unity of essence. And as this glorious name (as hath been before observed, and never can be too often observed) expresseth self-existence, independent and underived essence and being; nothing can more highly prove the perfect equality which the Holy Three in One possess together, in all that constitutes eternal power and Godhead: so that, when by this mysterious union of God and man in one Person, we behold one of the Holy Three coming forth from his invisibility, to make a special revelation of the eternal purpose, counsel, will, and pleasure of Jehovah, in making known the riches of grace to the church; all that humiliation we behold in him, while we keep in view his own eternal dignity, doth not lessen an iota of what he is in himself. And wherefore? because the indwelling Godhead is in all! So that every act, every deed, yea, every word, every thought is infinite, because he himself is infinite! Suppose therefore, brethren, that the

spiritual church of the living God was thus taught, thus lived upon, and thus daily acted faith upon the whole persons in the Godhead ; what idolatry could creep in to corrupt the truth as it is in Jesus? But bear with me while I say, to what church or chapel shall we now look where the tang of unbelief concerning the person of our most glorious Christ, hath not tainted more or less the whole lump? Oh ! what blessed times were those, when the fathers of the old church never failed to conclude in one, the whole purposes of the Godhead manifested in the person of Christ. There is a savour of his name, which as the church said, “ is as the ointment poured forth,” Song i. 3. And the expression one of the fathers made upon this occasion, when reading John xvi. 14, 15, is striking ; he called it *sacratissimus consessus Trinitatis!* the most sacred sitting of the Trinity !

Brethren, farewell ! “ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.”

Charles, Plymouth, Feb. 8, 1826.

ROBERT HAWKER.

SKETCHES

OF

A JOURNEY TO LONDON,

IN THE SPRING OF THE YEAR 1803:

INTERSPERSED WITH

SPIRITUAL REFLECTIONS.

SKETCHES

OF

A JOURNEY TO LONDON.

A man on earth, devoted to the skies,
He sees with other eyes than ours; where we
Discern a sun, he spies a Deity;
What makes another smile, makes him adore.—YOUNG.

TAKING LEAVE OF THE CHURCH.

I Did not know until in the evening service, preceding my proposed journey on the morrow, when I came to take leave of my church, to what extent the affection reacheth which subsists between a minister and his people. I thought indeed, if I knew any thing of my own heart, that I loved them; and had conceived, that I was not altogether unacquainted with those feelings which the apostle experienced, when he told the church of Corinth, that he would very “gladly spend and be spent for them.” But it was reserved for the moment of separation from the people of my charge, to be made sensible how very closely both their persons and their everlasting interests had wrapped themselves about my heart. Five and twenty years of a feeble but affectionate ministry among them, and

which never had before been interrupted by an absence equal to the one now intended, (excepting only by sickness, and once on a similar errand) called up a variety of interesting images before me, and awakened every anxious concern.

What the will of God, in this dispensation of his providence, as concerning my departure, might be: what event either in my own circumstances, or in the circumstances of the church and people during my absence, might take place: whether vacancies by death might not be made among those I left behind, ere my return; or whether the same common period of nature in myself, might not for ever prevent that return:—these, and the like affecting ideas, crowded upon my mind, when in the close of my evening lecture I came to say farewell: so that I could only tell them, what at that time I thought to be little, and no fear, was presuming to say too much; that, like Paul, “I greatly longed after them all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.”

It was true, indeed, I had been led to hope, and the partiality of some around me tended but the more to the cherishing of that hope, that, during the many years in which I had gone in and out among the people, I had entered with a warmth and earnestness of affection into all their spiritual concerns; and that in labouring in the word and doctrine, I had “kept back nothing that was profitable.” But now, when in the prospect of leaving them, and when the thought crossed my mind, that those “among whom I had gone preaching the kingdom of God, might see my face no more:” a thousand fears and misgivings arose within, lest, through ignorance, inattention, or the want of earnestness in my duty, I had at any time lost sight of the sweet spirit of the Lord Jesus, and thereby offended any of those “little ones for whom Christ died.”

If my reader be of the sacred order, he will enter into a better apprehension of what my feelings were, by his own, on these interesting points, than by any words which I can adopt to convey an idea of them. You, who sustain the arduous office of a minister of Jesus! whose earnestness in labour and zeal in winning souls, is manifested both in the private and public department of duty. You! for whom a throne of grace can witness, with what awakened solicitude you have pleaded, when, like the great High Priest himself, you have continually brought all the spiritual concerns of your charge before the Lord, and spread their wants, and doubts, and fears, and temptations, and left them there for answers: do you say, for (you who enter with a warmth of love into the church's interests, and make the people's care you own) you only can determine, what kind of feeling of the heart that is, which ariseth from an apprehension, that much hath been neglected and much forgotten, in the discharge of the arduous task of the ministry.

Blessed Master! in that "book of remembrance," which thy servant the prophet (speaking after the manner of men) tells us, "is written before thee," blot out the numerous errors of my poor ministry! And while thy condescending grace is manifested towards all thy faithful servants whom thou hast sent forth to the work, in marking down their labours of love with every tear they drop, and every prayer they plead, in the sweet employment of ministering to souls; Oh! may it be noted in the margin of thy book, that, notwithstanding all the weakness and unworthiness of my ministry, the earnest desire of my heart, and which thy grace hath given me, is to be the humble servant of Jesus, and the affectionate friend of his people.

TAKING LEAVE OF MY FAMILY.

I had finished the morning devotions of the closet, and of the household. After the example of the man of God, I had entreated the Lord, not "to carry us up hence, unless his presence went with us." (For part of my family was to accompany me.) Nothing therefore remained, but to bid them a farewell which were at home; and to step into the carriage then at the door.

But here a new source, to call forth the tender sympathy of the heart, was opened, in which the streams both of nature and grace were blended. I see no cause to blush, when in the hour of the separation of friends, the tearful eye bespeaks the feelings of the soul: for what is it but another mode of nature, and infinitely more expressive than the voice, to say, I love you. Call it not a weakness: for surely, that can be no weakness which at once distinguisheth and dignifieth humanity; unless indeed, insensibility be a virtue.

But what a precious relief is it to the mind of a true believer in Jesus to reflect, that, amidst the many separations of near and dear connexions, nothing can separate "from the love of Christ!" My God may, and if his wisdom see fit, (for wisdom as well as love is at the bottom of all his ordinations to his people) my God will, take from me every creature comfort: but never, never, will he take away his Christ. And while faith is in lively exercise, amid many changeable providences, to live upon an unchangeable God, will always afford an abiding security to the soul. I found sweet consolation from the thought, as I stepped into the chaise. And the mind receiving this bias of direction to ruminate; a variety of pleasing considerations sprung up of themselves to my ideas. I recollected that this separation, though from some of the dearest

images of natural affection, was not as the separation of many others. It was not an everlasting farewell which we were taking of each other. It was not the departure of the father a family in dying circumstances, neither was it so much as the absence induced from the removal to distant climes. But, an occasional, and (as the sequel hath since shewn) a short interruption to domestic enjoyment, and that only, that both they who went abroad and they who remained at home, might, in the very separation, find the better opportunities for proving the faithfulness of God.

Reader! have you ever carefully noticed, and as carefully marked down, in the memorandums of your own experience, the tokens of divine love in *distinguishing* mercies? If not, you have lost much happiness. They form the sweetest portions of life. I would not be without them for the universe. How often, in a cold and dark hour, when present enjoyments were wanting, hath the recollection of some special testimonies of the divine favour that were past, warmed and enlivened my heart!

It was this comparative statement in the mind, of the distinguishing mercies of God to my soul beyond thousands, that brought with it instant satisfaction. Perhaps (I said to myself) in the very moment that I and mine are mingling our tears together, in the prospect of a short separation; some are hanging in agonies over the bed of a dying parent, child, or bosom friend! Nay, is it not possible, there may be others, (and gracious minds too) now exercised with soul distresses of inexpressible misery, in being torn for ever from the embraces of objects endeared to them by nature, but whom the hand of justice, or the rash hand of their own daring impiety, hath consigned to destruction? The very thought makes the blood run cold as it enters my heart!

I was so lost in meditation on the subject which

had thus engaged my thoughts, on entering the carriage, that time had slid away insensibly, and we were got on many miles in the road before I was aware of it.

But the reader will I hope forgive me. I have undertaken to give 'Sketches of my Journey.' But this is not with the design of counting the mile-stones as we pass, but to mark down the memorandums of mercies which meet us in the way. I shall not think it necessary to detain the reader's attention, with an account of towns, or inns, or in short any thing but what hath an immediate tendency to lead the heart to God, or what may fairly be marked down as a mercy coming from God. And if the reader thinks as I do, that a blessing is doubly sweet, when both the giver and the gift are seen and enjoyed; he will not be offended, that I pass over a thousand circumstances which a traveller meets in his way, to dwell wholly upon such as carry in their bosoms tokens of divine favour.

THE MANSION HOUSE.

Our attention was pleasantly arrested with the view of an elegant mansion house which lay in our road, situated in the centre of an extensive lawn, beautifully ornamented with trees, here and there, in an irregular order, (according to the modern method of laying out ground) with a double cascade in front; and in short, where every thing, both in nature and art, corresponded to make the spot lovely and desirable.

Oh! what a sweet place, (exclaimed one of my children) how delightful must it be to live here! True, my dear, (I replied) if the bountiful giver of it dwells at the same time in the owner's heart: for this is essential to put sweetness into the possession, and give him a relish for the enjoyment of it. Creature-comforts

inherit nothing in themselves to impart happiness. A man may be very miserable in the possession of every earthly blessing: and, on the contrary, another may be very happy in the absence of every thing the world holds dear. And this explains the seeming paradox, that many an aching heart dwells in a fine house: while many a poor man, such as the apostle speaks of, "having nothing, yet possesses all things." Jesus, and a consciousness of an interest in his love, is the "one thing needful" to crown all. And where he is not, all the surrounding circumstances signify nothing. If (I added) the owner of this beautiful mansion hath Jesus for his portion, and by a well-grounded interest in him, tastes the love of God in a covenant way, in all his mercies; then is he blessed indeed "in his basket and in his store:" but if his heart and affections, like his cascade, only run downwards; not all "the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, nor the precious things put forth by the moon," can give real and substantial joy to the heart.

