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Thomas F. Torrance

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THE  
**WORKS**

OF THE

**REV. JAMES FRASER,**

OF PITCALZIAN, MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL AT ALNESS, ROSS-SHIRE.

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THE SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE

OF

**SANCTIFICATION,**

WITH AN APPENDIX;

AND

**SACRAMENTAL SERMONS.**

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EDINBURGH:

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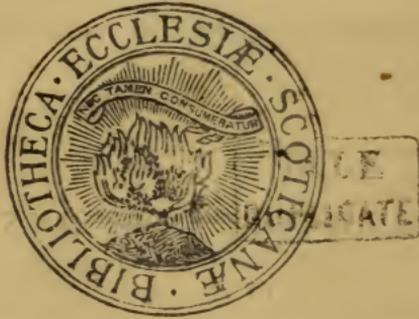
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A SHORT  
ACCOUNT OF THE AUTHOR

OF THE FOLLOWING WORK, AND OF  
THE PERSECUTIONS SUFFERED BY HIS PARENTS.

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THE REV. MR JAMES FRASER of Pitcalzian, Author of the following Treatise, who died minister of Alness, in Ross-shire, October 5, 1769, was son to the Rev. Mr John Fraser, who died minister of the same parish, in the year 1711.

The father, on account of his steady adherence to the principles and constitution of the Church of Scotland, suffered persecution, from the year 1679 or 1680, till the happy Revolution. Having gone to London about 1680, he lodged in the house of an Anabaptist minister, whose godly conversation, with that of sundry members of his meeting, he was much taken with, insofar that he had a strong inclination to have joined that little church and body of Christians; and for that end communicated his mind one day to the minister, his landlord, who heard him patiently, and then replied: ‘Mr Fraser, I love you, because  
‘ I think you love Christ. You love our society, because  
‘ you think God is amongst us, and I trust he is so in  
‘ truth. But I must tell you, if we have our beauties,  
‘ we have also our blemishes; and the congregations in  
‘ our way are mighty few when compared with the con-  
‘ gregations in that church in which you have been edu-  
‘ cated and brought up. The Church of Scotland, whose  
‘ principles you have hitherto professed, is at present in  
‘ the furnace, but the Lord will in due time bring her  
‘ out of it. You are but young, and should you join  
‘ yourself to our society, your sphere of usefulness must  
‘ be very small and contracted. You know not as yet  
‘ what work God may have in reserve for you in your na-  
‘ tive land, where you may have a large circle to move in.  
‘ My advice therefore to you is this, that you forbear at  
‘ present to join yourself to us: consider further of the  
‘ matter, and seek light and direction from the Lord.

‘ When you have done so, if you continue still in the same mind, then acquaint me, and I will receive you, and embrace you in the arms of love and affection.’ Mr Fraser took his advice, and was wont oft to say, he saw much of God in it, especially when he came afterwards to the work of the ministry in his own country.

Mr Fraser, during his residence in London, waited closely upon the meetings of the Dissenters, which were enjoyed frequently till the years 1683 and 1684, that informers turned very common, being spurred on by the twenty pounds sterling of fine that was imposed upon every landlord in whose house a conventicle was kept, besides the fines from the preacher and hearers. At one of these meetings, where the memorable Mr Alexander Shiells preached, was Mr Fraser taken. Most of the hearers being Scotsmen, they were ordered down by sea to Scotland; and when landed at Leith, they were manacled two and two, as the greatest malefactors, and brought from thence to Edinburgh; the Rev. Mr Alexander Shiells having Mr Fraser for his companion.

A short time after, they were examined by the council upon the ordinary ensnaring questions of these times; but not giving entire satisfaction, all of them, except Mr Shiells, were sent to Dunotter Castle, May 18, 1685. There they underwent severe treatment, being, with many others, cooped up in one low vault, and afterwards in another, rather worse; which was the occasion of death to some, and great danger to the whole of them. There our author’s father, Mr John Fraser, contracted a cough, which remained with him all his days thereafter.

Being brought back from Dunotter, the privy-council sentenced a great number of persons, confined in different prisons, to be transported to the plantations, and made a gift of a hundred of them to the laird of Pitlochrie, who engaged to carry them to New Jersey. Our author’s father and mother were part of the number. Pitlochrie, in connexion with another gentlemen, hired a Newcastle vessel, and took the prisoners on board in Leith roads, he and his lady going along in the same ship. After the prisoners were all on board, they were detained fourteen days by contrary winds: however, about the middle of Sep-

tember 1685, they got under sail, their number now being about 300 souls.

Various were the hardships they underwent during the voyage; for by a manuscript of Mr Fraser's, it appears, that soon after they past the Land's-End, the fever began violently in the ship, especially amongst those who had been prisoners in the great vault at Dunotter, who were sick when they came on board. Besides, the flesh which the captain gave to the prisoners stunk before they left Leith roads, so that in a few days it was much for dogs to eat it. The fever increasing in the ship, about a month after they sailed, it became usual for three or four dead bodies to be thrown over board at a time. The leading men of the ship were all removed by death, excepting the captain and boatswain. The chief freighter of it, Pitlochie, and his lady, died also. The captain then began to tamper with the other freighter, one Mr Johnston, to steer the vessel for Jamaica, where he was to give Mr Johnston a good allowance for the prisoners, and take them off his hand; meaning to sell them all, says Mr Fraser, for slaves. While they were thus treating together, God in his holy and wise providence defeated their schemes, for the wind blew up fresh and favourable for New Jersey, where they all arrived before they knew well that they were nigh the place, in December 1685, after a melancholy passage of seventeen weeks.

Upon the whole of this voyage, Mr Fraser remarks, that between those who voluntarily left Scotland to escape persecution, and the banished prisoners, about sixty at least died during the voyage, whose blood will be found in the enemy's skirts, as really as if they had shed it in the Grassmarket on gibbets.

During this winter, and the spring following, they remained in towns about New Jersey. Places which had not the gospel planted amongst them, showed them little or no kindness, but what they purchased with their money. But where the gospel was established, there they were freely and kindly entertained. Such blessed effects does the gospel produce. But the foresaid Mr Johnston (who represented Pitlochie, whose daughter he married,) pursued the prisoners for their four years' service: the consequence of which

was, that they were all imprisoned to prevent escape, and convened before the chief court of the province; where the governor having called a jury to try and judge in the affair, they brought in a verdict, finding that the prisoners did not go on board that ship voluntarily and of their own accord, nor bargained with Pitlochrie for money or service, and therefore they assoilzied them at the bar. However, the prisoners, afraid of meeting with further trouble from Mr Johnston, mostly left New Jersey, and went to New England, where they were kindly entertained, and employed according to their several stations and capacities.

Here Mr Fraser, having been licensed, if not ordained, began to preach, and continued to do so with great faithfulness and remarkable success. In the town of Waterbury, in the county of Hartford, and colony of Connecticut, though his stay in New England was but short, yet from a note-book which he kept at that time, it appears his labours were not in vain in the Lord, for he has no less than the names of twelve persons wrote down, whom God, by means of the word preached, had translated from darkness to light, and brought to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Here he married the author's mother, Mrs. Jean Moffat, daughter of a worthy family in Tweeddale, who had suffered persecution in the same manner as her husband did, and for whom her father had paid at sundry times, 1000 merks of fine, on account of her absenting from the parish church, and frequenting field meetings, prior to her transportation.

Mr Fraser and spouse continued in New-England till they heard of King William's accession to the throne. Then they returned to Scotland, and Mr Fraser was settled minister at Glencorse, in the presbytery of Dalkeith, Mr David Walker, minister of Temple, presiding on that occasion. As there was then a scarcity of ministers in the North who had the Gaelic language, the Assembly sent three or four at different times to preach in these parts. Mr Fraser being generally one of that number, the people in the parish of Alness fixed their thoughts on him upon the death of the curate; and Sir John Munro of Fowles joined them in their application before the southern judicatories: but they rejected the

call; and the parish of Glencorse built him a new kirk to engage him to stay amongst them.

But next year the parish of Alness renewed their call, and appealed to the General Assembly. The evening before the sitting down of said Assembly, the last seat in the church of Glencorse was finished. But the wright not being attentive to extinguish the snuff of a candle, the church, before ten o'clock that night, was all in flames: upon seeing of which, Mr Fraser said to his wife, This will not do, I must use the little remaining Earse I have, it seems, and go and preach Christ in my native country. Mrs Fraser viewed the call so clear, she durst not say nay, but cheerfully acquiesced, though her father and friends lived in Tweeddale. The call of the Alness people being agreed to at the Assembly, Mr Fraser was admitted their minister *anno* 1696. There he continued his ministry with great fidelity and success till his death, Nov. 1711.

The Author of the following treatise being born *anno* 1700, was but very young when his father died. An older brother, called John, grew up to be a very promising youth, but died the year after his father, in the full assurance of faith. He having observed the genius and disposition of his brother James, earnestly recommended to his mother, then a widow, to take care of his education. This was accordingly done, and having finished his academical studies in philosophy and divinity, he was soon licensed.

About that time, Mr Daniel Mackiligan, who succeeded Mr John Fraser, died; and our author succeeded him *anno* 1726, being then twenty-six years of age.

His distinguished abilities as a sacred critic appear in the following treatise, from the strong and masterly manner in which he has examined and refuted some of the most eminent Socinian and Arminian commentators. The judicious reader will easily see, that the author's understanding was quick, clear, and penetrating, his judgment solid, and his learning very extensive. His public ministrations were highly edifying, and contained rich entertainment for the learned, as well as the unlearned.

In judicatories he discovered singular prudence and judgment, with a steady adherence to the principles and

constitution of our church. And if at any time he swayed any of his brethren to his sentiments, it was not by an overbearing temper or conduct, but by his admirable good sense, which he always displayed with great modesty and meekness. All who knew him, can bear testimony, that he was richly endued with the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit. He was remarkably zealous for the interest of truth and holiness, and lamented greatly the progress of error and immorality. He appeared to have been set in a peculiar manner for the defence of the gospel, in opposition to the pernicious tenets and principles that have been spread in the land. As he applied with unwearied diligence and activity to the duties of his ministerial office, which was followed with remarkable success; so in more private life he shone in all the virtues of the Christian. Though of very quick feeling, yet at the same time he showed the greatest patience in trials and adversities. Singular wisdom and discretion, with equal goodness and integrity, were visible in his whole conduct. His deportment was grave and cheerful, his conversation most entertaining. He was a kind and indulgent husband, a steady friend, and a faithful counsellor. In short, his mannerly and courteous behaviour as a gentleman, his piety and goodness as a Christian, his singular knowledge and learning as a divine, made him highly acceptable to all ranks. No wonder the life of this worthy man was exceeding useful, and greatly valued and prized. His death, October 5, 1769, was deeply and generally lamented.

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The above historical account of Mr Fraser and his parents, merits the fullest credit, being compiled by a gentleman well acquainted with that family, and furnished with authentic papers by a surviving branch of it. The character of the following Work, and of the worthy Author of it, was drawn up by the Rev. Mr Alexander Fraser of Inverness; and if I can credit some of the best judges, rather falls short of, than exceeds the truth. I reaped much instruction from perusing the manuscript, even before it had received the Author's last corrections; for it is proper the public should be informed that this Treatise does not labour under the common disadvantage of posthumous publications, having been prepared for the press by the learned and ingenious author. I am assured, the talents for criticism displayed in it have been greatly admired by some gentlemen of ability, attached to a very opposite system of divinity.

JOHN ERSKINE.

*Edinburgh, April 28, 1774.*

INTRODUCTION  
TO THE  
EXPLICATION OF ROMANS VI.  
SHOWING

*That this, and the preceding Chapter, are not meant, as Mr  
Locke interprets, of Believers of the Gentiles separately,  
and as contradistinguished to Jewish Believers.*

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IT is of great consequence in interpretation, to discover and observe carefully the general scope and purpose of a writer, and of his argument. When this is justly conceived and understood, it serves in a great measure as a key in interpreting particular passages, that might otherwise be ambiguous or dark. But when the general scope is mistaken, through the influence of prejudice against the truth, or of an hypothesis and preconceived opinion possessing the mind, this often occasions a forced and unnatural interpretation of particular passages, and giving meanings to particular expressions, that are not agreeable to scripture use, or to the use of speech otherwise, or to the real scope of the writer, and of his argument.

I cannot help thinking that this hath, in some degree, happened to the celebrated Mr Locke; when he understood the fifth and sixth chapters of this epistle to the Romans, as addressed to the Gentile converts to Christianity separately, and as contradistinguished to the Jewish converts; to whom he supposed the seventh chapter to be addressed, as contradistinguished to the Gentiles. I see little in this sixth chapter itself, that he brings to prove it to be addressed to the Gentile converts separately. But as he supposes it to be addressed to the same persons as the fifth, it is from that chapter especially that he brings the proof that the whole discourse contained in both is directed to the Gentiles. This notion of his appears to have brought him under great disadvantage in interpretation; and an ill superstructure has been raised upon it. It is therefore needful that I give the reasons why I cannot fall in with it, and show it not to be well founded.

His proofs are taken chiefly from the first eleven verses of chap. v. The word *we*, in the first verse, he will have to mean the Gentiles; and thus he reasons: 'It is in their name that St Paul speaks in the three last verses of the foregoing chapter, and all through this section, as is evident from the illation here, *Therefore being justified by faith, we—*; it being an inference drawn from his having proved in the foregoing chapter, that the promise was not to the Jews alone, but to the Gentiles also.' Very well; if he proved that the promise was not to the Jews alone, but to both Jews and Gentiles—that is, to all true believers, the natural consequence is, that we should understand the illation, *therefore*, as introducing not privileges and comforts belonging to one sort of believers separately, but to all believers in common, whether of the Jews or of the Gentiles.