Reader! I would caution you to exercise a holy jealousy over your own mind on this grand point. Be more careful in the examination of what you estimate your prosperous hours than in any other: when you are most happy, most satisfied with surrounding circumstances, when health and wealth, children, friends, and all things smile around; search diligently, is Jesus in the mercy? And, is it sweet on his account? Doth the Lord and master of the feast sit at the head of the table he hath spread, and bid you welcome? Doth he say, "Eat, O friend, and drink abundantly, O beloved!" Estimate the real value of the blessing by this standard.

THE SOLDIER AND HIS FAMILY.

We passed on the road during the several stages of our journey, a great variety of characters. Some riding

in state attended by their servants; and others, walking by the way, in all the wretched circumstances of poverty. I seldom behold those very striking contrasts in the world, and especially where things appear so much in the extreme, without being led to the reflection of distinguishing mercy! Perhaps the reader, as well as the writer, hath sometimes felt that awakening question of the apostle rising within, "Who maketh thee to differ from another?" It is always profitable in the application.

Among the many which passed our chaise, and which called forth this idea very forcibly in my mind, were a poor soldier and his family. The whole group consisted of five persons; himself, his wife, and three children. The poor man carried the stoutest child in his arms: the second eldest (as it appeared) was tied up in the skirt of the mother's gown, and hung at her back; while the youngest, a little infant, lay at her breast: a small bundle was suspended at her arm; and the father had somewhat like an old knapsack on his shoulders.

My mind was instinctively led in beholding them to the recollection of what Solomon observed, "I have seen servants on horses, and princes walking as servants of the earth," Eccles. x. 7. If the passage be interpreted in a spiritual sense, and agreeably to the general analogy of scripture, the same will hold good in all ages of the church. The children of God are said to be "kings and priests to God and the Father:" while ungodly men in whatever situation they may be placed, are in scripture language called servants. Gen. xi. 25, 26.

Some author (no matter whom) in his writings, when speaking of God's children as princes, though in indigent circumstances in this world, hath called them '*reges designati*; kings elect.' In the next, he says, they will be '*reges de facto*; kings indeed.' Here,

therefore, they are not what they appear to be : they are in disguise : they move up and down in questionable shape : their circumstances, their apparel, their accommodations, in short, all things about them bear no correspondence to the children of a king.

Perhaps (I said to myself, as I revolved the subject) this poor soldier, or some one branch of his family, if not all, may be of this alliance. The thought itself was consolatory, in softening the reflections excited in my mind, in the view of his apparent poverty ; and I felt myself disposed to give scope to it.

There must be, let philosophy say what it will on the subject ; there must be a very sensible distinction in the frame and constitution of the soul from that of the body. The common clay of nature (if I may be allowed to call it by that name) admits a great variety in its structure. There is no doubt an elegance and loveliness in some, compared to others, as if they were not creatures of the same species. But how often have I seen under a rude, ill-shapen, and forbidding form, the tokens of a noble, generous, and intelligent mind, as if every quality that was lovely and engaging lodged within. I know not if the subject hath ever called up the reader's observation ; but I venture to believe, that whatever inequalities distinguish one man from another, in the structure of the body, there are none but what grace makes in the formation of the soul. And I confess that I am in a great measure confirmed in this conviction, from the united consideration of those two grand points respecting the soul, its creation and redemption.

By creation, we have all the reason in the world to infer, that souls are equally precious in themselves, in respect to dignity and value, inasmuch as they are not produced as the body, by successive generation ; but come immediately from the hand of God. Hence all alike originating from one and the same source, it

should seem to follow, that they are equal in rank and worth.

And by redemption, all for whom Christ died being bought at one and the same price, whatever other circumstances of distinction may arise, it should seem no less evident, that in this grand particular there is not the smallest inequality. And if I mistake not, this leading doctrine was intended to be conveyed to the church, under the Jewish law of ransom. "The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the Lord, to make an atonement for their souls." Exod. xxx. 15.

What a volume of the richest and most precious consolations may a gracious mind, who hath God the Holy Ghost for his teacher, read to himself, in those two great chapters of the creation and redemption of his soul!

Reader, may that blessed Spirit both prompt and enable us to look within ourselves, and properly value what is of such high dignity: and seeing that there is such a capacity of knowledge and happiness in the soul, let us pray for the sanctifying influences of divine grace, that by the work of God the Spirit on our souls here, we may be made "meet partakers of an inheritance with the saints in light" hereafter.

THE HORSE TRIPPING.

The tripping of one of the horses in the carriage, which seemed to threaten immediate danger, called off our attention for the moment from every other consideration. The poor animal was nearly thrown down, but providentially recovered himself, and relieved our apprehension.

In the modern language of the world, this would be called an accident, and the prevention of the evil resulting from it, would be supposed chance. But I bless God that "I have not so learned Christ!" It is a favourite maxim with me, to see all things and to receive all things in a covenant way, being perfectly convinced, that all are included in the covenant. And while the impression is warm upon my mind, I would tell the reader, that next to a clear assurance of being interested in this glorious covenant of redemption, the most satisfying consideration for the soul, in every event of life is, the assurance also, that it is an "everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure."

Reader! if God in mercy hath opened your understanding to a knowledge of these truths, let me beg of you to give a more awakened attention to them. My earnest desire is, to be always upon the look out to discover Jesus in every thing which concerns me. I am very sure that the most common, the most ordinary mercies, have more of his gracious hand in them than we always see. What a pleasure, therefore, we lose, in losing this view of him. When a soul can say, as David said, and feel as David felt, when he cried out, "My times are in thy hands;" then neither chance nor accident hath any thing to do in our concerns. For if our times are in the Lord's hands, all the events connected with them must be so: times of sickness, times of health, times of trouble, times of joy; in a word, every appointment, and the very timing of each appointment, are in his hands. Oh! precious consideration, to take off from the mind a load of care. Blessed God! help me to improve it as it may be needed on every occasion. In my travels to know my safety in thy power; in my wants to behold my provision in thy fulness; and in all my fears to see that thou art beforehand with me in all thy merciful preventions. And thus suffering no token of thy love to pass and repass

before me unnoticed, may I be enabled by thy grace, so to keep a watchful eye upon all thy providences towards me, that I may rest assured, I shall never want my God in his providence to watch me!

THE RAINBOW.

A falling shower had sweetly refreshed the earth, and laid the dust, which made it more pleasant for travelling. Similar are sometimes the effects of the gentle droppings of grace upon the mind: for when a long sunshine of prosperity hath given rise to the dust of our sinful corruptions, which have blown up with every wind of temptation, so as almost to blind the eyes of our spiritual faculties; how very salutary and grateful to the soul, like a falling shower, hath been the seasonable descent of grace in some sanctified affliction? Perhaps the reader may know somewhat of this in his own experience. If so, I congratulate him, for it is a blessed experience. I would not relinquish what I know of this, for an empire.

But the cooling rain did not only answer this pleasing purpose, but it brought with it another very delightful source of improvement to the mind, in becoming the medium to form a most beautiful rainbow.

I shall not attempt to argue which system of philosophy is nearest the truth, in accounting for the method by which this elegant arch is formed in the heavens. I shall not enquire whether Descartes, Antonio de Domino, or Sir Isaac Newton, most excelled in their discoveries on the subject: but taking up the received opinion, that the rainbow is formed by the reflection of the sun-beams from the drops of falling rain; and doubting not but that the rays of light, of different refrangibility, cause that diversity of colours which we behold beautifully combined together; I wish myself

always to pass over merely philosophical views of the rainbow, in order to contemplate those which are divine.

I would desire, at every renewed contemplation of this lovely object, to connect with it what the word of God hath said upon the subject: and (as I have remarked elsewhere*) while I keep in remembrance, that the God of nature is the God of grace also; when the Lord causeth this glorious object to be hung out for man's notice in the heavens, to forget not, that though the means of producing it be natural, yet the end proposed from it is gracious. Blessed God! hast thou said, that thou wilt set thy bow in the cloud: that it shall be a token of thine engagements to mankind, that thou wilt look upon it, and remember thine everlasting covenant? Lord, give me grace so to behold it, as to preserve alive in my mind the recollection of all these precious things connected with it. And may I always see in it, the symbol of Him, whom the apostle saw clothed with a rainbow round the throne in heaven; that all the affections of my heart may feel interested in every renewed view of the rainbow, in receiving it as a token of thine everlasting covenant with our nature, in the person and offices of the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE SETTING SUN.

The sun was going down the western heavens, with a degree of glory surpassing all description: but by the splendour of his beams, and the clearness of the horizon, his golden rays refracted by the spherical form of our atmosphere, afforded considerable light, even after his orb had disappeared.

I have often thought, that the believer in Jesus, when in the decline of his day, bears a striking resem-

* The Poor Man's Commentary on the Bible.

blance to the setting sun : for as the great luminary of the earth appears increased in magnitude, his beams of richer gold, and the rays he scatters all around infinitely more pleasing to the eye, and extending further than when in his meridian splendour ; so the man of God appears fuller in experiences, richer in divine gifts, and brighter in the evidences he gives to those around him of the Lord's gracious dealings with his soul, than in the former periods of his life, when in the very meridian of ordinances, and the enjoyment of the several means of grace, he was holding forth his light among men.

THE MOON.

We had many miles yet to go to finish our journey, when (as the author of 'Paradise Lost' beautifully describes it) night came on :—

Now came still evening on, and twilight grey
 Had in her sober liv'ry all things clad ;
 Silence accompany'd ; for beast and bird,
 They to their grassy couch, these to their nests
 Were slunk, all but the wakeful nightingale ;
 She all night long her am'rous descant sung ;
 Silence was pleas'd. Now glow'd the firmament
 With living sapphires. Hesperus, that led
 The starry host rode brightest, till the moon
 Rising in clouded majesty, at length
 Apparent queen, unveil'd her peerless light,
 And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw.

Paradise Lost, Book 4, Ver. 598, &c.