As to the three last verses of chap. iv. with which the illative word *therefore* is most immediately connected, there is no colour of reason for supposing them to be spoken in name of the Gentiles separately. *It was not written*, saith the apostle, chap. iv. 23. *for his [Abraham's] sake alone, that it [faith] was imputed to him; but (ver. 24.) for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe;*—that is, it was written for the sake of us also, who live in these latter times, if we believe. What other sense can be given these words? or what is there in them of any thing special respecting the Gentiles as contradistinguished to the Jews? Yea, I do not see in Mr L.'s own paraphrase and notes on these three verses, any thing that tends to restrict their meaning to the Gentiles separately. Instead of that, here is his note on ver. 24.—'St Paul seems to mention this here in particular, to show the analogy between Abraham's faith and that of believers under the gospel; see ver. 17.' Right; believers under the gospel, both of the Jews and of the Gentiles. It being so, then, what reason to think that the illative word *therefore* is meant to introduce any other matters than such as belong in common to believers of both denominations?

However, having fixed it in his mind that the apostle here, chap. v. & vi. means the Gentiles, as contradistinguished to the Jews, he says in his contents of chap. v. 1—11. 'In this section he comes to show what the convert Gentiles, by faith without circumcision, had to glory in.' They had indeed these things to glory in: but had not Jewish believers the same cause to glory? Or, is there any reason why all believers, Jews and Gentiles, should not be

understood to be meant? The author mentions three things: for thus he goes on—‘*viz.* the hope of glory, ver. 2.’ Surely this was common to all believers of the Jews and of the Gentiles. But had they not, previous to this, cause to glory in being at peace with God, (ver. 1.) and in being brought into a state of grace and favour with God, (ver. 2)? But the author here, without reason, doth, in mentioning the causes of glorying which the believer hath, confine himself to the three instances, in which the apostle uses the word *glorying*.

The next thing he mentions that the Gentiles had to glory in, was, ‘their sufferings for the gospel, ver. 3.’ Surely these, and the consolations of faith respecting them, were common to believers of both denominations. The chief tribulations of the Christians of these times were by persecutions, and the chief persecutors then were the unbelieving Jews,—the weight of whose malice and wrath fell especially on the believers who were of their own nation, whom they considered as the betrayers and enemies of their nation and religion. But it appears not that the apostle’s view was confined to sufferings for the gospel, when he mentions *tribulation*. As to tribulations for religion and the gospel, Christians may lay their account with them, in one form or other, in all times; for the truth is, as the apostle writes, 2 Tim. iii. 12. *All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution*. However persons religious in another way may be respected in the world, they who will be evangelically religious, (*godly in Christ Jesus,*) will be hated by the world, and be pursued with the malice and contempt of the world, in one way or other. But what is there in this to distinguish the case of Gentiles from that of Jews?

In the third place, our author says, ‘The Gentiles had cause to glory in God as their God, ver. 11.’ This is of the three the point on which he labours most. He observes how the Jew is represented, chap. ii. 17. *as making his boast of God*. The word is the same that is rendered here by *glorying*. In Mr L.’s note on chap. v. 2. he writes thus—‘*Glory*. The same word here for the Gentile converts, that he used before for the boasting of the Jews—plainly shows us here, that St Paul in this section opposes the advantages the Gentile converts to Christianity have by faith, to those the Jews gloried in with so much haughtiness and contempt of the Gentiles.’ But, allowing that the apostle meant an opposition of the glorying of different sorts of people, Mr L. hath not conceived or stated the op-

position in a just or right manner. He should have stated it as between the glorying of the true Christian, of whatever nation, and that of the unbelieving carnal Jew, mentioned chap. ii. ; not between the Gentile converts and the Jews without distinction. For (Acts xxi. 20.) there were many thousands of the Jews who believed, and were zealous of the law. These undoubtedly had their part in the glorying, and cause of glorying mentioned here, chap. v. together with Christians of the Gentiles.

To conceive the matter justly, the opposition and contrast stands thus: Upon the one hand, the carnal unbelieving Jew gloried on the grounds mentioned, chap. ii. 17., he *rested in the law, and made his boast of God, of his knowing his will, and approving the things that are most excellent, &c.* on such grounds as the apostle mentions as in his own case, Phil. iii. 5. 6. *Circumcised the eighth day, &c.* The carnal Jews their glorying in God, was the glorying of an ill founded carnal confidence in men insensible of their own sinfulness, and of what their true case required, in order to their having a well founded glorying in God. Upon the other hand, as to the Christian's glorying in God here, ver. 11. if he glorieth in God, it is *through Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the atonement*: by virtue of which, sinners, reconciled to God, admitted unto his grace and favour, and unto covenant with him, have the most sure and solid ground of glorying in God. Here is a clear opposition between the glorying of the carnal Jew, or hypocrite of that denomination, and that of true Christians through faith: and we may now justly substitute in place of this, and as of the same general kind, the opposition that still subsists between the glorying of the true believer, and that of hypocritical professors in the Christian church. But there is nothing here in the glorying mentioned, Rom. v. 11. that is peculiar to Gentiles, and that is not common to believers of whatever nation. When the apostle says, Phil. iii. 3. *We are the circumcision, which—rejoice in Christ Jesus, (the word is the same that is rendered glorying) and have no confidence in the flesh*; there is an opposition between the glorying of the true Christian, and that of the unbelieving carnal Jews, mentioned under very unfavourable character in the preceding verse; whose grounds of confidence and glorying are mentioned in the next following verses. But I expect none will take it in his head to say, that this glorying in Christ Jesus is peculiar to Gentiles. Mr L. himself, in a note on

ver. 11. of Rom. v. writes thus: ‘ And not only so, but we ‘ glory also in God as our God ;’ (so the author paraphrases there)—‘ And thus he (the apostle) shows, that the convert ‘ Gentiles had whereof to glory, as well as the Jews.’ Doubtless; as well as the Jews: why then not understand what is there of believing Jews and Gentiles ?

We are not indeed to understand Mr L. to have meant that the three subjects of glorying mentioned by him, did not belong to believers of the Jewish nation: that were too absurd. These, then, afforded no reason for supposing that the apostle in the first context of chap. v. and in chap. vi. meant the Gentile Christians, as contradistinguished to the Jews. Upon what, then, doth the learned writer indeed found that notion ? This we have in the following passage. ‘ An- ‘ other evidence (saith he, note on chap. v. 8.) St. Paul ‘ gives them here of the love of God towards them—is the ‘ death of Christ for them, whilst they were yet in their ‘ Gentile estate.’ But did not Christ die for those of the Jewish nation, (John xi. 51, 52.) though not for that nation only ? He goes on—‘ which (their Gentile estate) he de- ‘ scribes by calling them (note on ver. 6. 8.) *ασθενεις*, with- ‘ out strength, *ασεβεις*, ungodly, *αμαρτωλοι*, sinners, *εχθροι* ‘ enemies. These four epithets are given to them as Gen- ‘ tiles, they being used by St Paul, as the proper attributes ‘ of the heathen world, in contradistinction to the Jewish ‘ nation.’ So then under these epithets he doth not include the Jews, or any others than the Gentiles in their heathen state. As the criticisms of this eminent writer on these four epithets tend to establish misinterpretation of scripture, of considerable and hurtful consequence, it is the more needful that we consider them carefully.

1. *ασθενεις*, rendered here (chap. v. 6.) according to its precise meaning *without strength*—‘ The helpless condition ‘ (saith Mr L.) of the Gentile world in the state of Gen- ‘ tilism, signified here by *without strength*, he terms, Col. ‘ ii. 13. *dead in sin*, a state, if any, of weakness.’ I am hereafter to consider by itself this expression, *dead in sin* ; and to show that it doth not contradistinguish the Gentiles to the Jews ; and if not, then, having been *dead*, as in chap. vi. 13. the other text he adduces certainly doth not distinguish them. Mr L. himself says, in the contents prefixed to his paraphrase of chap. iii. 1—13. whatever advantages the Jews had, that, in respect to their acceptance with God under the gospel, they had none at all. ‘ He

‘ (the apostle) declares that both Jews and Gentiles are—  
 ‘ both equally incapable of being justified by their own per-  
 ‘ formances.’ And in his paraphrase of ver. 20. he gives  
 the apostle’s sense thus: ‘ It is evident that by his own  
 ‘ performances, in obedience to a law, no man can attain to  
 ‘ an exact conformity to the rule of right, so as to be right-  
 ‘ eous in the sight of God.’ One would think, that, ac-  
 cording to this general doctrine, he should have understood  
 the epithet, *without strength*, to belong to all. For if all are  
 equally incapable of being justified by their own perfor-  
 mances, this clearly implies, that all were without strength.

We have seen all that Mr L. adduces to support his in-  
 terpretation of this word. Let me now give my view of it,  
 and of that text, Rom. v. 6. There are two things in the  
 wretched, natural, and common condition of men. One is,  
 to be ungodly, guilty, destitute of righteousness with which  
 they can appear and stand before God. The other is want  
 of strength to help themselves, to do what is pleasing to  
 God, or to walk with God. This text directs sinful men to  
 look to Christ, for righteousness and strength, by virtue of  
 his death, and the purchase thereof. So it answers well to  
 the prophecy concerning him, Is. xlv. 24. *Surely, shall one  
 say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength.* I am  
 satisfied with this view of that text, Rom. v. 6. If any  
 others are not, they may consider what is offered by Dr  
 Whitby on the place; where he brings a good many in-  
 stances from the Seventy, of their translating the Hebrew  
 word that signifies to *stumble* or *fall*, by the Greek word  
 rendered here, *without strength*. His paraphrase gives it  
 thus: (‘ We being fallen, at the appointed time) Christ  
 ‘ died for the ungodly, (for us who since our fall had no  
 ‘ righteousness of our own.’) But neither will this suit  
 Mr L.’s purpose; for being *without strength* in this sense,  
 is the natural condition of Jews and Gentiles; all have  
 fallen.

2. The second epithet, specially denoting, according to  
 him, the Gentiles, is, *ασιθεϊας*, *ungodly*, which occurs in the  
 same text with the former, chap v. 6. The whole of what  
 he adduces in his note on this text to his purpose, respect-  
 ing this word, he gives thus: ‘ How he describes, *ασιθεϊαν*,  
 ‘ *ungodliness*, mentioned, chap. i. 18. as the proper state of  
 ‘ the Gentiles, we may see, ver. 21. 23.’ That the Gentiles  
 were chargeable with *ungodliness* in a very high degree,  
 yea, and with *holding the truth in unrighteousness*, is not a

matter in question. But if the apostle proves that against the Gentiles, in what remains of that first chapter, he thereafter proves the charge of *ungodliness*, and *unrighteousness* against the Jews; and certainly they were more chargeable with *holding the truth in unrighteousness*, as mentioned ver. 18. than the Gentiles, as they had more knowledge of the truth, having, besides nature's light, that of revelation.

However, Mr L.'s meaning is, that this and the other epithets denote the Gentiles nationally, not single persons of them universally. For in his note on this place, ver. 6. and 8. he writes thus: 'That there were some among the heathen as innocent in their lives, and as far from enmity to God, as some among the Jews, cannot be questioned. Nay, that many of them were not ἀθεοί, but σεβομενοι, worshippers of the true God, if we would doubt of it, is manifest out of the Acts of the Apostles.'

As to this it is agreed, that the persons so called in the book of Acts, chap. xiii. 43. and chap. xvii. 17. were Gentiles by nation and descent: that they were heathens in religion is very wrong, as heathen, in our use of speech, imports idolatrous religion. According to this, heathens, worshippers of the true God, as Mr L.'s passage hath it, is very improper speech. These mentioned in the Acts were proselytes, and are so called expressly in the first of the texts now mentioned: *Religious* (σεβομενοι) *proselytes*. They were persons who knew and received the faith of the church of God, though they had not become members thereof by circumcision.

But to bring what concerns this epithet to some issue,—Mr L. proposed it as a general rule, to interpret St Paul by St Paul himself. But in this, and in too many other instances, he is not lucky in applying that rule. According to that rule, it is reasonable to think that he means *ungodly* here, chap. v. 6. in the same sense in which he uses it in this same discourse, chap. iv. 5. In his note on the word there, Mr L. writes thus: 'By these words St Paul plainly points out Abraham, who was ἀθεος, *ungodly*, i.e. a Gentile, not a worshipper of the true God, when God called him.' Here are several things not justly conceived. 1. *Ungodly* cannot be a designation given to the Gentiles of Abraham's time, in contradistinction to the Jews, who did not then exist. All the people God had then on earth were among the several nations of the world. 2. There appears not sufficient cause for calling Abraham

*ungodly*, as not being a worshipper of the true God. I know that Joshua says, chap. xxiv. 2. *Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor; and they served other gods.* Yet it is not clear that Abraham personally served other gods. But the expression we are considering is, that *God justifieth the ungodly*; and it is at any rate unreasonable to think that Abraham was *ungodly* in Mr L.'s sense, that is, a worshipper of other gods, when God justified him.

But to apply Mr L.'s rule, and interpret St Paul by St Paul himself. He says, ver. 5. that the man is justified, or his faith imputed to him for righteousness, who *believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly*. The blessed apostle explains the meaning in the very next following words, ver. 6, 7. *Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven.* Here it is plain, that the apostle states in opposition, justifying the ungodly, and justification by a man's own works; which behoved for that purpose to be perfect and sinless. Every transgressor is in the eye of the law ungodly; and it is evident that the apostle means by *ungodly* every one who needs to have his iniquity forgiven; as he explains himself, and proves his doctrine by the Psalmist's words to that effect. It was not the case of the Gentiles, but his own case, who was a Jew, that suggested these words to the Psalmist. It is then very clear, by the manner in which the apostle introduces these words of David, that by *ungodly* he means every one who can be charged with sin, and needs forgiveness. Thus we have the meaning of *ungodly*, chap. iv. 5. and there is no reason to think, that in the continuation of his discourse, chap. v. 6. he uses the word in any other meaning. The consequence is, that *ungodly*, chap. v. 6. is by no means to be understood as a special epithet of the Gentiles, as contradistinguished to the Jews.

3. Of the third epithet Mr L. thus writes, note on chap. v. 6. 8. 'That he (the apostle) thought the title, *αμαρτωλοι*, *sinner*s, belonged peculiarly to the Gentiles, in contradistinction to the Jews, he puts it past doubt in these words, *We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles*, Gal. ii. 15. See also, chap. vi. 17—22.' This last mentioned context does indeed represent those he writes to, to have been formerly *servants of sin*. But if that is the

case naturally of Jews, and of all men, it says nothing to the purpose for which it is adduced here. His arguing from Gal. ii. 15. is no better than if one should say, *sinner*s is the peculiar character of a particular nation, to be presently named, who were noted for wickedness, as 1 Sam. xv. 18. *Go, and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites.*

To consider the matter more closely; the truth is, the name *sinner*s is often used to signify persons flagitious, distinguished for impurity or iniquity. So, Luke vii. 37, 39. Matth. xi. 19. Matth. xxvi. 45. Luke vi. 32. Luke xv. 1. 2. John ix. 16. 24. 25. 31.; and so in many instances in the New Testament, and likewise in the Old Testament, which one will easily find by the help of his concordance. In this sense might the name *sinner*s be sometimes given to the Gentiles. If, however, when the name *sinner*s is joined to the name *Gentiles*, it is to be understood as a character of them, must it be so understood when the name *Gentiles* is not mentioned? I would think it so should, if the word expresses the *peculiar* character of Gentiles. For instance, Luke vii. 37. *And behold, a woman in the city which was a sinner*; doth this mean a woman which was a Gentile? If the apostle had said, Gal. ii. 15. *We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners*, and not to have explained the matter by adding *of the Gentiles*, there had been some colour for the criticism: the scope of the place would say much for understanding it there of the Gentiles. But when he explains, and expresses as he does, it is rather contrary to the purpose for which it is brought, and looks as if he was sensible that the word *sinner*s would scarce be understood of the Gentiles, if he had not so added expressly.

Again: If a designation, epithet, or name, is given to the Gentiles on some particular occasion, are we to understand of them these names on all occasions? The Jews called the Gentiles *dogs*, Matth. xv. 26, 27. Shall we, wherever dogs are mentioned metaphorically, understand it of the Gentiles? The apostle says, Phil. iii. 2. *Beware of dogs*. If one should say, that this denotes the Gentiles, as contradistinguished to the Jews, he certainly would mistake greatly; for it is plain the Jews are meant.

If we are to interpret the apostle Paul by himself, it is needless to go so far as Gal. ii. 15. to interpret the word *sinner*s, Rom. v. 8. when the apostle's style and words in this same discourse contain enough to determine the mean-

ing of the word in the last named text. Mr L. himself observes in the contents prefixed to Rom. iii. 1—13. that ‘he (the apostle) declares that both Jews and Gentles are sinners.’ In this same chapter, v. 19. *By one man’s disobedience many were made sinners*; is this, *many were made Gentiles*? The apostle had in the first three chapters of this epistle proved, that none can be justified by the law; and that by this general principle, chap. iii. 23. *That all have sinned*. So all whom God justifies, they being sinners, he justifies them freely, as in the next verse. If, then, in the continuation of his discourse, he draws, chap. v. consolatory inferences from this doctrine, no man, if an hypothesis or peculiar conceit did not give a wry cast to his mind, could be at a loss or in danger to mistake the meaning of the word *sinners*, when the apostle says, ver. 8. *When we were yet sinners, Christ died for us*. Surely Christ died for all his people; as the apostle had proved, chap. iii. 9. that *both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin*. This epithet, then, or character, doth by no means contradistinguish Gentiles to the Jews.

4. The fourth epithet, said to be peculiar to the Gentiles, and to denote them separately, is  $\epsilon\chi\theta\epsilon\omicron\iota$ , *enemies*. ‘As for  $\epsilon\chi\theta\epsilon\omicron\iota$ , *enemies*, (saith Mr L. *ibid.*) you have the Gentiles, ‘before their conversion to Christ, so called, Col. i. 21.’ The words are, *And you who were sometime alienated, and enemies in your minds by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled*. But, strange! is every thing that is said to Gentiles peculiar to Gentiles? If so, then all that Paul says to the Gentile churches he writes to, concerning men’s natural condition, or concerning the grace of the gospel, must be understood to mean something peculiar to Gentiles. Some do indeed labour hard to turn things that way as to both, absurdly enough. As to this text, Col. i. 21.—*enemies in your minds*,—this enmity is in the mind, or is inward; not in their outward condition or state. This makes it reasonable to understand, when he adds—*by wicked works*—that there is a metonymy of the effect for the cause; wicked works, for wicked lusts, that are the cause of such works. The like metonymy seems to be, Rom. viii. 13. *If ye—mortify the deeds of the body*,—body meaning the same as flesh; and deeds for lusts, the inward cause of deeds. Now, if the Colossians are said to be *enemies in their minds by wicked lusts*, there is nothing in that but what is ascribed to the carnal mind; Rom. viii. 7. *The carnal mind is enmity against God*.

But as it is not reasonable to restrict the enmity of the carnal mind to the Gentiles, neither is it reasonable to restrict to them being enemies in their minds, Col. i. 21.

Let us consider the text itself, Rom. v. 10. the expression of which is in question: *When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.* Being reconciled, doth certainly presuppose a previous enmity. The Sovereign and Judge of the world views sinners as rebels and enemies previously to this reconciliation. But Jews, being sinners, needed to be, and many of them were, reconciled to God by the death of his Son. Therefore the character of *enemies*, in the sense of this place, doth not denote the Gentiles as contradistinguished to the Jews.

Mr L. however, gives an account of this reconciliation and peace, that tends to invalidate the account I have given of *enemies*. Thus he says, (*ibid.*)—‘ Hence St Paul, who was ‘ the apostle of the Gentiles, calls his performing that office, ‘ *the ministry of reconciliation*, 2 Cor. v. 18.’ As to this, let it be observed, that Christ by his cross hath procured reconciliation, according to Eph. ii. first of Jews and Gentiles; ver. 15. *Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments*; so he hath reconciled Jews and Gentiles, making them one body and church. Next, the reconciliation of BOTH (Jews and Gentiles) UNTO GOD *in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.* The consequence is, ver. 17. *he came to preach peace, even this reconciliation, to them who were far off, (the Gentiles) and to them who were nigh, that is, the Jews.* It is to be observed, in the next place, that Christ’s preaching this peace, after his undergoing the cross, was not in his own person; but he preached by his apostles and other ministers. Particularly the preaching of it to the Gentiles was committed to Paul: the preaching it to the Jews was committed to Peter. But surely it was preaching the same peace: it was the same ministry of reconciliation that was committed to both.

Let us consider the subject of this ministry and preaching. It was, ver. 19. *That God is in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.* Here the word *world* includes the Gentiles; but no good reason can be given why it should not include Jews also. For though *world* is sometimes meant in contradistinction to the people of Israel, yet sometimes it is used with respect to the Jews especially; as on occasion of going to attend the solemnity of the feast of tabernacles, Christ says to his

brethren, John vii. 7. *The world cannot hate you: but me it hateth.* World in this place appears to be particularly meant of Jews. Christ says to Nicodemus, John iii. 16. *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish.* If world includes here the Gentiles, must it even be restricted to them? That were poor comfort to Nicodemus a Jew. At that rate, we behoved to restrict to the Gentiles the next clause, *That whosoever believeth might not perish*; and understand it, Whosoever of the Gentiles; which were very absurd. If the reconciliation, 2 Cor. v. 18, 19. imports God's not imputing to men their trespasses, I hope it will be allowed, that Jewish believers had their part in this, as the Gentiles had.

Finally, the ground on which this reconciliation and peace is founded, is what Jews and Gentiles were alike concerned in; and that hath an equal respect to both; ver. 21. *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* Upon the whole, though the apostle Paul was the apostle of the Gentiles, and in teaching the Corinthians, as he doth, ver. 18—21. is representing the subject and end of his ministry, yet there is nothing therein peculiar to the Gentiles. If, according to Christ's words, Luke xxiv. 47. *Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations,* (which is indeed the ministry of reconciliation, 2 Cor. v.) our Lord adds, *beginning at Jerusalem.* The ministry of reconciliation was designed for all nations; but first for the Jews. So it was very unreasonable for Mr L. to restrict the ministry of reconciliation to the gathering in of the Gentiles, and to understand being *enemies* previously to that reconciliation, as an epithet or character distinguishing Gentiles from Jews.

Mr L.'s views we shall more fully understand, by observing what he adds in the place before mentioned, (note on chap. v. 6. 8.)—'And here in this chapter (Rom. v. 1.) the privilege which they (the Gentiles) receive, he tells them 'is this, that they have peace with God, *i.e.* are no longer 'incorporated with his enemies, and of the party of the open 'rebels against him in the kingdom of Satan; being returned to their natural allegiance, in their owning the one 'true supreme God, in submitting to the kingdom he had 'set up in his Son, and being received by him as his subjects.' As to this, it is true, that in their conversion by

the gospel, the Gentiles turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, 1 Thess. i. 9. and God received them as his subjects. But certainly all they, whether Jews or Gentiles, who truly believed in Jesus Christ, and were justified by this faith, have received the remission of their sins, as chap. iv. 5, 6, 7. This is the principal thing in the reconciliation; God not imputing to them their trespasses, but receiving them, as to the real state of their souls, unto grace and favour. So that they are not any longer under the curse of the law, nor have the wrath of God abiding on them; as is the state of many, who are not heathens, in the party of *open* rebels, but are outwardly of the kingdom which God hath set up in his Son. To neglect this, and to interpret the peace with God, Rom. v. 1. of the outward common privilege of all who are members of the church, is what I cannot consider otherwise than as enervating and grossly perverting the scripture.

I know that in the eleventh of Romans, the apostle teaches, ver. 15. that on occasion of casting away the Jews, the *world* [the Gentiles] were *reconciled*, which implies that formerly they were *enemies*, in a particular sense. And he represents, ver. 28. that the Jews cast off, and no longer in a church-state, were thus become *enemies*. But let the expressions be understood in the sense to which the scope and argument in that place determines them. It appears, however, that in this place, Rom. v. 10. all men, being sinners, ungodly in the eye of the law, and needing (as chap. iv. 7.) the forgiveness of their sins, are in the apostle's meaning and view *enemies*, whether Jews or Gentiles, until they are *reconciled to God by the death of his Son*, being (as ver. 9.) *justified by his blood*, and chap. iii. 25. *through faith in his blood*. So that *enemies* is not a character peculiar to Gentiles.

These criticisms of Mr Locke's on the four epithets have some appearance of being ingenious. But the ingenious have often produced conceits, that would not bear strict examination, while they have been, however, the source or support of very gross misinterpretation. That it hath thus happened as to Mr L.'s criticisms and interpretations of Rom. v. in particular, may appear in a strong enough light to such as will peruse the writings of the late famous Dr Taylor. Therefore I expect to be excused for looking a little farther into these interpretations of Mr Locke's. His notions of the four epithets come to this, That they import the *national* character of the Gentiles in their state of heathenism; and

that the comfortable things, stated in opposition to these in the Christian state of the Gentiles, do import national privileges and advantages accruing to the Gentiles by the grace of the gospel: and that in such way, on the one side and the other, as to their former state of heathenism, and their latter state under the gospel; that from these there could no conclusions be formed concerning the real spiritual condition of particular persons before God.

To this purpose the author expresses himself thus, note on Rom. v. 6. 8. 'If it were remembered, that St Paul 'all along, through the eleven first chapters of this epistle, 'speaks *nationally* of the Jews and Gentiles, as it is visible 'he does, and not personally of single men, there would be 'less difficulty, and fewer mistakes in understanding this 'epistle.' So he. Concerning these things, I say, in the first place, if in the 9th, 10th, 11th chapters, the apostle doth frequently speak of Jews and Gentiles nationally; let him be so understood whensoever his expression, or the scope of the argument give cause for it. But to apply this notion to the preceding eight chapters, is altogether without reason; yea, is contrary to the evident design and meaning.