It was a very kind providence for me and my fellow travellers, that the queen of the night (as poets call the moon) should, in her monthly course, be passing that part of the planetary orbit, which caused her borrowed light to shine on us. And if the reader be curious to enquire, and will consult the moon's age for the first week in May, 1803, he will find that she was at this period very near her full.

I stay not to enquire whether the moon hath an atmosphere: neither do I feel much interested to know, whether the ocean of the moon be frozen. They who assert that she hath no atmosphere, may, if they please, suppose the fact fully proved from the undiminished brightness with which the stars appear, when emerging from behind the moon's disk: and they who contend that her ocean is frozen, may be equally satisfied in this hypothesis from the want of the appearance of lunar tides; which, if they existed, they tell us, would certainly cover that part of her disk which is nearest the earth. Questions of this kind may amuse, but they cannot profit.

Rather, let my contemplation of this servant of the Almighty, commissioned, as she hath been at this time, with so much mercy and goodness to my accommodation, call up the nobler affections of gratitude, love, and praise to her Creator; and, while receiving the ministry of this friendly planet of the night, and deriving so much benefit from her shining; here again, as in every other instance of the Lord's kindness, I desire grace to look beyond the means to the Author of the means; and while enjoying the gift of a gracious God, to enjoy a thousand times more the gracious God of his gift.

Do I not know, that this light of the moon is not her own, but derived? Is it not certain, that in her opaque body, there is, there can be nothing luminous? And is it not equally certain, that she shines by a borrowed brightness from the sun's influence? Oh! then let the thought lead my soul to thee, thou Sun of Righteousness, from whose glory and fulness alone it is, all that is fair, or bright, or amiable, or lovely, in thy people, is derived; neither is there any thing that is truly good or gracious in them, but what comes from thee. Dear Lord! mercifully shine on my soul; let the rich graces of thy Holy Spirit be always shedding

upon me; and let it be my mercy, never by sinful departures to withdraw myself from thy benign influence; but let that sweet promise be my never-failing security, in which thou hast said, "I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me," Jer. xxxii. 40.

THE JOURNEY FINISHED.

We arrived at length, after experiencing a series of mercies, to the proposed termination of our journey. We had implored the Lord's presence at our leaving home, to accompany us: and that presence, in a most gracious and refreshing manner, had gone before us, been with us, and followed us all the way.

In taking a review of the loving-kindness of the Lord upon this occasion, and gathering into one aggregate the many journeying mercies which hath encompassed us on every side, my heart melted within me in tracing the footsteps of divine love. The "pillar of cloud," had not only been our guide by day, and the "pillar of fire" screened us by night; but our bountiful God and Saviour had marked the covers of direction to us, in which his favours were inclosed, with such special love-tokens of his own hand, (as if to manifest from whom they came) that in the opening of them a thousand pleasures of the sweetest kind were at the same time communicated to our hearts. Wherever we came, whatever we saw, whatever we received by the way, in any and in every blessing, it was Jesus himself, and his love, which appeared in it, which gave a sweetness and a relish to all. If the sun warmed, or the air cooled, or the refreshments on the road ministered to our accommodation and happiness, every one of them became doubly, nay, ten-fold more precious, because Jesus was in all. It was his sun which warmed; his

air which cooled; his refreshments which spread, and furnished out our table.

Reader! you will not, you cannot surely wonder, when I tell you, that a deep sense of these things, and accompanied at the same time to my heart with an equal sense how utterly undeserved they were, prompted me to call upon the dear companions of my travels, in the very first moment of our arrival, in alighting from the carriage, to bend their knees with mine before the God of all our mercies. And had we not, all nature might well have joined to reproach our foul ingratitude, and the very stones of the earth have cried out against us!

Even now, in the recollection of so much mercy, even now again, dear Lord! would I renew my humblest thanksgiving. And do not, O my God, negative my request, when I accompany that thanksgiving with a prayer; that since thou hast been so gracious, thou wilt, O Lord, more incline my soul to holy obedience; that a life thus spared by thy grace, may be spent wholly in thy service.

THE CHARITY SCHOOL OF ST. PAUL'S, SHADWELL.—LORD'S DAY MORNING, MAY 8, 1803.

It was a matter highly gratifying to my feelings to be called upon, in the first exercise of my ministry after my arrival in town, to stand up in the pulpit as an advocate for this benevolent institution.

The religious education of the children of the poor, blended with the due attention to their future prospects in the world, is so truly laudable and praise-worthy, that every one who feels as he ought, an interest in what concerns the welfare of the rising generation, must take part. In fact, there needs no advocate either from the pulpit or the bar, to plead on these occasions: there is one already placed in every man's

breast, who is not totally void of charity. I had therefore nothing to do, by way of using arguments to persuade to liberality; but my province was simply to state the peculiar claims of charities to public favour, and then leave the application in every instance to each man's breast. And the event proved the propriety of the plan. The text of my sermon was those sweet words of the Lord Jesus; "I am come that they might have life; and that they might have it more abundantly," John x. 10.

As it is possible some reader may feel interested to know more particularly the outlines of this charity, it may not be improper to subjoin, that this school contains eighty children; viz. forty-five boys, and thirty-five girls, which are instructed in the principles of the church of England. The boys are taught to read, write, and cast accompts. The girls to read, write, knit, mark, and sew. In both schools they are annually clothed; and when of proper age, are put out as apprentices. Since the first institution of this school, the number received into it hath amounted to one thousand nine hundred and twenty-seven. In which number, it is not the smallest recommendation of the charity, that there have been many, and some are now living, who have risen into very respectable situations in life, and have become truly honourable and useful members of society.

I pause in this place, to pay a small tribute of thankful remembrance to my much honoured friend, Mr. Simpson, of this parish; who, after the service of the church was over, constrained us to take refreshment, and, like another Publius, "received us courteously."

THE LAZARUS SOCIETY.

The Lazarus Society hath for its treasurer, Mr. Gibbons, 95, Church Street, Bethnal Green; by whom

I was solicited to preach for it; which I did on the afternoon of the same day, in the church of St. Matthew, Bethnal Green, from those words of the prophet; which, according to my apprehension, seemed to be peculiarly appropriate, "And they shall come that are ready to perish," Isa. xxvii. 13.

If the reader be unacquainted with the principles of this charity, he will be pleased, I think, with the relation of them. And I doubt not but that he will be led with me to wish, that a similar institution was formed in every large town in the kingdom. Figure to yourself, a number of humane and pious persons going daily in quest of misery among the haunts of wretchedness; not waiting with a coldness of indifference until application be made for relief from the numberless sons and daughters of affliction, but penetrating into cellars and garrets, where the poor hide themselves to conceal their shame, and where many of them literally pine away for want. Figure to yourself innumerable cases of this kind; and fancy also, as is truly the case, that the members of this charity are privately administering to such supplies suited to their perishing circumstances; and this will afford some faint idea of the plan of the Lazarus Society.

But it were to give an imperfect idea of the outlines of this charity were the reader to suppose from hence, that the care of the body is the only object of its concern. It hath still far nobler designs in view: the everlasting welfare of the soul comes in agreeably to its importance, for a larger proportion of the Society's attention. And when the visitors have searched and found out misery in all its various forms, and have administered to the pressing demands of the body, then they take occasion (and it must be confessed the season is peculiarly suited to it) to direct the objects of their charity to seek relief in the more interesting concerns of the soul. And I am authorized to add, that their

labours of love, in many striking instances (as may be seen on the records of their charity) have been blessed of God to the conversion of souls "from darkness to light, and from the power of sin and satan unto the living God."

ST. ANN'S, BLACKFRIARS.

The evening of this day was engaged in divine service, at St. Ann's, Blackfriars; where I preached from those words of Job, "Oh! that I knew where I might find him," &c. chap. xxiii. 3, 4, 6.

I found my mind impressed with a more than ordinary solemnity as I entered the pulpit of this church. When I recollected the venerable character of that faithful servant of God who had so often occupied it; when I called to mind the labours of so great a man in this place; and when I considered, this very pulpit in which I now stand is the highly honoured spot on which dear Mr. Romaine stood, who is now with Jesus; a certain undescribable emotion passed over me, and induced sensations I had never before experienced.

Happy servant of Jesus! he hath realized the enjoyment of that blessedness, which is the portion of them "who die in the Lord." He hath now known what it is "to rest from his labours, and for his works to follow him." He hath seen, and is continually seeing his works following him, in the happy effects of his labours here below, in every soul he now meets before the throne, to whom his ministry was blessed by the sovereign power of divine grace. And who shall say how many of this description whom he left behind have since entered into glory; how many unfinished, and apparently at that time, unanswered prayers for the conversion of sinners, whose souls lay near his heart, have since been answered by a prayer-hearing God in their salvation, and who have since mingled their songs with his to

redeeming grace in the church above? Rest, faithful servant! in the enjoyment of God and the Lamb, now thou art entered "into the joy of thy Lord!" And may it be my portion also to be as thou wert, "the follower of them who now through faith and patience inherit the promises."

THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY.

It was with no small degree of satisfaction to myself, that in the few labours of my ministry while in town, the preaching a sermon for the Religious Tract Society formed a part. I have seen the good effects of this institution in several instances, and therefore, might well recommend it to the public attention. This service I endeavoured to perform, on Monday evening, the 9th day of May, in the church of St. Antholin's, Watling Street, from those words of the apostle, "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," Colos. ii. 2.

If the reader be unacquainted with the nature and design of this institution, he hath a great pleasure yet to receive in the perusal of the last Annual Report of the Society, which is truly interesting.* They state, that upwards of one million two hundred thousand tracts have been already circulated since the formation of the society; and that very decisive testimonies have been received of the Lord's blessing upon it.

It were devoutly to be wished that the plan was more generally known, and that it was yet carried into far more extensive execution: there are a great number of villages, where those useful little tracts

* This was the Report for 1802; with a small tract, entitled, 'the Origin and Progress of the Society.'

might be dispersed with promise of the most happy effects. And it cannot be the question of a moment, but that great good would be diffused among the community at large, if pious persons made it their business to scatter them in every direction. It would certainly tend, under divine grace, to counteract the poisonous principles, which abound in the filthy and profane songs, and other modern trash, which of late have issued so abundantly from the press, to the subversion of all order, as well as of religion and morality.