This will be very clear, if we consider the two subjects he insists especially and most largely upon. The first is that of man's sinfulness: concerning which he hath this conclusion, chap. iii. 19. *That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Every mouth—*is not this to every one singly? *and that all the world may become guilty,*—is this as to general national character, while thousands may happen not to be guilty? Surely the apostle means to represent the case of all men, and of *every* man singly, and indiscriminately, without distinction of nations, or of any peculiar national character. This is the more to be observed, that it is the result of all his reasoning hitherto in this epistle. When he adds, ver. 20. *Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight;* surely this is not to be understood nationally, but of every man singly and personally; as it is plain he includes every one singly, when he says, ver. 23. *All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.*

As by these texts just mentioned it appears, that all the apostle's reasoning in the three first chapters terminates in conclusions that respect and include every man singly, and that prove the sinfulness of every one; we might from this expect, that what he next produces for men's encouragement

and comfort, should be designed for men singly—for every man with respect to his own case in particular. So it is indeed; for he immediately passes to a doctrine concerning justification through faith, which, without distinction of nations, concerns every one singly, who truly believeth in Jesus Christ. So ver. 22. *Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe.* The apostle's conclusion respecting justification is, ver. 28. *That a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.* A man—certainly this respects men singly and in particular. As he had said, chap. i. 16. that *the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*

Upon a just view of the apostle's expression and doctrine, it must appear extremely absurd to suppose, that with him *believing* is a national character; or that justification through faith is a national privilege, blessing, or attainment. It is very evident, that the faith he speaks of is true, or, as he calls it elsewhere, *unfeigned faith*; and that this is not a national, but a personal thing. It is no less evident, that justification through faith is a personal, not a national blessing. It appears, then, though *Jews* and *Gentiles* are national names, that what the apostle asserts of men's sinfulness, is not to be understood nationally, but personally of all and every one of mankind; and that his doctrine of justification through faith is applicable to every true believer, whether Jew or Gentile, singly, and to none else. All and every one having sinned, they who are justified, are so, *freely by grace, through the redemption that is in Christ*, (chap. iii. 23, 24.) *In whom* (as Eph. i. 7.) *we have redemption through his blood, even the remission of sins*; he being (as Rom. iii. 25.) *set forth as a propitiation, through faith in his blood.* The reality of this faith, and of the blessedness that cometh by it, are not national, but personal, to every true believer.

Now, when the apostle proceeds, chap. v. to set forth the blessedness and consolation arising from this faith, and justification through faith, what should we expect from a view of his preceding discourse, and of the evident scope and drift of it, but a representation of blessings, consolation, and hope, belonging to true believers singly? not national advantages, which are but external, and take effect for the salvation but of a few commonly.

Let us consider the first of these privileges and blessings, chap. v. 1. *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.*

It is easy judging from the apostle's preceding discourse, how this peace is to be understood. He had proved that all and every one had sinned; that they are the ungodly, chap. iv. 5, 7. who are justified by the forgiveness of their sins. Previously to this, being guilty, and the wrath of God abiding on them, (John iii. 36.) they are considered as enemies; and in this wretched state are without strength or ability to help themselves. What then should we understand by the blessing set in opposition to all this, even the peace which believers have with God? but as it is expressed, ver. 10. that they are *reconciled to God*, who is (2 Cor. v. 19.) *reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them*: and that (as Rom. viii. 31.) God is for them, and that they are admitted, as in the next following words of chap. v. 2. unto a state of special grace and favour with God.

Mr Locke's account of this peace with God we have seen already. It is, that the Gentiles were not now in the state of open rebels, as when in heathenism and idolatry; but are admitted as members of the kingdom of Christ: and this he would have understood of the Gentiles nationally. If so as to the peace with God, ver. 1. then certainly all that follows must be so understood; nationally *rejoice in the hope of the glory of God*; nationally *glory in tribulation*; nationally *have the love of God shed abroad in our hearts*, &c. &c. How contrary this is to the apostle's view, appears from what hath been said already.

It is fit to consider in this place one argument that remains, and which he takes from the connexion of the apostle's discourse, which cannot, he thinks, be accounted for, without understanding this context, chap. v. 1—11. as he has done. But as it hath been shown here, that his interpretation is altogether without foundation, that gives good cause to think, that he has mistaken the connexion, or that it can be well accounted for without receiving his interpretation.

Let us, however, observe how he manages this argument, in the last paragraph of his note on ver. 6. 8.—‘And, indeed, if the four epithets be not taken to be spoken here of the Gentile world, in this political and truly evangelical sense, but, in the ordinary systematical notion, applied to all mankind, as belonging universally to every man personally, whether by profession Gentile, Jew, or Christian, before he be actually regenerated by a saving faith, and an effectual thorough conversion, the illative particle *where-*

'fore, in the beginning of ver. 12. will hardly connect it and what follows to the foregoing part of this chapter. But the eleven first verses must be taken for a parenthesis, and then the *therefore*, in the beginning of this fifth chapter, which joins it to the fourth with a very clear connection, will be wholly insignificant.'

Here he calls the sense he gives of the four epithets, the political and truly evangelical sense. I shall add nothing about the political sense to what hath been said already about the national sense, as he had been calling it before ; but only take occasion from the word to say, it had been well if Mr Locke had written on subjects in divinity, as well as he did on some political subjects. Meantime, I think his sense is far from being truly evangelical. A sense and interpretation that enervates quite a context so full of consolation, that deprives Christians singly and personally of the special consolations belonging to them as true believers, justified by faith, and turns all to matter of external and common privilege, common to them and others, members of the church, who are not actually regenerated by a saving faith, as he speaks, and an effectual thorough conversion.

Whatever contemptuous notion this author and some others, adversaries to the doctrine of the reformed churches, have affixed to *system* and *systematical*, (though they have their own systems and systematical notions themselves) it is very evident that what he calls the systematical notion is the true notion of the four epithets in Rom. v. and that his conceit concerning them cannot be supported by any argument or just criticism.

As to the connexion of chap. v. 1. with the preceding discourse, expressed by the illative *therefore*, it is very clear : nor is there need of Mr L.'s notion to make it so. He had asserted justification by faith, and now infers,—*Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God* ; justification imports the forgiveness of sins, and this of itself imports peace with God. All that follows, to ver. 11. is comfortable inference from justification, and the apostle's doctrine concerning it. So the illative *therefore*, ver. 1. represents a clear connexion ; and is fraught with inferences of the utmost importance and consolation. There is no need of making the intervening context to ver. 12. a parenthesis. There is nothing in it but what the illative *therefore*, ver. 10. conveys clearly from the preceding discourse.

Now, as to the connexion by the *wherefore*, ver. 12. let us

observe how Mr L. himself represents it. He gives it at the end of his long note on ver. 6. 8. thus—‘ We Gentiles ‘ have by Christ received the reconciliation, which we can- ‘ not doubt to be intended for us, as well as for the Jews, ‘ since sin and death entered into the world by Adam, the ‘ common father of us all : and as by the disobedience of ‘ that one condemnation of death came upon all, so by the ‘ obedience of one, justification to life came upon all.’ Let us now see whether the connexion here may not be as clearly and justly accounted for, and as much produced by it for the interest of the Gentiles, according to the common interpretation, as Mr L.’s view of it has produced. Let us for this take the paraphrase of ver. 12. by the judicious Dr. Guise, (from which that of a more late very worthy writer might receive correction in some things) the sum of which is as follows,—‘ Since therefore under the gospel state, Gen- ‘ tiles as well as Jews are in fact reconciled by the death ‘ of Christ, and have received the atonement by faith in ‘ him, (ver. 10, 11.) ; and since—persons of all nations ‘ were on a level—as to their guiltiness before God, and ‘ their need of the gospel way of justification—let us now ‘ —go back as far as the original apostacy, in which the ‘ Jews were without doubt equally involved with the Gen- ‘ tiles.—Now, as this is the case of one and all in Adam, ‘ and shows that the Jew is as much under guilt, and has ‘ as much need of the gospel-salvation as the Gentile ; so, ‘ as we shall see anon, (ver. 18, 19.) spiritual blessings, ‘ opposite to all this ruin by the first man, are brought in ‘ by Jesus Christ, as a public head of recovery to one as well ‘ as another of these sorts of people, through faith in him.’

By what hath been observed, it is evident, that there is no need of Mr L.’s notions concerning the scope and meaning of the first context of chap. v. in order to give a satisfying account of the connexion therewith of the latter context of that chapter. The apostle having proved that all and every one of mankind are, in their natural condition, under condemnation, he next asserts the doctrine of justification through faith, and lays open the great consolations that arise from it : and concludes his discourse on these subjects, with giving a view of the origin, source, and ground, both of condemnation and of justification ; the former by the offence and disobedience of Adam, and by the many offences men have added thereto ; the latter by the obedience of Christ. He then finishes his discourse on these subjects with the most comfort-

able conclusion, contained in ver. 21. which may be considered as a very brief epitome of all that precedes it in this epistle — *That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness (the righteousness of one, ver. 18. the gift of righteousness, ver. 17. or, the gifted righteousness) unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.*

There remains one argument yet, by which Mr L. endeavours to establish his notion of the four epithets, and by that means to warrant his interpreting the first context of Rom. v. concerning the Gentiles separately. It is this, that the sense of each of them is to be found in the description the apostle gives of the heathen state of the Gentiles, Eph. ii. But what doth this prove? It hath here already been made very evident, that the four epithets mean what is, in natural condition, common to Jews and Gentiles: if then that meaning be found in a description of the state of the Gentiles, that doth by no means weaken the evidence already brought, that these epithets belong both to Jews and Gentiles. However, to obviate or remove all difficulty, I shall consider what the learned writer takes notice of as to his purpose in Eph. ii. And I expect it will appear, that some things which he understood to be there said of the heathens, as peculiar to their case, are not so, as he conceived.

The first thing is, that the epithet *weak* (or, *without strength*,) is in the meaning of *dead in trespasses and sins*, Eph. ii. 1. 5. which he understands as restricted, in the sense of it, to the state of heathenism: and this, being dead, is, he says, a state, if any, of weakness; and the state of heathenism being represented, as he understands, by being thus dead, is the only argument that I see he brings to prove, that *weak*, or *without strength*, Rom. v. is an epithet meant in a peculiar sense of the Gentiles, as contradistinguished to the Jews. But being dead does not import merely being weak, but represents a state of utter incapacity, until new life is given by Divine grace; and if it be peculiar to heathens to be dead in sins, as he understood, yet how can this prove, that to be weak is not applicable both to Jews and Gentiles?

But further, if being *dead in trespasses and sins* is not meant as a character peculiar to the state of heathenism; and if it shall appear that, according to the apostle's view, the Jews in their natural condition were also thus dead, there will remain no colour of argument to Mr L.'s purpose. Let us then direct our inquiry to this point, and see how the matter shall come out.

In order to this, it is to be observed, that upon a general view of the chapter, Gentiles and Jews are therein spoken of distinctly and separately. This is very clear from ver. 11. downwards. If we consider it closely, we shall see good reason to think that it is so from the beginning of the chapter. So ver. 1. *You who were dead*, i. e. you Ephesians, Gentiles. Ver. 3. *Among whom also we all* (that is, believers of the Jewish nation) *had our conversation*.—They who will have the Gentiles meant in this third verse, account for the pronoun *we* by saying that it means not the Jews, but the Gentiles; the apostle including himself with them, as being the apostle of the Gentiles. But this would be as likely to have led him to say, ver. 1. *we*, or *us*, *who were dead*— We see that in those parts of the chapter, wherein it is evident that the Gentiles separately are meant, he avoids using the words *we*, or *us*, or *our*. He in these places says, *ye*, or *you*. So ver. 1. *You hath he quickened*—Ver. 11. 12. *Ye being in time past Gentiles,—ye were without Christ*—Ver. 13. *Ye who were far off*. And so again, ver. 17. *to you who were far off*—Ver. 19. *Ye are no more strangers*—Ver. 22. *In whom you also*.— On the other hand, in those places wherein it appears that he includes others besides Gentiles under *we*, or *our*, or *us*, it is evident he doth not include merely himself with the Gentiles, as being their apostle; but means both Jews and Gentiles together. So ver. 14. *He is our peace, who hath made both one*—Ver. 15. *To make to himself of twain one new man*.—So the word *us*, in the end of ver. 14. *The middle wall of partition between us*. And ver. 18. *Through him we both have an access*.—This being observable in the apostle's style through the chapter, it gives good cause to think that *we all*, ver. 3. is meant of the Jewish believers with regard to their former state. We shall see presently something more that tends to establish this point.

Let it then be admitted, that the first verse is meant of the Gentiles, and these words of ver. 2. *Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of the world, according to the prince of the power of the air*; yet I cannot agree that they are the Gentiles who are meant in the last clause of that verse—*the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience*. I think these words are so introduced as to indicate that another sort than Gentiles are meant. This designation seems more likely to be designed for the character of the Jews. The Gentiles were become remarkable for

the obedience of faith. The prophecy set forth, Is. xlix. 18. 22. was now a-fulfilling. When the apostle describes, Gal. iv. the gospel-church, in opposition to the *Jerusalem that now is*, (as he speaks, ver. 25.) he doth it, ver. 27. in words cited from Is. liv. 1. which do evidently mean the Gentiles, and the Gentile church.

The Jewish nation, with the exception of a small remnant, were disobedient to the gospel, *children of disobedience*, (απειθείας): and if the character of *disobedient*, (απειδοῦντες) is given to the Jews of a particular place, Acts xiv. 2. we find it elsewhere the character of the nation.

There seems to be good cause to think that the Jews are the *disobedient*, whom the apostle Peter hath particularly in his eye, 1 Epist. ii. 7, 8. as the two texts he there cites, Psal. cxviii. 22. and Is. viii. 14., are certainly meant of Jews; and if those meant by Peter, ver. 8. *STUMBLED at the word*, (that is, the doctrine of the gospel,) *being disobedient*, we see the apostle Paul using the same expression concerning Israel, Rom. ix.; there, speaking of Israel in general and nationally, he says, ver. 31, 32. *They attained not to the law of righteousness, because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law; for they STUMBLED at that stumbling stone.*—They stumbled at the word, as to that essential article of gospel-faith.

This matter will become more clear, if we consider Rom. xi. 30, 31, 32. The apostle observes, that the Gentiles *in times past had not believed* (ηπειθήσατε, obeyed) God; but that *now* the Gentiles had *obtained mercy through their unbelief* (απειθεία); and ver. 32. he says, *God had concluded them* (N.B.—*them* should not, according to the Greek, be here) *all in unbelief*, (εις απειθειαν, disobedience) *that he might have mercy upon all.* The interpreters whom I have seen, do generally understand *all* here to include Gentiles and Jews; not at once, but in their turns, and at different times, concluded in unbelief. The Gentiles *in time past*, as ver. 30. the Jews *now*, as ver. 31. By this it appears, that at the time the apostle wrote, to be *disobedient*, or (according to the Hebrew idiom) *children of disobedience*, as Eph. ii. 2. was the general and national character of the Jews, as contradistinguished to the Gentiles, who had now obtained mercy, and were become very remarkable for the obedience of faith.

According to this view of matters, we see that Rom. x. 20, 21. where the apostle is clearly contradistinguishing

Gentiles and Jews to one another, he applies to them thus the words of Is. lxxv. 1, 2. *I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me:* (this of the Gentiles.) *But* (so the apostle goes on) *to Israel he saith, All the day long have I stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient people.* Upon the whole, it appears, that the scripture-style in other places warrants us to understand, Eph. ii. 2. *Children of disobedience,* as the national character, at that time, of the Jews.

Other circumstances and expressions there used, accord well with this sense of *children of disobedience*, and tend to establish it. Particularly when it is said of *the prince of the power of the air* [Satan,] that he is *the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.* Satan reigned openly among the heathen Gentiles; he and his inferior demons were openly and solemnly worshipped by them. This idolatry was the thing most obvious, remarkable, and universal in the course of the world. It was not so indeed among the Jews. Yet the unbelieving Jews (as was now their national character) were no less truly under his influence, and practically conformed to him. So the Lord says to a company of them, John viii. 44. *Ye are of your father the devil; and the lusts of your father ye will do.* Accordingly, Eph. ii. 2. though the Jews did not so openly and directly serve Satan in idolatrous worship, since the Babylonish captivity, as the Gentiles; yet he was *ενεργων*, *working in them.* The Greek word sometimes signifies *working effectually*; but most strictly signifieth, *working inwardly.* Dr Whitby takes notice of this meaning of the word in his note on the place. 'This evil spirit (saith 'he) is here said *ενεργειν* inwardly to work in the children 'of disobedience.' It was not so always as to the Jews nationally, when they were the church, the only church of God. But *now* he wrought inwardly in them by various lusts and delusions, by which, becoming disobedient to the gospel, he wrought them up to the utmost malice and fury against it.

It is likewise to be observed, that when the apostle doth more particularly describe the conversation and practice of these children of disobedience, there is not any hint of outward idolatrous practice. Their conversation was, he says, *in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind.*

Some may readily suggest on this occasion thus: Paul

here ranks himself, as to his former state, with these children of disobedience: but can it be thought, that when he was the Pharisee, so very devout, and strictly righteous, that he had his conversation as is here described? For conceiving justly of this, let us remember the distinction he makes, 2 Cor. vii. 1. between *filthiness of the flesh and spirit*. Both sorts come under the general name of the *flesh*, as that word is sometimes used. So here there is first the general thing; their conversation was *in the lusts of the flesh*: then he distinguishes and adds, *fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind*. This last, *the mind*, is the thinking and understanding faculty. By the account Paul gives of himself when under the law, yea, and when under grace, Rom. vii. he well knew the motions of sin, and of the flesh, in various forms. But what was most remarkable in his case was, that error and delusion possessed his mind, attended with what may be called intellectual lusts and passions. There was the pride of self-righteousness, with an ignorant furious zeal for the Mosaic law, and for the honour and dignity of Israel beyond all nations; by which he became the blasphemer, persecutor, and injurious. So it is not without cause he ranks himself with the children of disobedience, as to his former condition and conversation. What was his case, seems to have been pretty generally the case of the Jewish nation; to whom he ascribes, in general terms, *a zeal of God*, Rom. x. 2.

The apostle's general purpose, Eph. ii. appears to be to set forth the riches of divine grace towards Jews and Gentiles. As it is his way on other occasions, he first represents men's former and natural conditions; and having described the state and way of the Gentiles in the first verse, and in the first part of ver. 2. what immediately follows makes an answer to such a question as Rom. iii. 9. *Are we better than they?* By no means. For though Israel had great advantage of outward privilege and means of salvation, yet otherwise, as to real spiritual state, whilst Satan reigned with more open sway among the Gentiles, he worked inwardly and efficaciously in us Jews, by means of various delusions, passions, and lusts, and *we were*, ver. 3. *by NATURE children of wrath even as others*; even as Gentiles.

I see not that any well founded argument against the interpretation given of *children of disobedience* arises from what Mr L. observes in his note on Eph. v. 6. '*Children of disobedience* here, (saith he) and chap. ii. 2. and Col. iii. 6. are

‘plainly the Gentiles, who refused to come in and submit themselves to the gospel, as will appear to any one who will read these places and the context with attention.’ I have done so; but what the learned writer says is far from appearing to me. What appears is plainly this; if there were whoremongers, or unclean persons, as Eph. v. 5. or persons given to fornication, uncleanness, &c. as Col. iii. 5. they were well entitled to the designation of *children of disobedience* as their personal character, in ver. 6. of each context, whether they were Jews or Gentiles. But as to refusing to come in, and submit to the gospel, what hath been here above observed, makes sufficient reason for understanding *children of disobedience*, Eph. ii. 2. as the national character, not of the Gentiles, but of the Jews.

Having fixed the meaning of *children of disobedience*, Eph. ii. 2. we may take the meaning of the three verses, as if he had said—*You* Ephesians, Gentiles, in time past dead in trespasses and sins, walked according to the course of this world, according to Satan, whom ye openly served, and worshipped; and who indeed doth *now* (since divine grace is manifested to the Gentiles) work inwardly and effectually in the unhappy Jews, children of disobedience: among whom *we* of the Jews, who are believers in Christ, all of us had our conversation in time past; and by nature our spiritual condition was no better than yours, being by nature children of wrath, even as others.

One step yet farther forward. The apostle says, ver. 4, 5. *But God, who is rich in mercy—even when WE were DEAD in sins, hath quickened us.* In ver. 1. it was, *you*. Here it is, *when we were dead in sins*. I have formerly observed, that the apostle in the latter part of this chapter doth not use such words as *we, us, our*, but where it is plain that Jews and Gentiles together are comprehended. It appears to be so here. Having said, *you* and *ye*, ver. 1, 2. he now, ver. 5. hath *we*: and as upon the intervening part of the context it hath been shown, that therein he means the Jews, it is plain that when he says, ver. 5. *when WE were dead in sins*, he means that Jews and Gentiles, in their former and natural states, were dead in sins.

If any shall yet hold, that *children of disobedience*, ver. 2. means all who are in unbelief and disobedience to the gospel, whether Jews or Gentiles, and that *we all*, ver. 3. means all believers of both denominations; this is still cross to Mr L.’s purpose, and is inconsistent with understanding *dead in*

*sins* as the distinguishing characteristic of Gentiles, in the state of heathenism. According to this interpretation also, *when we were dead in sins*, ver. 5. must mean the former and natural state of all believers, both of the Jews and of the Gentiles.

I have, however, given good reason for understanding *children of disobedience*, ver. 2. as the national character at that time of the Jews. It, at any rate, tends to confirm the sense of *dead in sins*, ver. 5. as meaning the natural state of Jews and Gentiles, according to both interpretations, that the immediately following context represents comfortable effects of divine grace common to persons of both denominations, without the hint of any thing peculiar to Gentiles, while he uses the words *we* and *us*—*Quickened together with Christ,—raised up together ;—made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus,—*God purposing in this way to *show the exceeding riches of his grace*. On occasion of mentioning this divine grace, he says to the Ephesians, ver. 8. *By grace ye are saved,—*and ver. 9. *not of works, lest any man should boast*. Though he speaks so in those two verses to the Ephesians apart, who were Gentiles, shall we say, that these verses contain any thing peculiar to Gentiles? No, surely; for salvation by grace, not by works, is salvation, and a way of salvation common to Jews and Gentiles. So also is what follows, ver. 10. *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works*.

The characters of *weak sinners*, and *ungodly*, Mr L. pretended to find ascribed to heathens here, Eph. ii. 2, 3. But who ever doubted that these heathens were *weak sinners*, and *ungodly*? But it hath been here proven, that Rom. v. these three characters or epithets are meant of Jews and Gentiles. The epithet *enemies*, he finds in the 11th and 12th verses of Eph. ii. though the word is not there used. It is, however, true, that these verses represent what comes up to the meaning of *enemies*, Rom. xi. 28. But it hath been here proven, that *all men* are enemies, in the sense of chap. v. until they are reconciled to God by the death of his Son.

Upon the whole, it appears now very evidently, that there is nothing in the import of the four epithets, from which Mr L. argues, or in what he adduces, to support his meaning of these from Eph. ii. that gives cause to understand that context, Rom. v. 1—11. to respect the Gentiles as contradistinguished to the Jews, or to understand it otherwise than

as it hath been hitherto generally understood by judicious and worthy interpreters; viz. as representing privileges, blessings, and consolations common to all true believers, of Jews or Gentiles, or of whatever nation; as well as the natural condition, expressed by the four epithets, of Jews and Gentiles, that is, of all mankind: and Mr L.'s notion having no good reason to support it, it can make no solid foundation for the superstructure which Mr Taylor of Norwich has raised upon it.

Thus I have endeavoured to clear out of our way a wrong notion of the general scope and design of the sixth chapter. The chief ground of this notion is, that the sixth chapter must be meant of the same sort of men of whom the fifth is meant; and as it is meant of the Gentiles separately, and as contradistinguished to the Jews, that the sixth chapter should be so understood likewise. But it now appearing that this notion is not well founded, it cannot give us cause to interpret any part of this sixth chapter of the Gentiles separately. So we have got rid of one thing that hath led some men to a wrong interpretation of some parts of it.

I shall not say much here concerning the scope of the sixth chapter, and of the following context, so far as I have proposed to explain. Only, in the general, that the apostle's subject its sanctification, and the freedom from the reign and dominion of sin that is necessary in sanctification, and in order to the true practice of holiness. As he had asserted and explained a doctrine of justification common to Christians of the Jews and of the Gentiles, we have cause to think, from a general view, that his doctrines and explications concerning sanctification have an equal respect to Christians of both sorts—to all Christians.

I shall not endeavour to prepossess the mind of any reader by a more minute account of the scope and design of the particular parts of the context; or by prefixing an account of the contents: let us search for that in the context, as we go along in the explication. When that is finished, the contents and scope of every part will appear, in a more clear and satisfying light, in such a recapitulation of the apostle's principles, doctrine, and reasoning, as may fitly have place in an appendix.

# EXPLICATION AND PARAPHRASE OF ROMANS VI.

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TEXT.—Ver. 1. *What shall we say then? shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?*

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

The objection in this place appears to take its occasion from what the apostle had said two verses before this; to wit, chap. v. 20. The *entering of the law*, there mentioned, is certainly meant of the solemn promulgation of it to Israel at Sinai. As Mr L. explains the whole of that verse, and the next after it, concerning the Jews, one would think, that this should have led him to ascribe the objection in the next following verse rather to the Jew than to the Gentile; as, indeed, the Jews were the greatest adversaries to the apostle's doctrine, particularly to his doctrine of justification, and the most ready to cavil at it; and so to suppose that in this chapter the apostle is directing his reasonings to them, rather than to the Gentiles, as he understood it.

But as I do not think the apostle is directing his reasoning here to Jewish or Gentile converts separately, some consideration of chap. v. 20. from which occasion is taken for the objection, will tend to make the matter clear. There it is said, *The law entered, that the offence might abound.* To say, that the design of giving the law at Sinai to the Israelites, was to increase their sin, or the aggravations of it, cannot be easily received. For though the consequence might be the actual abounding of sin, and of its aggravations on the part of the Israelites, through their corruption and perverseness; yet it cannot be admitted that this was the design of giving them the law. Therefore another interpretation of the words must be looked for.

In order to this, let it be considered, that often in Scripture things are said to be, when the meaning is, that they appear, or are proved to be. So John xv. 8. Christ exhorts his disciples to bring forth much fruit, by this argument, *So shall ye be my disciples*; that is, so shall ye appear or prove yourselves to be my disciples. For the true order of

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

Thus did matters stand in the world before the giving of the law to the Israelites. The writing of the law in the natural consciences of men was very much obliterated; and in the heathen world idolatry and all sorts of wickedness were come to a great height. The ancestors of the Israelites had indeed divine revelation but two or three generations before this time; but that light even among them was become very dim and obscure. They were become very ignorant; and the infection of Egypt, as to idolatry and other sorts of wickedness, had prevailed greatly among them. By the increase of ignorance, and of all wickedness, the distinction between moral good and evil was in danger to be quite forgot, and lost in the world. In this state of things, God being to set apart a peculiar people to himself, he thought fit to set up the light of the law among them, by a new, clear, and very solemn promulgation. By this light might Israel perceive how much sin abounded with themselves; as *by the law is the knowledge of sin*, chap. iii. 20. By it appeared in what fearful degrees sin abounded in the heathen world about them; from which they had cause to adore the grace that had so favourably distinguished themselves. By this light of the law, by which the abounding of sin appeared so clearly, might Israelites, and such of the Gentiles as came to the knowledge of this law, discover the need they had, on both hands, of the grace that pardoneth sin, and of that Saviour, and gospel-way of salvation, which Moses and the prophets were, from time to time, setting before them.

When, therefore, on occasion of mentioning the abounding of sin, which it did to a high degree among Jews and Gentiles, the apostle takes occasion to say, that *where sin abounded, grace did much more abound*, it is plain, that this hath respect to both Jews and Gentiles; sin had abounded with both; grace did much more abound towards both sorts. Now, as it is from a proposition, which hath respect to both Jews and Gentiles, that occasion is taken for the objection here, chap. vi. 1. what cause can we have to ascribe the objection to one sort, when there is nothing said, or insinuated, that implies it; or to suppose that, in answering the objection, the apostle means any other than doctrine and arguments, which all believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, are alike concerned in?