Reader! I could wish to interest your feelings in this work of mercy: there can be no charity equal to that charity which hath for its object the welfare of immortal souls. If I give alms to a poor man to preserve him from starving, certainly the act is kind and deserving commendations: but it should be remembered at the same time, the preservation of a thousand or ten thousand from starving is mercy only to the body; which, whether relieved or not, can live but for a little while: whereas mercy to the soul of a poor perishing sinner is of everlasting moment; for in its eventual consequences, if blessed of God, it makes the soul happy for ever. And the man that is thus made instrumental in the Lord's hand of so much good, as the rescuing a soul from death, is truly performing the office of a ministering angel upon earth. And as there is nothing, in the whole scale of christian love and charity, which bears any kind of resemblance in point of value to this gracious employment; so is it worthy consideration, that in the word of God, the greatest promises are held forth to the performance of it, "Let him know, (saith one of the sacred writers) that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." James v. 20. And another scripture saith, "They that turn many to righteous-

ness, shall shine as the stars for ever and ever," Dan. xii. 3.

THE FRIENDLY FEMALE SOCIETY.

This institution is of modern rise, under royal patronage. It was my privilege to be called upon to preach the first sermon in its behalf, which I did in the parish church of St. Saviour's, Southwark, on Tuesday morning, the 10th of May, 1803. The foundation of this discourse was taken from the words of the prophet Isaiah, xliii. 8. "Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears," &c.

The leading object of this benevolent scheme, is to provide for the necessities of poor aged women in declining years. It is well known, that the female character in every period of life is exposed to peculiar trials: it is at all times in itself defenceless; and makes an appeal, indeed, from its very form and tenderness, to any and to every one that can befriend it. But in the more advanced season of old age, when growing infirmities are sometimes added to the distress of a lonely unprotected state; when the body is bowed down perhaps with pain, and the mind depressed with sorrow; without any husband's love to assuage, or the child's help to relieve the pressing want: situations like these (and they are not a few in life) plead very powerfully with the finer feelings of our nature.

It reflects the highest honour upon the nature at large, that a plan for softening the various burthens of poor aged women, which hath been long wanted, is now, by the fostering hand of a few individuals, brought forward to public notice, and puts in its modest claims for favour among the other noble institutions for charity, which distinguish the liberality of the present day.

There is one distinguishing feature by which the

Female Friendly Society is marked; and which, in the very first appearance of it, cannot but prepossess the mind of those for whom it is designed in its favour, and that is, that it is wholly under the management of women themselves. So that it ensures all that tenderness, sympathy of character, fellow feeling, and female knowledge in the conducting of it, which peculiarly belong to the sex. Every thing that is gentle, soft, and affectionate, is called in to its administration; and a poor woman will find no restraint in communicating what she feels, and what she needs, when she unbosoms herself to one that can enter into a proper apprehension of what those feelings are, and what those wants may be. And it need hardly be observed, that there are a multitude of circumstances, arising from distress and poverty, among the weaker part of our nature, connected with the delicacy and tenderness of the character, which none but one of the same sex can be informed of, or become suitable to relieve.

But, though the whole government of this admirable charity is vested in the hands of women, it hath the best of all appeals to the affections and generosity of men. It proposeth to stretch forth its liberal hand to the aid of those who have known better days, but by the dispensations of a power, whose wisdom none can dispute, are reduced to want. Here, therefore, is a fine occasion opened to the man of opulence, who can best suppose, and ought at least to feel, what a reverse of such a situation must be. It hath for its objects of relief also, the case of servants, who have spent the youth and summer of life in labour without having been able to lay up any provision for the winter of it. Here again, the kind master finds scope for the exercise of his generosity, who would blush to see the labours of a faithful servant, when those labours are fairly over, recompensed with starving. And as

the Friendly Female Society desires to take into its benevolent arms the mother and the widow of every description, who may need its care; here every man who would lay claim to the character of an affectionate husband may consider himself appealed to, who would tremble at the idea that the partner of his heart, or the mother of his children, should in old age be reduced to want. In these, and similar cases, the Friendly Female Society holds forth its unanswerable arguments for support; and every man is called upon, under one or other of those rules, to prevent that distress in others, which, in a reverse of circumstances, would be so painful in his own.

The reader will not be displeased, I hope, if after saying so much in the recommendation of this charity, I only add the names of those respectable banking-houses, which kindly receive donations for it: these are, Messrs. Down, Thornton, and Free, Bartholomew Lane; and Messrs. Ransom, Morland and Co. Pall Mall.

THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY.—May 11, 12, 13.

The annual Meeting of this institution on those days, which called together from all parts of the kingdom so much of the religious world, superseded the exercises of my poor ministry during the remainder of the week. I only preached once at St. John's church, Horselydown, on Thursday evening. Text, Heb. iv. 14, 15, 16.

It was at one of those solemn services, I glanced for the first and last time, at that faithful servant of the Lord, the Rev. Mr. Newel, Vicar of Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire, who died very shortly after. The errands of grace which we were sent out upon lay in different directions, so that, like the throng passing and repassing in the street of Cheapside, our time

afforded no more than the momentary glimpse of each other: but had I known that the evening of his day was come, and that "the eye that then saw him would see him no more," I would have stopped him, though in his work of mercy, to have learnt from his lips, how sweetly those doctrines of salvation, which he was dispensing to others, comforted his own soul.

It is probable that as, at this very time, the Lord of the vineyard was about to call this labourer home, he might have been imparting to him more manifest tokens of his love. Many a believer, like Moses, hath ascended the hill by faith, and not only seen the promised land, but anticipated the possession of it before that he hath been taken up to the actual enjoyment. Perhaps this may have been the lot of this dear servant of Jesus. And had I asked him what his feelings were, when, as it proved by what followed, his steps were nearly approaching the suburbs of the heavenly city, he might have told me, that such were the lively exercises of his faith upon the person and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ; so gracious and manifold were the communications of the love of his Lord; and so sweetly did he find his soul drawn out in increasing longings after him; that every earthly tie was loosening in his affection; that the gates of the new Jerusalem seemed magnifying to his view, and the shouts of the glorified inhabitants increasing upon his ear.

Reader! I would pause to ask, what is your experience of these things? Sudden death, you know, is nothing uncommon. Most men may be said, in the strictest sense of the word, to die suddenly: for, independent of those instances of it which none will dispute, even in those diseases also in which death gives intimations of his approach, yet even here his hasty strides are hid as much as possible from the person himself for whom he comes by surrounding friends; partly, as it is said, by way of supporting the

spirits, and partly out of affection and good-will; so that the last hour is frequently an unexpected hour, and calls upon him by surprise. For an event, therefore, which in general is sudden, and may for ought you know happen to-morrow, how is my reader prepared? An unsettled state of unconsciousness concerning our interest in Christ, must always produce an unsettled frame for departure out of life. A soul that is wedded to the world will never leave the world but with reluctance. And if with a worldly spirit, the mind be under the dominion of any one affection that is earthly and sensual; if there be sin on the conscience; a loose and careless walk in the life and conversation; if there be no knowledge of God the Father's love, and the Redeemer's grace in the covenant of redemption; and the heart hath neither felt, nor desired to feel, the quickening, reviving, and renewing influences of God the Holy Ghost, dreadful will be the sound of the keys of death, hanging at his girdle "who openeth and no man shutteth; who shutteth and no man openeth." But, if a well-grounded hope of God's mercy through Jesus Christ hath wrought in the soul a life of faith and expectation of the coming of Christ, and of devotion to him, the dying day will then be considered as a welcome day: and the believer, like one long waiting for his Lord's approach, will rejoice when his chariot wheels are heard; and when the carriage shall stop at the door, he will leap up, and arise, and leave every thing behind, to spring into it, that he may mount up "to meet the Lord as in the air, and so be for ever with the Lord."

THE PHILOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

I had preached in the morning of the Lord's day, May 15, 1803, at St. Saviour's church, from the pre-

cious words of David, "Thou art my portion, O Lord!" Ps. cxix. 57.—and being engaged to preach in the parish church of St. Peter, Cornhill, in the afternoon, for the Philological Society, I chose as a subject sweetly connected with it, and arising out of the same, those words of the prophet for my text, "Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee," Isa. xliii. 4.

The Philological Seminary is a noble institution, and the object it hath in view is to give education and clothing to one hundred poor boys, who, when fitted by age and instruction to go forth into the world, are placed out in such situations as their respective abilities, genius, and disposition, seem to be calculated for.

One distinguishing character of the Philological Society, in which it differs from most other charities of the same nature, is, the selection of its objects for relief from the departments of life, whose parents had been bred to higher expectations and brighter prospects than the generality of the poor. Hence, therefore, sons of poor clergymen, and of naval and military officers, or of reduced tradesmen and mechanics, are particularly adopted in this school; and hence also, the education is conducted upon a more liberal plan than the common charity schools aim at, or indeed are designed for. Genius and ability are therefore sought after in the system formed by the Philological Society, and the sphere of usefulness to the state is extended, by bringing forth into action those latent powers of genius and ability, which otherwise might for ever remain hidden and unknown. It will of course be expected, that with these great and noble designs the plan of education should bear a suitable correspondence: and this is the case. The children to whom a more liberal system of instruction is supposed to be serviceable, beside the common learning, are taught the rudiments

of the Latin or French language ; and those whose bent of inclination leads them to the sea service, are instructed in the principles of navigation, geography, and drawing.

It would be an unpardonable omission in me, while relating this account of the Philological Society from its papers, did I not subjoin what those papers particularly wish to have known ; that subscriptions for the support of a charity of such national importance will be thankfully received at the School House, Mary Street, Fitzroy Square.

ST. JOHN'S CHARITY SCHOOL.

In the evening of this Lord's day, May 15, I preached in the parish church of St. John's, Horselydown, a charity sermon for this school, from those words of our Lord, "Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity," Luke xiii. 12.

The Friendly Society, as it is called, is formed for the purpose of educating and clothing one hundred poor children, consisting of sixty boys and forty girls. In addition to the common mode of government in charity schools, this affords maintenance to the sixteen senior girls of the school, by taking them into the house. Two pounds are also given with every girl put out apprentice. The school is held in Fox Court, Brook Street, Holborn.

I pause, in the recollection of the labours of this day, to pay the small token of remembrance to that highly honoured friend, whose affection not only rendered those labours light, but sweetened them by his society in accompanying me from one church to the other, as well as refreshing me at his house. This little memorandum will serve to convey to him the sense I still have, and shall long retain, of his friendship upon this occasion.

THE CHARITABLE FUND DISPENSARY.

There is a mode of administering charity which renders the application of it in many instances doubly grateful, and perhaps in none more so than in the one this institution of the Charitable Fund Dispensary hath for its object, in relieving the Sick Poor at their own habitations. Public hospitals are great blessings to a nation; but there is a multitude of cases which live out of their reach; infants and little children cannot be taken from their parents in order to receive their benefit; and many in adult years will forego their aid, rather than lose thereby the personal assistance and softening hand of the relation and the friend: and to say nothing of the delicate feelings of the human mind, however brought low by poverty, which cannot brook the publicity of their circumstances among the common mass in an hospital. Certain it is, that many a sick family may be found which would thankfully receive the favour of medical assistance at home, when the same assistance would not be acceptable if obliged to receive it abroad; for these and similar causes, dispensaries for administering medical advice, and medicines gratis to the poor in their own houses have been established in the various districts of this great city with very singular advantage, and their utility thankfully acknowledged by the modest and retired poor.

The Charitable Fund Dispensary, held at No. 5, Lily Pot Lane, near Goldsmith's Hall, hath relieved upwards of two thousand two hundred sick families with medicine and medical advice, as well as occasional help in a pecuniary way, since its institution; and it is not among the smallest honours of this charity, that the gentlemen of the faculty which belong to it, not only give their labours gratuitously, but give them with so much tenderness as well as promptness and skill, that the poor have in many instances testified in

very high terms their sense of both. But this institution is to be peculiarly commended and admired for the connection with it of a Visiting Society: so that while the medical gentlemen are benevolently endeavouring to relieve the bodily complaints of the distressed objects who apply, the serious members of the society visit them with a view to impress on their minds the truth and solemnity of eternal things: and what my views are of such charities the reader has already seen above.

It was my province to preach a sermon for this charity, at St. Ann's, Blackfriars, on Tuesday morning, May the 17th, from those words of the apostle, "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ," 2 Cor. ii. 14.

ST. LAURENCE'S CHURCH, NEAR GUILDHALL.

The evening of the same day, May 17, was employed in attending divine service at this church, where I preached from John iv. 49, 50.

THE PROTESTANT UNION.

This institution is formed for the purpose of making provision for the widows and orphan children of ministers of every denomination; and it must be confessed, that none stand more in need of it. Their profession, for the most part, precludes their making any provision themselves, and when it pleaseth God to close their labours, the whole source of maintenance to their families is necessarily dried up.

My endeavours to promote the funds of this Society were called forth on the evening of May 18, 1803, in preaching the anniversary sermon in the parish church of St. Mary Magdalen, Bermondsey, from these words

of the prophet, "And the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth," Isa. xxv. 8.

In calling to mind the service of this evening, it is impossible not to connect with it in remembrance the kind attention shewn me by a truly honourable friend in the Borough, whose zeal in the department of justice is as well known and approved as his general affection to the ministers of the gospel is open and avowed. I feel at this moment a renewed sense of his kindness upon this occasion, and cannot suppress the desire I have in this way of acknowledging it.

PAUL'S CRAY SCHOOL, KENT.—THURSDAY, MAY 19, 1803.

The retrospect of this day will ever form a very high gratification, among the pleasing memorandums of my life. It was my happiness on this day to become the advocate for this school in three successive sermons; and I have only to lament, that the arguments to its support, fell far short of the liberality shewn upon this occasion. The congregations of each service anticipated all I had to say in its favour, and in eagerness to hold it up in their fostering arms outrun my utmost hopes. In my morning sermon, I dwelt upon the fullness that there is in Christ Jesus, from the words of the apostle, Col. i. 19. In the afternoon, I endeavoured to represent his preciousness, from the words of the prophet, Isa. xiii. 12. And in the evening discourse, the assurance of divine love to "supply all the need of his people according to his riches in glory," from the words of the apostle, Phil. iv. 19.

THE LYING-IN CHARITY.—LORD'S DAY MORNING, MAY 22, 1803.

At the parish church of Allhallows Barking, Tower Street, I preached a sermon for the benefit of the Lying-in Charity, for the Delivery of Poor Married

Women at their own habitations. The text I made choice of was these sweet words of the Lord Jesus, "I am the bread of life," John vi. 35.

It is no reproach to any other benevolent scheme for softening or relieving the ills of our fallen state (for they are all excellent in their kind) to observe, that the Lying-in Charity for the Delivery of Poor Married Women at their own habitations stands as high in its pretensions for public favour, as almost any one institution that can be named. It would be invidious to make comparisons between the public institutions of charity, when all possess one and the same family feature; but while all possible respect is paid to those noble edifices of national grandeur, the hospitals, and asylums, which rear up their magnificent heads in the various parts of the metropolis, and challenge respect from every beholder, I must contend, that the secret and unobserved acts of charity which are going on in the many haunts of obscure poverty have many advantages, and none more so, than the provision which this society holds forth for the delivery of poor married women. Let the reader be told, that no less than four thousand four hundred and seventy-three poor women have been delivered at their own habitations, by the aids of this charity, during the last year; and that upwards of one hundred and sixty-one thousand six hundred and twenty-three have received that relief since its institution! And what an evidence will such an account bring with it of its great utility? If the number of births, within the bills of mortality, includes (as is supposed *communibus annis*) twenty thousand; it will then follow, that about a fifth part of these come within the department of this lying-in institution; and indeed the committee state, that a certain class of persons, such as the characters for whom it is evidently intended, seem to look up at it as among their privileges to partake of, and make ap-

plication accordingly. What a noble charity must this be!

It is not among the smallest inducements to the preference given by the poor to this charity, that in the relief administered here is no separation of families; the mother (if she be a mother before) doth not leave her little brood at home, while she goes into the hospital for delivery; neither is the wife deprived of the sight and attendance of her husband; but her presence is still useful to look over her household, and the husband's presence is rendered advantageous to soften her sufferings, and to keep alive, or to awaken those affections which such seasons are above all others calculated to induce. These are very strong recommendations with the affectionate poor. The reader may perhaps be earnest to know through what channels subscriptions may be conveyed for the support of so noble a charity; it may not be amiss therefore to add, that the office is at No. 13, Godliman Street, Doctor's Commons.

THE SURREY DISPENSARY.—LORD'S DAY AFTERNOON, MAY 22, 1803.

In the parish church of St. George the Martyr, in the Borough, I preached a sermon for this charity, from those words of the prophet, "I will make a man more precious than fine gold," &c. Isa. xiii. 12.

The best idea of this Institution may be gathered from the treasurer's account of it, which states that 'there evidently was required some kind of charitable institution between the hospital and the poor-house; for the former affords relief only to those who will become inhabitants, and those whose diseases admit of their personal attendance; the latter affords comfort to those who are destitute of any domestic accommodation. A dispensary like that of the Surrey, forms an intermediate arrangement that meets the defects of

both. Here the poor and industrious workman and his family may receive the aid of the physician, surgeon, and midwife, in all diseases and accidents, at their own habitations. Here the sick, hurt, and lying-in woman, can have every assistance, without the evils which necessarily arise to a family, when any one who is sick is removed. In a dispensary, medicines and other means of cure are regularly administered; and, at stated hours, those that are capable of attending may receive advice and medicines, with as little loss of time as possible. So that, by this system of a dispensary, medical charity is widely diffused, and every description of sickness is in some degree provided for, to which the arrangements of hospitals, with all their allowed excellence, cannot extend.'

The Surrey Dispensary hath admitted patients from the 2nd of March, 1778, to the 2nd of April, 1803, in point of number, no less than eighty-two thousand six hundred and eight. The Dispensary is in the Borough, where subscriptions are received.

THE LOCK HOSPITAL.

It is too well known to need the observation, at least the being much insisted upon, that the distinguishing feature which marked the Lock Hospital in its first formation, was the earnest desire of stretching forth the hand of pity to a set of beings, made more immediately wretched by their own depravity. It was thought but the common act of humanity to extend relief to misery, in whatever form it might be found, without being too exact to scrutinize in the first view of things, how great a degree of guilt had entered into the cause of that misery. But it was grace in the soul, which prompted the first promoters of the Lock Hospital to carry their views yet further, and cherished the hope, that if the blessing of God

followed the design, by converting the sinner from the error of his way, they might "save a soul from death, and hide the multitude of its sins."

Stimulated by these views, the Lock Hospital was first formed, in the year 1747. And since that period, twenty-seven thousand of the most wretched of human beings have found shelter and protection under its merciful roof; and many of them not only have been evidently snatched from the jaws of death, and restored as useful members of society; but, what is infinitely more delightful to consider, have given the most unequivocal proofs, in their after conduct in life, of the real conversion of their hearts to God.

I hope that I was clearly in the path of duty in preaching a sermon recommendatory of the institution, on the Lord's-day evening, May the 22nd, in the chapel of the Hospital. The subject I endeavoured to make as appropriate as possible, being gathered as well from the consideration of the charity itself, as from those interesting words of the Psalmist, "I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant, for I do not forget thy commandments," Psalm cxix. 176.

MONDAY, MAY 23.

This day, forming a parenthesis to the ministry of the pulpit, I availed myself of it for an enjoyment which had been long proposed since my arrival in town; but for which I had hitherto found no opportunity. I had heard that there was a gracious man, who lived somewhere about Brixton Causeway, on the Surrey Road, whom the Lord in his providence had thought fit to make his prisoner. Long sickness had deprived him the privilege of public ordinances; so that it fared with him as with the church of old, in those days when there was no open vision, "the word of the Lord was precious." In the present state, some

of our sweetest enjoyments become so, only when, in the want of them, we are thereby made more sensible of their value. Few have grace enough rightly to appreciate them when in the fulness of possession. I determined if the Lord favoured the wish, to visit this man, that I might both learn this truth from his own mouth, and at the same time gather information also, respecting the general state of his mind under soul exercises.