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

I must here likewise observe Dr Whitby's annotation on this verse. 'Note here,' says he, 'that if the faith to which St Paul in this epistle doth ascribe justification, did not only oblige us to, but even comprehend evangelical and constant obedience, there could be no colour for this objection. That therefore must be a mistake.' It had indeed been so observed, and argued formerly by many; but it is fair of this learned writer to make such observation and concession. As to his own notion of justification by faith, it were easy showing it to be far from being right, if this were a proper place for it.

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

PARAPHRASE.—

PARAPHRASE.—Ver. 1. How shall we judge of this doctrine, that justification is wholly and merely by grace; even by grace super-abounding where sin hath abounded; and that a sinner is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law? It seems indeed to be well calculated for those who find themselves destitute of righteousness; for the self-condemned and humbled sinners, it affords great consolation on that side. But is it not, at the sametime, very comfortable and encouraging to the flesh, and unfavourable to holiness and good works? For if it is the glory of divine grace, that where sin hath abounded it doth much more abound, is it not a just inference, that we should continue in sin, that grace may be thus glorified? For, however contrary the practice of sin may be to the Divine holiness, yet as a special design of God, in the salvation of sinners, is to magnify his grace, should not we contribute to advance the glory of superabounding grace, by continuing in sin; and so give occasion to grace to display its utmost richness and glory?

TEXT.—2. *God forbid: how shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?*

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

Here we have occasion to observe, if the apostle had meant the faith, to which he ascribes justification, as including evangelical obedience and good works; or, that its virtue and effect in justifying did arise from its certain connexion with subsequent holiness and good works; he could not have missed to answer, and say to this purpose—You unhappily mistake my doctrine of justification by faith, and the true sense of my words; the faith I mean includes good works, and its justifying virtue is from its connexion with holiness and good works, which necessarily flow from it, and which I include in my notion of faith. What absurdity, yea, what nonsense is it, to charge such a doctrine of justification by faith with being unfavourable to holiness, or with favouring and encouraging sin! This answer, if such were his notion of justifying faith, were so much in point, so full, and withal so very obvious, that when he says nothing to that purpose, it gives us cause to be well satisfied that his notion of justifying faith is not such as would afford that answer.

Another thing yet with regard to this point. According

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

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

It is of great consequence, not only for understanding the apostle's answer and argument here, but for understanding his whole discourse in this chapter, that we discover and fix the true meaning of that expression—*dead to sin*. Mr Taylor of Norwich's paraphrase gives it thus: 'How can any man imagine the gospel allows us to continue in a wicked life, when, by its principles and obligations, we are set at the greatest distance from all iniquity; even as far as the dead are separated from all society with the living?' Is this, that we are *actually* put at such distance from sin? for the apostle's expression says something positive and *actual*—*We—ARE dead to sin*. Surely to be actually at a distance from sin, as far as the dead are separated from all society with the living, is the attainment only of that place whither nothing shall enter that defileth.

Dr T. explains himself in his note on this verse: 'Ver. 2. *How shall we that are dead to sin*. He doth not mean they were *actually* dead to sin; for he supposes they might, in fact, live after the flesh, chap. viii. 13.; he therefore must mean, they were by their profession obliged to be dead to sin, (274) see ver. 11, and the note upon it.' We shall soon see ver. 11. As to his note upon it, there is nothing in it, but his quoting Col. iii. 3. And as I

cannot see how it makes for his purpose, so neither doth he say a word to show that it doth, or how it doth so. As to the citation from Rom. viii. 13. the words do not imply that the true believer may in fact live after the flesh, and perish; the apostle doth only warn Christians, by that hypothetical proposition, of the certain connexion between fleshly living, and perishing. But, as that text comes again in my way, I defer till then speaking more largely concerning the import of it. Here I only observe, that Dr T. doth not argue agreeably to his own sentiments concerning perseverance, when he says, that the apostle doth not mean that the believers he wrote to were *actually* dead to sin; nor can be so understood, by reason of what he supposes (according to this interpreter) in that other text, chap. viii. 13.; for they might actually be dead to sin at that present time, as much as ever Christian did, or could, attain in this life; and the apostle might be understood to assert so in our text, consistently (by Dr T.'s sentiments) with their falling afterwards to fleshly living, and perishing.

He therefore must mean, saith this writer, they were by their profession obliged to be dead to sin. But in this way there is no answer to the objection, ver. 1. That men were obliged to be dead to sin, is what the objection itself implies; otherwise the alleged consequence could not be charged as an absurdity against the apostle's doctrine. We may conceive the matter thus on both sides.—*Object.* All men are obliged to die to sin; that is, to forsake it, and put themselves at the utmost distance from it; yea, what man is there who doth not profess himself to be so obliged? Yet your doctrine encourages men to do otherwise; even to continue in sin and live in it. *Answ.* according to Dr. T., God forbid! how shall we, who by our profession are obliged to be dead to sin (which is implied in the objection itself) live any longer in sin? Here plainly there is no answer to the objection, or argument against what it imports, though it is clear that the apostle means, from the Christian's being dead to sin, to bring an argument of special evidence and force against what the objection imports.

But what argument doth this interpreter bring for our understanding by being *dead to sin*, that we are obliged to be so? For this he refers to sect. 274, of his key to the apostle's writings.

There he says, 'It should be carefully observed, that it is very common in the sacred writings,—— to speak of that

‘ as done, which only ought to be done, and which, in fact, ‘ may possibly never be done.’ One of the instances of this he gives thus: Matth. v. 13. *Ye are* (ought to be) *the salt of the earth.* The other texts he there mentions are Mal. i. 6. Rom. ii. 4. chap. vi. 2. 11. chap. viii. 9. Col. iii. 3. 1 Pet. i. 6. 2 Cor. iii. 18. 1 Cor. v. 7. Heb. xiii. 14. 1 John ii. 12—15. chap. iii. 9. chap. v. 4. 18. All these texts, however, admit of a commodious interpretation, without such supplying of words. Translators, indeed, sometimes found themselves obliged to supply a word or two to make a complete expression of the sense; but that should be admitted only when the scope of the place appears to require it, and words should be supplied only to make a sense agreeable to the evident scope. But if words may be supplied in Dr. T.’s way, contrary to what the text expresses, without any thing in the scope of the place that requires it, every text may be turned to whatever a man pleases, and so the scripture become an uncertain rule, good for nothing.

In the instance we are considering, the matter stands thus between the apostle and this interpreter. The apostle says positively, *We—are dead to sin.* No, saith Dr. T. not actually dead to sin, but that we ought to be so. This is contradicting, not explaining; which is a way not uncommon with this interpreter.

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

Others take in here the profession, serious purpose, and strict engagements of Christians against sin. The truth is, it hath of a long time, and generally, been understood to be the apostle’s meaning, by being *dead to sin*, to denote matter of duty, (as to abstain from, to resist, to mortify sin,) in which a Christian ought to advance from one degree to another. Hence hath come into use that expression, ‘ to die ‘ more and more unto sin.’ This sense is in itself good and right, and agreeable to scripture-doctrine. But I am not satisfied that this manner of expressing that sense is agreeable to scripture style. I do not see that the scripture ex-

presses mere duty, and the Christian's progress in it, by 'dying, and dying more and more unto sin.' The scripture-expression here is, *dead unto sin*; and ver. 11. *Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin*; and 1 Pet. ii. 24. *That we being dead to sin, &c.* I do not see, that to be *dead* can be a proper and right expression for mere matter of duty: and if a man is actually dead, that doth not admit of degrees or progress. If he is once truly dead, he cannot be more and more dead.

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

Upon the one hand, sin is represented as reigning; chap. v. 21. *sin hath reigned unto death*; so grace reigns, as in that same verse. Doth then grace greatly abound, even where sin hath abounded? It is it that doth, by so abounding, put an end to the reign of sin; so that the abounding of grace can give no encouragement to continuing in sin. Thus the apostle brings a pertinent answer to the objection from that very passage, on which it is pretended to be founded. In ver. 14. and downwards, sin is mentioned as having dominion, such as a lord or master hath over his slaves, whom he employs according to his will, in all his service and drudgery. So Christians are represented as having been *the servants* (that is, slaves) *of sin*. Thus, ver. 17. *ye were the servants of sin*—Ver. 20. *when ye were the servants of sin*.

Upon the other hand, Christians being *made free from sin* is much in the apostle's view through this discourse. Yea, ver. 7. he seems himself to explain being *dead*, by being *made free from sin*. So also, ver. 18. *Being then made free from sin*—Ver. 22. *But now being made free from sin*. Yea, when the apostle comes towards the conclusion of his

explications on this subject, he says, chap. viii. 2. *The law of the Spirit of life—hath made me FREE from the law of sin and death.* All this gives sufficient cause to think, that the true believer's being *dead to sin*, is no other than the privilege and blessedness of his state; viz. to be made free from the reign and dominion of sin. More particular explications respecting this subject we may look for in the apostle's subsequent discourse and reasoning. In the mean time, what a pointed and pertinent answer he makes here to the cavil, and objection in ver. 1. we may see in the following

PARAPHRASE.—2. By no means: how shall we believers, who are made free from the reign and dominion of sin, (dead to it) prove, by continuing to live in sin, that we are not made free from its dominion, but are yet its slaves? yea, can it so happen, as to the common, ordinary, and final course of the believer's practice, that being made free from the dominion of sin, he should, in practice, continue under its prevailing influence and power? or, whatever we might be capable of, considering us as we are in ourselves, free agents, in whom there is considerable remainder of corruption, can it be supposed, that the grace, which, in the superabounding thereof, hath made us free from the reign of sin, hath not provided various and effectual means, consistent with our liberty, for preserving us from continuing in sin, and so (see ver. 14.) coming again under its dominion? But though there is such real inconsistency in the case, that it cannot reasonably be supposed, yet if it shall be supposed but in imagination, that a believer should be made free from the dominion of sin, and yet, at the same time, should, by living ordinarily in the indulged practice of it, affront the grace that hath abounded towards him, and give dishonour to the precious ransom by which he hath been redeemed and made free, will not the very imagination of it give horror to every sincere heart of a Christian, to every reasonable and ingenuous mind?

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

EXPLICATION.—As to the expression in the first clause, *baptized into Jesus Christ*, there is a similar expression 1 Cor. x. 2. *Our fathers—were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea.* Though Moses is commonly considered as the law-giver, yet from the import of baptism, and the spiritual meat and drink mentioned, ver. 3, 4. it is plain, that

Moses is set forth there as a minister of grace: and being *baptized unto Moses*, must mean chiefly, being baptized unto the faith of the Saviour, and the salvation to which Moses bare witness; and receiving the typical baptism, as a sort of seal of that grace.

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

But so many as are so, and to whom this grace is sealed by baptism, they are *baptized into Christ's death*. This last clause of the verse comes next to be explained. It has been indeed explained by many, as meant of the professions and vows which Christians come under at baptism, to die unto sin, and to mortify it, in conformity to the death of Christ and the design of it. That adult persons at baptism came under such engagements, is not to be doubted. This is likely to be included in that *answer of a good conscience towards God*, mentioned in view to baptism, 1 Pet. iii. 21. Nor is it to be doubted, that baptism, and the grace thereby exhibited, doth of its own nature fix such obligation upon infants. But that cannot be the thing here intended, as there is not the least mention or hint of baptismal vows and engagements; and that good reasons have been here given why being *dead to sin* should be understood, not of matter of duty and practice, which is the proper subject of vows and engagements, but rather of the blessedness and privilege of the state of believers. It is said, ver. 10. that *Christ died unto sin*; and therefore believers are directed, ver. 11. to

reckon themselves to be dead indeed unto sin—through Jesus Christ. It is said of Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 24. that *he bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness.* They who consider being dead to sin as matter of duty, do refer it to men's purposes and to baptismal vows and engagements. But in these two texts, we see being *dead to sin* referred to the death of Christ, and immediately connected therewith. So when, in the text under consideration, Christians are said to be *baptized into Christ's death*, we have cause to understand by it, that baptism doth apply, exhibit, and seal to them the benefits of Christ's death, and that it is a solemn rite, whereby believers are invested in a fellowship of interest in his death and in the benefits and happy consequences of it: so that as he died to sin, dying in their vice, so by virtue thereof they are dead to sin; that is, made free from its reign and dominion. This the ordinance of baptism doth exhibit and seal to their faith.

Baptismal vows and engagements do greatly enforce the duty of forsaking, resisting, and mortifying sin. Baptism, according to its own nature, as here explained, doth afford strong argument and powerful excitement to that duty. But to restrict the apostle's meaning here to these, hath this great inconvenience, that it tends to hide from Christians the great consolation and encouragement to that duty, that is properly and directly meant; viz. that they are by the death of Christ made free from the reign and the dominion of sin, and that the same is ascertained and sealed to them by their baptism.

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

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

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

In these places, (Eph. ii. and Phil. iii.) the apostle does not appear to have baptism at all in his view. He considers our fellowship of Christ's sufferings, and conformity to his death,—our being quickened, and raised together with Christ, and sitting together with him in heavenly places, as matters of privilege, comfort, and hope, arising from our relation to Christ, and union with him. A true believer is united to Christ, and is dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God through Jesus Christ, (as here, Rom. vi. 11.) previously to his baptism; or if he should never have the opportunity of being baptised. So that turning the matter of being *dead unto sin* on this point of baptismal vows and obligations, falls greatly short of the apostle's argument, and tends to obscure instead of giving light to it.