I have always found visits to the sick truly profitable; and, if I may venture to say so without offence, I would add, that according to my apprehension, it forms a most important part in the province of a clergyman's duty. Indeed, I do not see how it is possible without it for a minister to get acquainted with the spiritual circumstances of the people among whom he labours. I remember to have read of a minister of the last century (and it struck me very forcibly at the time, that it formed the highest testimony to his character) whose congregations were so numerous, that very frequently his church could not contain them; and yet it was said of him, that amidst this large assembly, there was scarcely one with whose spiritual state he was unacquainted.

If my reader be of my sacred order, he will, I hope, think on this subject as I do; for if ever a minister's labours are made eminently useful, they must be so under the blessing of the Holy Ghost, from a conduct of this kind. That preacher will certainly be most likely to speak to the experience of the hearer, who hath studied most the various workings of the heart. And in the office of his public ministration, he will best know how to offer "a word in season to weary souls," who is best acquainted with the groans and complaints of exercised believers in private. What a lovely view hath the Holy Ghost given of the Redeemer under this character, in that sweet allegory of the

Canticles, where he is described as watching over the spiritual state of his people! "I went down into the garden of nuts, to see the fruits of the valley; and to see whether the vine flourished, and the pomegranates budded," Sol. Song v. 11. I would not wish to strain the sense of scripture beyond its plain sense and meaning; but I would ask, is it not following the steps of this "Lord of the vineyard," when, as labourers sent by him into it, the faithful servant of such a master goes down into the several inclosures of his garden, the church, to notice the growth, and actings, and exercises, of those graces among his people which are the fruits of the Spirit; and which are called, perhaps, "the fruits of the valley," not only because they grow out of humble souls made humble by his power, but also, because in the humbler seasons of sickness, trials, temptations, and the like, they bring forth, under the same power, their fruits in greater abundance. And can the imagination form an idea of any path of duty and of usefulness, among the labourers in the vineyard, which carries with it a more striking resemblance to what is here said of the blessed Jesus, than when, like him, they carefully notice the increasing fruitfulness of old believers, which, as the vine, "bring forth fruit in old age, and are fat and flourishing;" and when also, like him, they as diligently mark the first manifestations of grace in young beginners, which may no less be compared, to "the tender buddings of the pomegranate?"

Perhaps, the reader may feel a curiosity to know the result of my visit to the sick man. I confess it might be interesting, had I the power of conveying the particulars. But it would carry me much beyond the limits of a work like this, to relate all that passed in this interview. I can only say, that I found in him what, from the accounts I had before received of him, I expected to find, namely, the sweet effects of a sanc-

tified affliction; and I brought away with me what, under divine teaching, will for the most part be the general improvement to be gathered from sick and dying chambers; I mean, deeper conviction of the emptiness of all creature enjoyments, and increasing evidence of the preciousness of the Lord Jesus:

CHRIST CHURCH, SPITALFIELDS.

On Tuesday morning, May 24th, I commenced afresh my labours of the pulpit in preaching for the Charity School of Christ Church, Spitalfields, from those words of the apostle, "Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us," 1 John iv. 10.

The plan of this school is similar to that of St. Paul's, Shadwell. It consists of one hundred children; viz. fifty boys and fifty girls. They are instructed in the principles of the established religion: they are annually clothed, taught to read, write, and cast accounts; the girls learn also needlework; and the boys, when of a proper age, are put out apprentices. The school is supported by voluntary contribution. The school-house is near the church, where benefactions are thankfully received.

And here I pause, to pay the token of affectionate remembrance to that man of God who accompanied me from the church to the house of my much honoured friend, and so abundantly refreshed the minds of all that were present, in following up the service of the sanctuary with the pious and edifying conversation of the parlour.

There is a shyness, and surely it must be a very blameable one, even among the most gracious minds, in speaking of the best things. How often have I known a company of truly serious persons, whose hearts I have been convinced, like musical instruments all in tune, have only waited for the sacred string to have

been touched, when the affections of every one would instantly have joined in concert, and all have sweetly vibrated in the same key; and yet, through this unpardonable timidity, have sat mute to this most melodious of all subjects until the opportunity hath been over, and not a note all the while hath been raised by any to the Redeemer's praise. Not so the man of whom I speak. Unrestrained by fear, he soon called up the attention of all around to the charming topic. Taking occasion from the subject we had just been attending to in the church, of the love of God, he traced the evidences and effects of that love, in some few of the leading points of it, by which the soul is ripening in grace for glory, until in imagination he had led our minds to the very paradise of God, and we were sat down under the tree of life. To tell the reader *how* he discoursed on these sublime points, or to describe the graceful *manner* in which he spake, is what I cannot do. I may adopt the poet's figure, and say:—

————— “ Had he dropt
That eagle genius! Oh! had he let fall
One feather as he flew, I then had wrote
What friends might flatter, prudent foes forbear.”—YOUNG.

While I have ventured to say so much upon this subject, I care not for the consequence of reproof, if I add a little more. It was not certainly without reference to such conversation, that our Lord delivered that well known axiom, “ Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh :” for if the heart be full of divine things, the overflowings from the lips will manifest what is uppermost within. I remember to have observed in the writings of Dr. Arbuthnot, (in his Treatise on Aliment, I believe it is) that ‘ in general, whatever be the state of the *tongue*, the same is that of the coat of the *stomach*.’ Whether this be so or not in *nature*, I will not determine; but in respect to *spirituals*, as manifested in the conversation, we have authority to assert,

that "a good man out of the good treasure of the heart, bringeth forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things." Matt. xii. 35. And hence, perhaps, in allusion to the former state it is, that the Redeemer is represented (in the book I just before noticed) as commending the church, in that "her lips dropped as the honeycomb;" (Song iv. 11.) meaning, no doubt, that as this sweet food falls without pressure, so the lips of him that hath received the grace of God will need no constraint, but will be always free to speak of "the things which he hath heard and seen." And as the honeycomb ceaseth not to let fall its golden treasure, but as soon as it hath deposited one of its sweet drops, another is instantly forming for the same purpose on the comb; so the speech of the believer is unceasingly engaged in communicating, from the grace of the lips, the words of life, which David says "are sweeter than honey and the honeycomb." And may we not add, that wherever such auspicious effects, resulting from pure and undefiled religion, manifest themselves in the whole life and conversation, there is an holy communion kept up in the soul amidst divine and spiritual things, which, like the apostle's, is breathing an heavenly atmosphere, while surrounded with earthly objects. It was charmingly said by Dr. Preston, when dying, 'I shall change my place, but not my company;' for he had been long in the familiar enjoyment of this society, and by faith had been living, as it were, in the very suburbs of heaven, before the time came that he was called up to the actual enjoyment of it.

THE ST. ETHELBURGA SOCIETY.

The school of St. Ethelburga consists of fifty-six poor children; viz. thirty-six boys and twenty girls. They are all annually clothed: their education is upon the general plan of charity schools. Five pounds are

given by the trust with every boy on going out of the school, as an apprentice. The school-house is at No. 14, Helmet Court, Wormwood Street, where benefactions are received.

It may be proper to inform the reader, that together with the St. Ethelburga Society, formed for a charity school, in the year 1719, there was also a Sunday Evening Lecture, established at St. Swithin's Church, London Stone. This service was performed for many years by some of the most approved ministers of the day in which they lived. The Rev. Mr. Jones, of St. Saviour's; and Mr. Romaine, of St. Ann's, Blackfriars, were among the number of those who laboured in the word and doctrine upon those occasions. I confess I felt a very peculiar pleasure in ministering for this charity, in the recollection how many eminent servants of the Lord had gone before me in this office; and to how many souls, now resting with them from their labours, their services had been made eminently useful. To be the follower of them in this work of love, whose ministry had been so graciously commissioned, afforded a satisfaction of a very interesting nature, and served to awaken an earnestness corresponding to it. It was an evening service, on Tuesday, May 24, at which I preached for this charity, at St. Helen's Church, Bishopsgate Within, from these words of David, "Lead me in thy truth and teach me, for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day," Psalm xxv. 4. I have not the honour of acquaintance with the clergyman who officiated in the desk upon this occasion, but I cannot withhold testimony to the superior manner, in point of solemnity and earnestness, with which he read prayers; I was very much pleased with it.

THE CHARITY SCHOOL, BETHNAL GREEN.

If my reader should be of that class of persons, who conceive that even a good thing may be carried too far,

I fear that he will take offence at the frequent charity sermons I preached, during my short stay in the metropolis, for the public schools of this description. But in defence, I would beg to say, that if the annual display of the charity schools, all congregated together under the dome of St. Paul's, be (as it is said to be) the noblest sight in the whole world, it will require but little apology for stretching forth the helping hand in the individual instance of each school to keep up the mass: and if the education of children be essential in a state, the education of the children of the poor in that state, according to the rank in which they are hereafter to move, will be equally essential. It is said of Augustus Cæsar, that after he had mastered the world, he sat down himself to the instruction of children; and we know, that the Emperor Constantine constantly made it his custom to convey pardons to those he forgave, and favours of kindness to those he loved, through the medium of his son, at the earliest age, by way of training him to acts of clemency.

The charity school of Bethnal Green is conducted, I believe, under the eye of the magistrates. It contains sixty children; and is supported by voluntary contribution. The plan of education is similar to that of others, in the usual mode of reading, writing, and arithmetic. The school house is on the Green, where subscriptions are received.

It was on the Wednesday evening, May 25th, 1803, that the sermon was preached at St. Matthew's church, from the words of the Psalmist, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee," Psalm cxvi. 7.

ST. JAMES'S CHURCH, DUKE'S PLACE.

Preached in this church on the Thursday evening, May 26, a charity sermon for the Willow Walk So-

ciety, from these words, "The faithful God!" Deut. vii. 9. This institution is formed on principles like the Lazarus; and, as I was informed, hath been made eminently useful, both in temporal and spiritual concerns, to a number of poor diseased families and individuals. Benefactions for its support are received at the place, where the committee for the government of it meet, in the Willow Walk, St. Agnes le Clair.

FRIDAY, MAY 27.

The time of my departure from London drawing nigh, I appropriated this and the following day to the taking leave of friends. I forbear to particularize in my acknowledgments to those who honoured me with their attention during my visit, lest I should err, and give pain where I meant to shew thankfulness. Some minds are so exquisitely formed, that like the plant which shrinks from the gentlest touch, their sensibility would feel hurt even at the smallest notice. There is one class, however, whose kindness I must not pass over in silence; I mean, my brethren in the ministry. Not to make mention of their condescension and liberality would be as unbecoming in the respect that is due to their feelings, as it would be injurious to my own. The handsome way in which they first opened their pulpits to me, and the very gracious manner in which they afterwards accepted my poor services, will long live in my remembrance. And I venture to persuade myself, that the same inviolable affection and friendship which Plutarch tells us subsisted between Pelopidas and Epaminondas, will distinguish our attachment; for sure I am, the motives to it are infinitely more interesting, as the cause in which we are equally engaged is infinitely more important. 'The cause (saith this historian) of their conduct was the respect they had to the common weal, which kept them in all

their actions from aiming at wealth and glory, which fatal contentions are always attended with envy; but being both equally inflamed with a divine ardour to make their country prosperous and happy by their administration, they looked upon each other's success as their own.'

ST. SAVIOUR'S CHURCH.—LORD'S DAY MORNING, MAY 29.

It was Whit-Sunday, and the prayers of the faithful, no doubt, throughout the christian world, had gone up with an earnestness of supplication before the throne of God for the renewal of Pentecost. The service this morning became truly interesting, and the ordinance of the holy supper, with which the service closed, I found to be sweetly refreshing. My preaching was from those words of the Lord Jesus, "And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you," &c. Luke xxiv. 49. In what an elegant strain hath our great English poet conveyed his ideas on this most important doctrine:—

But say, if our Deliv'rer up to heav'n
Must reascend, what will betide the few,
His faithful, left among th' unfaithful herd,
The enemies of truth? Who then shall guide
His people? Who defend? Will they not deal
Worse with his followers, than with him they dealt?

From heav'n
He to his own a Comforter will send,
The promise of the Father. Who shall dwell
His Spirit within them. And the law of faith,
Working through love, upon their hearts shall write,
To guide them in all truth.—MILTON.

THE CHARITY SCHOOLS AT WAPPING.

In the afternoon of this day, my services were called forth for these schools, in the parish church, when I

preached from those words, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing," John vi. 63.

This is another of the noble institutions which form the truest monuments of national glory, in its care for the rising generation. To the general principles of education, which it possesseth in common with the other charities of a similar nature, it hath in addition this peculiar excellence, that, notwithstanding it is a parochial seminary, it forbids not to adopt the children of other parishes. The highly esteemed friend, at whose instance I preached for this charity, put into my hand a paper to this effect before sermon, which I here transcribe. 'These schools differ from most of this description; they not only educate a greater number in proportion to the size of the parish, but the charity is not confined to the parishioners.' For in case of a vacancy, and there are none suited to fill it in that parish, any other poor child may be made the subject of its liberality.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL, AND SCHOOL OF INDUSTRY, ROTHERHITHE.

I finished my public labours in the ministry, during my stay in town, on the evening of this day, in preaching for the Sunday School, and School of Industry, at St. Mary's Church, Rotherhithe. And as an appropriate subject at the same time for a farewell sermon, I chose those words for my text, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever!" Heb. xiii. 8. Precious thought! amidst the changeable state of things every where around, and the movements in the world, to have this unchangeable Rock of Ages to live upon.

I pause in this place—in the recollection of that grace and mercy which hath conducted me safely through so many labours, I would imitate his example, who set up "the stone of help!" for surely, I have equal cause to ascribe deliverance to the same source;

and say, as he did, "hitherto hath the Lord helped," 1 Sam. vii. 12. Perhaps, I shall in some measure be speaking the reader's experience, when I describe it as my own; that the mercies of our God are very often unacknowledged by us, because his providences are unobserved. The mercies drop in every direction, as the "tender rain and the showers upon the grass;" but the cloud hides from our view the gracious hand which causeth them to fall.

I pause again—to bend the knee in prayer, while offering thanksgiving, in the remembrance of the mercies to this ministry, to beg the Lord to forgive the errors and imperfections of it. And if the Lord would add one mercy more, it would be that he would bless it to much good! 'To preach the word and not to follow it with prayer (saith the great Dr. Owen) is to disbelieve its use, neglect its end, and to cast away the seeds of the gospel at random.' May the divine strength be perfected in human weakness, and human labours be made instrumental to the promotion of the divine glory!

THE DEPARTURE.—MONDAY, MAY 30.

The morning of our departure being arrived, we took leave of London, after having sought the continuance of his presence and protection, whose favour we had so graciously experienced all the way. Our first day's stage ended at Reading, having engaged to preach (D. V.) at a church in that neighbourhood, on the following morning. And here I stop to pay the well-earned tribute of praise to the hostess of the house where we slept. I did not particularize all the circumstances which occurred in my journey upward in order to avoid the tediousness of recital. But I think it will be a subject of pleasure to the pious mind, who may condescend to peruse my journal, when I inform

him that the good effects of a plan, which was observed at the inn in Reading, in one journey, were sensibly felt at our return in the other! It is my custom in travelling, to invite the master or mistress of the inn at whose house I am, with as many of the family as feel disposed, to join in the morning or evening worship. This was done with such happy consequences at Reading, that on our return there needed not the invitation to be repeated. It would be matter of great satisfaction to me had I the power of bearing testimony to the piety of many an inn, equal to that which I can and do cheerfully bear of the Crown Inn, in Reading.

TUESDAY, MAY 31.

Preached at a country church, some few miles from the town of Reading, from John x. 10.—and in the evening, at the parish church of Wallingford, from the words of Peter; “Unto you therefore which believe, he is precious,” 1 Pet. ii. 7. It is with much pleasure I call to mind the marks of attention shewn me upon both these occasions, by some of my brethren in the ministry. They well know whom I mean, without particularizing names: and they will think it but a common instance of gratitude when I say, that a sense of their friendship upon these occasions will dwell long in my remembrance.

OXFORD.

Though it is not my intention to notice the different places through which we passed in our return home, more than I did in our journey out, otherwise than as any particular object or circumstance called up our attention by way of improvement; yet in those instances, where the immediate spot hath opened an avenue to the mind

in reflection, there seems a propriety in naming it. With this view I mention Oxford, as having furnished several very interesting subjects of the kind.

Among the great variety of paintings in the different colleges, I could not but remark, how uniformly the artists of almost every age have preserved the luminous circle round the head of those characters which are designed to represent saints or apostles. It should seem to have formed a part of the symbolic expression in painting from great antiquity; and if this art be considered in its scientific department, as designed to convey character as well as person, there is certainly a great beauty in it. Painting, as well as poetry, may be indulged with metaphor. I remember, Dr. Darwin, in his *Loves of the Plants*, relates the circumstance of one of our modern great painters, who, in his wishes to introduce yet more freely the language (if I may so call it) of painting, figured the character of a demon behind the pillow of a wicked man dying: but he tells us, that the cold criticism of the then age, was disgusted at the attempt.

My mind was wonderfully engaged, while looking at that well known picture of our Lord bending beneath his cross, under the altar at Magdalen College. There is somewhat in it, when beheld in connexion with the divine subject to which it refers, that tends to call up and arrest all the finer feelings of the soul; and sets at the same time at an infinite distance every other object! Xenophon, in his account of Cyrus, respecting the wife of Tigranes, whom he had taken captive, gives us a lively idea of what our views should be, when contemplating the person of the Redeemer under any of his characters in the accomplishment of the great work of redemption! Perhaps, the reader may not be acquainted with the history to which I allude; or, if otherwise, he may immediately recollect it. The

story is this. In the event of war, the wife of Tigranes had fallen into the hands of his enemy Cyrus. Upon the conqueror's demanding of Tigranes what ransom he would give for her liberation, Tigranes offered his own life. Struck with the greatness of the offer, Cyrus immediately gave her freedom. Every one was charmed with the generosity of Cyrus; and among the rest, Tigranes felt himself overcome, and his hatred against Cyrus subdued. But when the husband asked his wife, what her sentiments were of this noble deed, 'Truly (said she) my eyes have been so engaged in looking upon him that offered his own life to ransom mine, that I have thought of nothing else.' I beg the reader to make application of this to the subject of the picture at the altar of Magdalen College; and it may serve to shew him, why I pass by every other beautiful object in that delightful spot.

We visited Christ Church College. The woman, whose office it was to shew the hall, was very civil to tell us the names of the many portraits that are there. But my attention was engaged to examine whether among the characters of kings and judges, that ornament of a golden chain round the neck, was generally worn. I was glad to observe that in the portrait, when full drawn in robes, it was uniformly preserved. I think it more than probable, that this badge of distinction is not only of very ancient usage, but is originally derived from divine authority, though from the effects of time, and the alteration made in human custom and manners, it hath undergone much change. We read in scripture, that the high priest, at God's command, had upon his breastplate an ornament when he went in before the Lord, *Exod. xxviii. 30.* And if we may give credit to ancient history, we are told, that among the Egyptians there was a remarkable imitation of this sacred ornament; the chief priest, who was also their supreme judge in

civil matters, wore about his neck an ornament of precious stones, suspended by a golden chain, and that no cause was opened in the court before these *insignalia* were put on. If the reader be desirous to prosecute this enquiry, I refer him to Parkhurst's Hebrew Lexicon, page 31.

The beauties of Oxford are very many, and open a large field for the exercise of meditation to men of contemplative minds: but these things came not within the plan of our pursuit to go leisurely over. We were only passing through it, and could allow but an hour or two at the most, to glance at some of the more striking objects, which heretofore I had more particularly noticed. The new window just finished at All Soul's College, in the modern stile of painting, and the elegant picture of the nativity, seen through the opening of the organ from the altar at New College, were among the most prominent sights we looked at in the places we visited. In beholding the crosier at the latter place, it is hardly possible to disconnect in the mind the idea of the childish age of extreme ignorance in which this was used. There are no records, I believe, to determine at what period this bishop's staff was first taken up, or when it was finally laid down: but at whatever era under papal jurisdiction it was most in repute, the same melancholy cloud of darkness and superstition hung over the church, and obscured all that was truly valuable. 'Among the bishops (saith an ingenious writer, speaking of the barbarism of the seventh century,) the want even of a knowledge of the common rudiments of literature was so general, that it was scarcely deemed disgraceful to acknowledge it. In the acts of the councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon, many examples occur, where subscriptions are to be found in this form: 'I, such an one, have subscribed by the hand of such an one, because I cannot write.' And 'such a bishop having said that he could not write, I, whose name is underwritten, have subscribed for him.'