The part of baptism in this matter is, that the privilege, blessings, and comfort meant by the apostle, (and from which there arise the strongest obligations and encouragements to holy living,) are represented, further applied, sealed,

and confirmed to the Christian's faith by it. Thus, Col. ii. 12. 'Buried with him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.' Here our being buried with him in baptism, (it is in view to the baptism of adult persons he speaks,) and our rising therein with him, are both ascribed to faith; not our rising with him only. Beza's note on the place seems to be a good one: '*Per fidem, id est, illam fide a vobis apprehensam virtutem Dei, efficientem ut Christo mortuo, et a mortuis excitato, sitis conformes.*' To this purpose in our language: 'By faith, that is, by your laying hold on, (or apprehending) through faith, that divine power, by the efficiency of which you become conformed to the death and resurrection of Christ.'

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

The apostle's argument in this place I do not take to be, that Christians are by their baptismal engagements obliged to that duty, or course of duty, which some understand by dying to sin; though undoubtedly baptism, and the grace it exhibits, doth fix such obligation to duty on them. But his argument is plainly to this purpose, that the baptism of Christians doth, in way of figure, signify the blessings thereby represented, and is a means whereby they are applied to them; and is, at the same time, a comfortable, solemn, divine ratification of their interest in the fruits of Christ's death and resurrection; this particularly of being dead to sin, made free from its reign and dominion, and so brought unto a capacity of holy living. Christians having in their baptism this comfort, with respect to the dominion of sin, and a capacity of holy living, with the strongest obligations thereto, and that by the grace which hath abounded towards them; how extremely absurd to suppose continuing in sin a consequence of that grace, or that it is at all consistent with it?

To look now more closely to the expression of this ver. 4. the first clause is, 'Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death.' In the common course of things, a man's

burial ascertains his death to beholders: they have no doubt of his being dead, when they see him buried. Thus the baptism of a Christian represented, in a very strong manner, his being dead; for in it he appeared to be buried by his immersion under the water; which was anciently the most common way, at least as to adult persons, in that hot climate.

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

Follows the latter part of the verse, 'That like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory' (that is, by the glorious power and operation) 'of the Father.' He doth, Col. ii. 12. mention our being risen with Christ in baptism. Here, after mentioning Christ's being raised from the dead, instead of adding, as there, our rising with him, he mentions the effect of our so rising, in our practice of life, thus, 'Even so we also should walk in newness of life.' So, to continuing in sin, as in the objection ver. 1. which is expressive of the practice of sin, he, with great propriety, and very emphatically, opposes the practice of newness of life, as the proper and necessary consequence of the Christian's fellowship in the death and resurrection of Christ, represented and sealed to him by baptism.

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

Therefore, (to put this matter out of question) as Christ's being actually buried, proved his being truly dead; so we have, in this divine ordinance, a baptismal figurative burial, which ascertains, demonstrates, and seals to our faith, our being truly dead unto sin, set free from its reign and dominion, by virtue of his death; and that in order to this further consolation and benefit, that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power and operation of the Father; even so we also being by our fellowship with him in his resurrection, and by the power thereof, raised together with him, which our baptism also represents and confirms to us, (Col. ii. 12.) should be engaged, disposed, and enabled to a new manner of life, in the inward and outward practice of holiness and righteousness. How unreasonable then, how calumnious and absurd, to suggest as if the grace that had abounded towards us, with such design and effect, did indeed favour sin, or men's continuing in it!

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 TEXT.—5. *For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death; we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.*

EXPLICATION.—It is generally agreed, that the apostle hath here in his eye the true Christian's ingraftment into Christ, as a scion into a vine, to which Christ compares himself, John xv. 1. I see with the learned a good deal of criticism here, and somewhat various notions of the sense; which seem, for most part, to come to the same general purpose. I conceive the scope and meaning to be in general thus: If by our ingraftment into Christ we have a conformity to his death, being dead to sin; that we shall also have a conformity and likeness to his resurrection.

But more particularly; the apostle had mentioned, verse 2. Christians being dead to sin; and ver. 3. that their baptism invested them in an interest in Christ's death, and in

this special benefit thereby, to be dead to sin ; and ver. 4. that their baptism ascertained this death to them by the baptismal immersion ; which was a kind of baptismal figurative burial. When he mentions here, ver. 5. Christians being planted together in the likeness of Christ's death, he but resumes what he had said in the three preceding verses, without any additional sense, though there is some variation of metaphorical expression and ideas. But having added in the latter part of ver. 4. ' That like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life ;' this is what he had said nothing of before ; and what he says here, ver. 5. is added to explain and confirm it ; and to assert the connexion of these things, viz. that if by our engraftment into Christ, our union and fellowship with him, we are dead to sin, and made free from its reign ; so we shall certainly have the fellowship of his resurrection in newness of life. To be made free from sin, that is, that sin hath not dominion over us, is a negative proposition ; it expresses nothing of itself concerning fruitfulness in holiness and good works. But the Christian is not made free from the dominion of sin, in order only to be barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of Christ. If by means of his fellowship with Christ in his death, he is dead to sin, he at the same time, by virtue of his fellowship with Christ, is risen together with Christ ; his baptism represents to him the one as well as the other. There is, however, this difference : When the Christian came unto union with Christ, he from that time became free from the dominion of sin. Though it remains, infests, and, in several respects, endangers the Christian, yet it doth not reign, nor hath dominion. But as to conformity to the resurrection of Christ in the actual practice of newness of life, that is but begun. The progress in this life, and the perfection hereafter of conformity to Christ's resurrection is future ; and that may be the reason why, in this latter part of the verse, the apostle uses the future tense, σκοπεθα, *we shall be*.

PARAPHRASE.—5. For if all we believers are together ingrafted into Christ, and united to him, and so in a likeness to his death, and by virtue thereof, are dead unto sin, free from its dominion ; we are not to conceive the matter merely under that negative notion. By no means ; by virtue of our fellowship with Christ, we are risen together with him : and, as his resurrection gives us, through faith, the certain prospect of a resurrection to eternal life, when we shall be brought to

a perfect likeness to his resurrection, in holiness, happiness, and glory; so on this side of that, we are, by the power of his resurrection, raised, and shall be more and more so, to a new, active, and fruitful life of holiness; by our continuance and progress in which we are to reach a full conformity to his resurrection, in the perfection of our resurrection state.

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

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

As to the first, Dr T. gives for it in his paraphrase, our heathen state. The old man he explains by the account he gives of the new man; and that he founds on Eph. ii. 15. so he says, (*Original Sin*, p. 426. ed. 3.) ‘The new man included two sorts of people, viz. believing Jews and Gentiles; and was created (Eph. ii. 15.) when Christ *abolished in his flesh the enmity*, or that which separated the Jews and Gentiles, *for to make or create (κτισθη) in himself, of twain, (i.e. of believing Jews and Gentiles) one new man.*’ So he says, p. 430. ‘The new man is either the Christian state, or the Christian church, body, or society.’ According to this notion, he explains what is the old man. In the page just now cited, he says, ‘The old man relates to the Gentile state;’ and, p. 178. ‘The old man has reference to the life these Christians had lived while they were heathens.’ And in the text under consideration, he gives for our old man, our heathen state, as was before observed.

But this account cannot be admitted. It is to be considered, that the gospel-church, called the *one new man*, Eph. ii. had, for a considerable part, converts of the Jews; many of whom were truly godly, and true believers, according to the light and promise of the old Testament, before they knew that Jesus was the Christ, or became members of the gospel-church. Acts ii. 5. ‘There were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.’ Another very considerable part of the new gospel-church had been in a state of proselytism before they knew the gospel. A great many of these proselytes were men that feared God, and were truly devout and godly. Such was Cornelius, a proselyte of the gate, and such was the Ethiopian eunuch. Yea, it is very likely that the greatest part of the new gospel-church in these times, and at first, were the Jews and proselytes of the Gentiles. The notion of the *old man* will not suit these;

and the *old man*, as to them, cannot mean the state or practice of heathenism. Dr T., as if he were sensible of this, although he makes the *new man* to include Jews and Gentiles, yet he commonly interprets the *old man* of the heathen state,—a state which a great, perhaps the greatest part, at first, of the Christian church had not been in. If the *new man* means the gospel state and church, the *old man* is of the same extent of meaning; for all, before becoming members of the *new man*, the gospel-church, were in a previous state; which, according to this way of interpretation, should be called their *old man*. But the character of *old man* will not apply to the previous state of a great part of the gospel-church of these times, devout Jews and devout proselytes.

One would think, that the character and description given, Eph. iv. 22. of the *old man*, *corrupt according to the deceitful lusts*; and, ver. 24. of the *new man*, *after God created in righteousness and true holiness*, might lead a man to different notions of both. Surely the character of *corrupt according to deceitful lusts*, will not suit the state of devout and godly Jews and proselytes. But the Christian may be sensible what that hath been in himself, some time prevailing and dominant, (and of which too much continues in him,) that is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts. That, whatever other name be given it, is the *old man*, according to the apostle's account; as that in him, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness, is the *new man*. Words and expressions bear sometimes different meanings in the different places of scripture, which the scope of each leads a reader to observe and understand. In one, and but in one place, Eph. ii. the *new man* signifies the gospel-church, consisting of Jews and Gentiles. It is unreasonable so to understand the *new man* in other places, where the scope, yea, and the description and character added, require a different meaning to be understood. It is also to be observed, that the apostle never uses the *old man* to signify the Christian's previous state of heathenism. The Christian having in profession, and serious, earnest purpose, Col. iii. 9. *put off the old man*, and having in like manner, under the influence of the grace that hath renewed his heart, verse 10. *put on the new man*; it becomes him to advance further on both hands; to *put off*—*anger, malice, &c.* as ver. 8, 9. which belong to the *old man*; and to *put on bowels of mercies, &c.* which belong to the *new man*, as ver. 12—15. Many a Christian in these times hath, by a good light and thorough

conversion, put off all at once, and renounced every thing peculiar to heathenism; and hath not needed to make this sort of progress in putting off the old man of heathenism, according to Dr T.'s sense of it.

But Dr T. himself doth (*Orig. Sin*, p. 427.) bring the matter to this. 'In Eph. iv. 22, 24. he considers (saith 'he) the one and the other, as a Christian duty, *That ye put off*, &c.—*That ye put on*, &c. The Ephesians as well 'as Colossians had, by profession, put off the old, and put 'on the new man; and therefore were obliged to do it effectually, by renouncing the spirit, deeds, and conversation of the one, by being renewed in their minds, and by 'practising the virtues of the other.' He then refers to 1 Cor. v. 7. chap. vi. 8—11. 2 Cor. vi. 1. But did the author mean renouncing the spirit, deeds, and conversation of heathenism, restricting the apostle's view to that? the texts he refers to, do not serve that purpose. His subject, 1 Cor. v. 7. is particularly enjoining the church to cast out a lewd man for that sort of fornication which he says, ver. 1. was *not so much as named among the Gentiles*. Among the many things named, 1 Cor. vi. there is no instance but idolatry that was peculiar to the heathens. As to this third text, 2 Cor. vi. 1. there is nothing at all in it that can serve his particular purpose. I need say no more about it: let the reader look to the place.

Any thing that is right in the passage just now cited might have been reached, without Dr T.'s new conceit concerning the old man's being the Christian's previous heathen state; which is a notion without any solid foundation.

What then are we indeed to understand by the *old man*? That certainly signifies the corruption of nature, (this is it that Dr T. could not bear, and that put all his critical wits to work on this occasion), the principle of sin, with all its various lusts, which possess and influence a man's faculties and powers; and that, so far as it remains in the true Christian, who is renewed by grace, and in whom is the new man: by virtue of, and in comparison with which in him, and in him only, the former is the old man. In persons unregenerate, this evil principle is not the old man, but continues young, in full strength and vigour. It is the old man only in persons regenerate—in true Christians.

The next inquiry on this first clause of the text, ver. 6. is, what it means, that the old man is *crucified*? The Greek word might be rendered, if the use of our language would

admit the word, by *co-crucified*, without expressing what or whom the conjunctive particle in the composition of the word hath respect to. The English doth for that, with good reason, supply *him*—*crucified with him*, Christ.

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

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

I think, however, that our text may be best explained by Col. ii. 15. *Having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it*. Here, with principalities and powers, may justly be included, in the apostle's view and meaning, sin. So Bishop Davenant on this places: '*Principibus igitur et imperatoribus hisce spiritualibus prostratis, prosternitur simul qui quid illis militabat, contra humanam salutem, vetus Adamus, mors, inferi, mundus, peccata nostra.*—Therefore those spiritual princes and commanders being overcome, there is overcome whatever served them against man's salvation,—the old Adam, death, hell, the world, and our sins.' A little downwards, after citing divers scriptures, particularly, 1 Cor. xv. 55—57. he adds, '*Mortem, sepulchrum, legem, peccatum, fuisse videtis in numero hostium a Christo superatorum.*—You see that death, the grave, the law, and sin, have been in the number of the enemies whom Christ hath overcome.' So this eminent person. Surely when it is said, Gen. iii. 15. that the seed of the woman would

bruise the head of the serpent, there is meant, not only Satan, but sin likewise; that with him it also should be deprived of its power and dominion, and be finally destroyed: as it is said, 1 John iii. 8. *For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.*

Now, what is the effect of Christ's cross against principalities and powers, and against sin? The apostle says to the Colossians, that he *spoiled* them; he deprived them of their armour wherein they trusted, as Luke xi. 22. Christ, by his expiatory sufferings and death, redeemed his people from the curse, brought them under grace, and procured for them the blessing of the Spirit, who creates in them the new man, and, dwelling in them, supports the new man against the old man, and gives complete victory over him at last. It is said there (Col. ii. 14.) of the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, that Christ *nailed it to his cross*. So may be understood the apostle's view as to devils and sin: Christ *nailed them to his cross*, and so, to the eye of faith, made an open show of them. Himself victorious left the cross and grave, and left principalities, and powers, and sin, nailed fast to the cross, crucified, and hard bound, in order to final destruction. The virtue of his cross reaching in due time his people in their own persons, they are justified, delivered from the curse, brought under grace; and they are to consider the old man in them as crucified; in order to his death, and total extinction.