THE ABBEY AT BATH.

We stopped but for a few minutes, while our horses were getting ready in Bath, but being near the abbey, it would have been a reproach, and in some measure bordering upon fastidiousness, not to have looked into it. The only thing that struck me forcibly in this place was, the innumerable trophies of death, proclaimed from the walls in clusters of monuments, so thickly placed in one undistinguished mass, that if the disease of perpetuating characters in this way should continue, there will shortly be needed a new abbey to receive them.

From whatever motive this disposition originates, it is equally wrong. Some, perhaps, originated in the request of the persons themselves, who expressed their wish before their departure, of being thus distinguished; hoping thereby, that they shall be the longer remembered, and the more frequently regretted, when they are no more; and others, have arisen out of the tender affections of those they have left behind. But in both cases, or in short, from whatever other source monumental records for the dead are made, it were exceedingly to be wished, that the partiality of friends never betrayed them into the excesses of commendation upon these occasions. If we read the major part of inscriptions on the sepulchres, we might therefrom be led to suppose, that they were intended for angels, and not for men: whereas, in the very moment they speak to us in such terms, they carry contradiction with them in all they say; and the cause for which they are there placed confirms that solemn truth, that "death hath passed upon all men, because all have sinned." And what a folly, to speak the least of it, must it be, to tell a traveller here and there that passeth by, that such an one was too good and innocent when upon earth to die; when it will be shortly proved, in the presence of men

and angels, that "all the world are become guilty before God!"

THE CATHEDRAL AT WELLS.

A cursory view of the cathedral at Wells was permitted us in the half hour we staid to take refreshments in the city, and we availed ourselves of it. Many are the beauties of this ancient fabric, both within and without; and I doubt not, but to the eye of the architect, there is enough to call forth his enquiry, and to gratify his mind for days together. But these things neither suited my time nor pursuits. How graciously hath the Lord consulted the state and circumstances of his people! And what an endless variety hath he spread, both in the department of nature and science, to answer the corresponding variety which he himself hath so bountifully placed in the minds of men!

Among numberless curiosities in this venerable spot, there was one in the library which more immediately attracted my attention. I mean that ancient manuscript which lays on the table. Let not the reader mistake me: it was not the writing contained in this manuscript, (for perhaps it was in a language with which I am unacquainted) neither was it the subject of its contents, (which I might have gathered also from the information of the person who conducted us through the cathedral) but it was the appearance of the book itself, which carried with it very decisive marks, independent of the account he gave of it, of great antiquity. The sight of this book served to awaken a train of thoughts in my mind of considerable moment; I mean, respecting the infinite importance of being well established and confirmed in the authenticity and correctness of that book of God, which is alone "able to make wise unto salvation, through faith, which is in Christ Jesus." The grand door of enquiry on this momentous point, after

all the volumes which the school men and divines have spent upon it, (and which at once serves as so many monuments both of strength and weakness of the human mind) the grand door after all will turn upon this simple hinge,—is the present translation upon the whole equal to all the purposes intended, or is it not?

Dr. Lowth, in his preliminary dissertation on Isaiah, after having pointed out the probability that mistakes, and omissions, and errors, of Jewish copyists may have crept in, so as not only to injure the beauty and elegance of the sacred writings, but often to alter or obscure the sense of them; makes this most sensible and judicious observation. ‘Doth this tend to invalidate the authority of scripture? I think this is a vain and groundless apprehension. Casual errors may blemish parts, but do not destroy, nor much alter the whole. If the Iliad or the Æneid had come down to us, with more errors in all the copies than are to be found in the worst manuscript now extant of either; without doubt, many particular passages would have lost much of their beauty; in many, the sense would have been greatly injured; in some, rendered wholly unintelligible: but the plan of the poem in the whole, and in its parts; the fable, the mythology, the machinery, the characters, the great constituent parts, would still have been visible and apparent, without having suffered any essential diminution of their greatness. Of all the precious remains of antiquity, perhaps Aristotle’s Treatise on Poetry, is come down to us as much injured by time as any; as it has been greatly mutilated in the whole, some considerable members of it being lost, so the parts remaining have suffered in proportion, and many passages are rendered very obscure, probably by the imperfection and frequent mistakes of the copies now extant. Yet, notwithstanding these disadvantages, this treatise, so much injured by time and so mutilated, still continues to be the great code of criticism. Hence, in like manner,

the important and fundamental doctrines of the word of God do not wholly depend on single passages; an universal harmony runs through the holy scriptures; the parts mutually support each other, and supply one another's deficiencies and obscurities. Superficial damages and partial defects, may greatly diminish the beauty of the edifice, without injuring its strength and bringing on utter ruin and destruction.'—See Lowth's *Isaiah*, Quarto Edition, p. 59, 60, Dissertation.

Thus far, this great man reasons with a degree of strength unanswerable. But when he goes farther, to recommend a remedy for the correcting what, in the passage I have quoted, he allows to be the 'errors only of the Jewish copyists,' &c. I beg, with all possible submission to his learning in other points, to differ from him, and to enter my warmest protest against any new translation, on these grounds. He says, p. 61, 'The case being the same in respect to the mistakes of scripture, like all other ancient writings, the same method which has been used with good effect in correcting the ancient Greek and Latin authors, ought, in all reason, to be applied to the Hebrew writings.' But God forbid! say I. It were a poor compliment to inspiration, to put sacred truths upon such a level with profane writings. And if Dr. Lowth were alive, I would humbly ask him, whether, on his own principles, if this had been done in the case of Aristotle's poetry, some ages since, appeals would at this hour have been made to it in the schools, as the standard of decision? Did Dr. Lowth acknowledge, that the plan of the *Iliad*, or the *Æneid*, amidst all the mutilations made by time, still hath preserved its whole machinery, and would have been the same in its worst manuscript, as to those great points: and doth not every one see that the holy volume hath, by the fostering care of its Almighty Author, preserved all its grand and distinguishing doctrines, in the knowledge and enjoyment of which man's happiness

consists? And would any man submit to an alteration, which under the idea of correcting no *important* errors, may go on to the hazard of frittering away all its distinguishing and most *essential* truths? Besides, there is one point, and a very grand point indeed it is, in which the book of God possesseth a superiority over all the writings of antiquity, independent of its divine original; I mean, that the great subject of which the several writers treat, and to which their whole design is directed, though written by so many different persons, and at periods so remote from each other, hath but one and the same object in view, and in which they are all found to correspond. An unity of sentiment and of doctrine mark the character of the inspired writers, and evidently manifest thereby, that there can be no error of any material nature which stands in need of correction. And it is a question of some moment, I think, in the argument, and with this view I propose it to the *pious* reader's consideration, whether the Holy Ghost did not intend to have it particularly insisted upon, in the after writings of one of the apostles, that "spiritual things are to be compared with spiritual?" On purpose, as if to say, that in any passage of a difficult nature, the general sense of the holy word itself, and not the partial interpretation of men, was to be made the standard of decision. I know full well, that with persons who deny the agency of the Holy Ghost in his church, and who would fain set aside the necessity of his divine teaching, such arguments have no weight. But I venture to believe, that with all teachable minds, there will be little difficulty to prove, that the present translation is, to all intents and purposes, competent, under the Spirit's guidance, "to teach and to lead into all truth." And I do hope that, however individuals may laudably attempt to improve the translation of some particular parts, I shall never live to see the day, nor the generations which are yet far to come, when

the sacred scriptures shall be committed to unscriptural men for a new translation. Such men may excel in *human* literature, but too many such there are, who afford the most undeniable testimonies, that they are altogether ignorant of divine knowledge.

HOME.

I fear the reader, who hath kindly accompanied me through the whole of my travels, begins to be tired; and, like myself, longs to arrive at the close of them. I pass over, therefore, all the intermediate stages. A long journey, though full of mercies, yet too barren of usefulness, made me earnestly wish to behold again the tower of my church of Charles.

There is a great sweetness in all our wants, when those wants make us sensible of the unsatisfying nature of all things here, and the satisfying fulness of him, who alone is competent to answer them. It is a pleasure, to be empty, and to know it to be so, when the heart feels constrained therefrom to seek supply from Jesus. I love to discover my own ignorance, when the same view prompts my soul to draw near to the fountain of wisdom. And let others talk what they please of the happiness of independence, I must insist upon it, for I know the fact to be so by repeated experience, there is a delight of the soul, inexpressibly sweet, in the after enjoyment of it, when from having been literally poor and in need, occasion hath been thereby given, for having "my God to supply all my need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

We arrived at our home after a journey of more than two hundred miles twice told, without any intervening circumstance of disaster, or a single untoward event, to interrupt our happiness. I blush in the recollection of divine goodness, and desire to take shame in the con-

sciousness of the unworthy returns made to it. I find occasion continually to say, as it is said Grotius did when dying, '*proh! vitam perdididi operose nihil agendo,*' 'alas! I have wasted life in great labour, yet doing nothing.'

And what is the upshot of all but this? If from a well-grounded hope of an interest in the covenant mercies of God in Christ, the mind is fortified in the assurance, that in all the various circumstances of life, in whatever place, state, or condition we are in, his word is engaged to support, bear up, and carry safely through every difficulty, and that he will never leave nor forsake his people, every past experience of divine faithfulness affords additional ground for faith to act upon for every future emergency; and surely, if "nothing but goodness and mercy have been following of us all the days of our life," we may humbly hope, like him of old, and upon the same cause of dependence, finally, "to dwell in the house of the Lord for ever!"

Reader! a greater blessing I cannot implore for you and for myself, than that this may be our portion. Farewell!

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