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

Before we leave this point, it is fit to observe Dr T.'s paraphrase of this first clause of ver. 6.: 'When you consider him [Christ] as crucified, and put to death, you may take in this sentiment, That our heathen state was, at the

‘ same time, put to death.’ Our *state* put to death ! this is rare style. But what may not a masterly critic venture to say, however improper or incongruous ? The expression, however, in this first clause, is not, that the old man is put to death. Persons might live a considerable while, yea some days, on the cross. Crucifixion is not a state of death, but a state of pain and torment, tending to death.

The worthy Dr Doddridge hath, in his paraphrase of this first clause, thus : ‘ The whole system of our former inclinations and dispositions—hath now, as it were, been crucified together with [Christ ;] the remembrance and consideration of his cross co-operating in the most powerful manner, with all the other motives which the gospel suggests, to destroy the former habits of sin, and to inspire us with ‘an aversion to it.’ This is in itself a just thought, and of high importance in religion. Among the *arguments* and *motives* that can be suggested against sin, the *remembrance* and *consideration* of Christ’s cross hath the most special virtue and efficacy. Yet this doth not come up to the full meaning of the old man’s being crucified with Christ. For that I refer to what hath been here above said on Col. ii. 15. The cross of Christ hath virtue against sin otherwise than merely as a motive.

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

As to *the body of sin*, Dr W.’s paraphrase hath it thus : ‘ (i.e. The appetites of the body, which subject us to sin.)’ By the first clause, the *old man*, is certainly meant sin, in all the extent of its power and influence in us ; and the *body of sin* can be understood in no less extent of meaning. But have we sin no otherwise in us to be crucified and destroyed than by the appetites of the body ? Dr W.’s paraphrase looks that way ; and so doth that of Mr Locke, which gives for this clause thus : ‘ That the prevalency of our carnal, sinful propensities, which are from our bodies, might be ‘destroyed.’ And his paraphrase of ver. 12. hath thus : ‘ Permit not therefore sin to reign over you by your mortal ‘bodies.’ This last he gives instead of, *in your mortal bodies* ; and in his note he observes that *et*, in the apostle’s writings, often signifies *by*. Then he adds, ‘ And he here ‘—and elsewhere, placing the *root* of sin in the body, his ‘sense seems to be, Let not sin reign over you by the lusts

‘ of your mortal body.’ There will be occasion to consider this again on ver. 12. Here I observe, that the learned writer makes our carnal sinful propensities to be from the body, and places the root of sin in the body ; as Dr W. to the same purpose, makes the *body of sin* to mean the appetites of the body.

These things are very wrong. If we will speak with strictness and propriety, all lusts, affections, passions, and appetites, have their seat and root in the soul, in the spiritual substance ; mere body is not capable of any of these, nor of moral good or evil. But as man is composed of soul and body, so united that the one powerfully influences the other, he hath propensities and appetites by the influence of the body, which receive excitement from it, and in the gratification of which he hath pleasure by means of the body ; as he hath at the same time propensities, affections, and appetites, such as a mere spirit might have that hath no connexion with body. In the one sort, man partakes with the brutes ; in the other sort, with mere spirits, with angels. In man’s corrupt fallen state, he hath spiritual lusts, such as pride, hatred, malice, envy, deceit. In view to such sort of unholy lusts and passions, our Lord says to the Jews, John viii. 44. *Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do : he was a murderer—and abode not in the truth.*

If the mention of *body* gave occasion to Dr W. to think of appetites of the body, he might, from sin in us being called the *old man*, have considered, that a man hath a soul as well as a body ; and therefore that the *old man* comprehends evils arising from the soul as well as from the body. If the apostle does in Gal. v. 19, 20. ascribe all sinful lustings and works to the *flesh*, he is far from thinking or meaning, that all sin hath its root or source in the body. For elsewhere (2 Cor. vii. 1.) he distinguishes between *filthiness of the flesh* and *of the spirit* ; and Dr W. had no reason to restrict filthiness of the spirit to idolatry ; nor to restrict idolatry, as he doth on Gal. v. 19, 20., to the notion of a sensual crime : there might be idolatry without sensuality.

It is true, indeed, that in man’s embodied state the influence of the body doth give a turn or bias even to these lusts and passions that have their special root in the spirit or soul, towards things external and earthly ; and it is according to this view that Dr W. explains all the works of the flesh mentioned, Gal. v. 19, 20. But if man’s pride, selfish-

ness, and ambition (for instance) are in this life turned towards things earthly or bodily, pertaining to this life, yet it were most unreasonable to say, that therefore these lusts have their source and root in the body. Let us consider how sin entered, as the said story is told, Gen. iii. If it be allowed, that, in our first parents considering and desiring the forbidden fruit as good for food, and pleasant to the eyes, there was what some mean by appetite of the body, yet, considering and desiring it, in order to be wise, and as God, knowing good and evil, it is not easy to conceive how this can be ascribed to bodily appetite.

If sin hath its root in the body, it seems to be a natural consequence, that when the soul comes to be separated from the body, it should have no sin in it. Yet I scarce think that any will say so; and at the same time, I see not how they can avoid this, if it be not by saying, that the soul having been engaged in the practice of sin, by the influence of the body, it hath contracted habits, which it brings unto a separate state. Indeed, some Protestants, (if they should be so called) have in our time said, it is so far thus with many of the souls of the righteous, that these habits must be wrought off in the separate state, even by means painful and distressing to a high degree. This notion does not fall to be considered in this place. Only, as to the present purpose, if it be allowed that a mere spirit, a separate soul, may have in itself sinful habits, propensities, and passions, though it may be said, that these in them are owing originally to bodily influence, yet what reason can possibly be given why such a spirit may not have sinful habits and propensities, from another cause and source? Can we not hold, that fallen angels have sinful lusts and propensities, without holding that they have bodies in which sin hath its root, as Mr L. speaks?

What, then, is meant by the *body of sin*? Plainly, as the expression in the preceding clause, the *old man*, is figurative, so is this other, the *body of sin*, and doth not mean the human body, but that whole system of corrupt principles, propensities, lusts, and passions, which have, since the fall, possessed man's nature, and is co-extended and commensurate to all the human powers and faculties. Let us observe how Bishop Davenant, on Col. ii. 11. explains this expression, *the body of the sins of the flesh*: '*Hæc interna* (circumcisio) *totum corpus peccati solet abolere—corpus peccatorum carnis, id est, massam vitiorum et peccatorum quæ*

‘*pullulat ex carne, hoc est, ex corruptione nostra insita et originali; qua carne anima uniuscujusque non minus circumdata est quam carne hac naturali.*’ Which is to this purpose: This inward circumcision abolisheth the whole body of sin, *the body of the sins of the flesh*; that is, the mass of vitiosity and sin which springs from the flesh; that is, from our original corruption, with which flesh the soul of every one is no less vested than with the natural flesh.—This learned writer had more extensive views of sin in men than to express it by appetites of the body. In this, as in divers other instances, that worthy Bishop of Sarum conceived the apostle’s meaning, and the true doctrine, much more justly than the learned chantor of Sarum. To say that the body is the chief seat and source of sin in men, and that sin in them hath its root in the body, as Mr L. said; as it is an error in divinity, it is a downright blunder in philosophy.

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

Dr T.’s paraphrase gives this second, and the following clause, thus: ‘With this view, that the whole body of sin, in all its various lusts and corrupt practices being destroyed, we should from henceforth, in our Christian state, be quite disengaged from the servitude of sin.’ He renders here, *destroyed*, and, as I observed before, that rendering may be retained with this meaning, that the end and design is, that sin may in due time be finally and wholly destroyed. But he does not take it so, but has it, *being destroyed*, as respecting the present time. But the whole body of sin, in all its various lusts and corrupt practices, being destroyed in this present time, is so contrary to the Scriptures, and the

common experience of Christians, that it is needless to offer a more particular confutation of this interpretation.

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

PARAPHRASE.—6. I have said, that the consequence of Christ's rising from the dead is, that we, in conformity thereto, should walk in newness of life, in which we bear the begun likeness of his resurrection. But this is not to be so understood, as if this newness of life were already perfect. Alas, no! sin remaineth in us: we have still *our* old man, and this is very nearly connected with us. It is we, our own very selves, in an unholy and vile form. All the sin he doth is my sin, which the holy and righteous law of God would charge against me, though grace allows me to distinguish, and say, It is not I, but sin that dwelleth in me; while I do truly distinguish myself from this old man, this evil principle, by habitually resisting it, having sorrow and regret for it. This evil principle, which, like another man, is superinduced upon me, pervades all the faculties, powers, and affections of my soul; and so hath the dimensions, form, and members of a man. But happily this man is become old; the new man created in us hath made this become the old man; and (let me here allude to Heb. viii. 13.) that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away, and to be quite extinguished. Yea, we know by our faith, that this old man, by a power superior to that of the new man in us, even by the power and virtue of the cross of Christ, is adjudged to death, crucified, and bound fast, as to Christ's cross; so that as surely as the cross of Christ exists in virtue and efficacy, so surely shall he die; and the present effect of this his crucifixion is, that this old man, the body of sin, is deprived of its force and reigning power, is enervated and enfeebled; so that from henceforth we are not in servitude to it, or under its dominion, though it remaineth in us.

TEXT.—7. *For he that is dead, is freed from sin.*

EXPLICATION.—It is to be observed, that the word here rendered *is freed*, (or made free,) should, according to its common use and meaning, be rendered *is justified*; and so the margin of our books have it. I see that the apostle's

using the word *justified* (the Greek word that so means) has given some difficulty to the learned; and they have accounted for it somewhat differently, though they seem to be generally agreed, that the scope of the place directs us to understand it of being made free from sin, as we translate it.

One way in which it has been thought that the matter might be taken, is this:—Sin is in the context set forth in the figurative way as a person, as hath been often observed by the learned, and as a person that hath exercised tyranny and dominion. Now, if we consider this person (sin) as still claiming to reign, and to have dominion, the apostle here asserts, that the Christian being dead with Christ, and by virtue of his death, he is justified, that is, (as Dr Guise expresses it) he is legally acquitted from any claim that this tyrant could pretend to have to his obedience. I shall not contend with any who shall thus interpret and understand this text.

Yet as this seems to be a somewhat uncommon meaning of the word *justified*, it were well if we could light on an interpretation, that would more clearly accord with the meaning in which the apostle commonly uses the word in this epistle. With this view, let what here follows be considered by the learned and judicious.

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

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

der the dominion of sin in the second respect before mentioned ; he is the slave of sin, detained and employed in serving it. But when he is made free from the reign of sin as it reigneth unto death, and from that penal consequence of it, he is at the same time made free from the dominion of sin in nature and practice.

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

Then he brings into view what I may call the practical dominion of sin ; and after a few words of exhortation, he expresses his comfortable doctrine clearly, and says, ver. 14. ' Sin shall not have dominion over you ; for ye are not under the law, but under grace.' Now, let us consider what respect the sinner's being justified hath to this matter. It is plain, it is by justification he is brought from under the law and its curse ; it is by justification he is brought under grace ; it is by justification that he is brought unto that state in which sin shall not have dominion over him, to hold him as a slave in its service.

We see then how much to the apostle's main purpose is

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

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

As to that manner of expression, *justified FROM sin*, we see the apostle expressing himself in a similar manner concerning the remission of sin, Acts xiii. 39. 'By him all that believe are justified FROM all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.'

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

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

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

its reign and dominion. This seems to be the true order of things.

In the mean time, the conclusion which the Christian's faith infers is, as here, that *we shall also live with Christ*. As Christ rose from the dead to life, his people, included as it were in him, and represented by him, have (as Eph. ii. 5, 6.) been 'quicken'd together with Christ,' and have been 'raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.' The fellowship and part which Christians have in the resurrection of Christ being so expressed in that place, it gives us cause to think, that here, being *dead with Christ* hath a similar meaning, and is to be understood, as I have said, of the Christian's fellowship and interest in the death of Christ.

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

PARAPHRASE.—8. Now if we have fellowship and interest in the death of Christ, surely we have so also in his resurrection to life, (which affords arguments of the utmost force for newness of life); and if we are risen together with Christ, what a glorious prospect opens to us, and what a sure and blessed hope ariseth thence, through faith? even that we shall live a happy and glorious life with him, that shall not be cut off or interrupted by death.

Let me explain a little this most comfortable subject, by

saying a few words, ver. 9, 10. concerning Christ's resurrection to life ; and then, ver. 11. concerning its consequence to you and all true believers.

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

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

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

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

Dr. W.'s paraphrase gives it thus, (as divers interpreters before him had given the same sense): '*For in that he died, he died once to sin, (or for sin, i. e. in that he died to the putting away of sin, Heb. ix. 26, 28. he died thus once for all.)*' As to the expression, *he died to sin*, they did not know what to make of it, it seems, in this place : so they substituted for it, *he died for sin*. But however inseparable these things are, that Christ died for sin, and that he died unto sin, as appears in this very place, yet as the expressions are different, they must mean very different things. Dying for sin, and dying to sin, are not convertible terms, to express the same sense. If Christ died to sin,

Christians do likewise die to sin : but Christians do not die for sin, as he did.

For interpreting this expression, that hath appeared so dark and puzzling, I venture to offer what follows.

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

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

The apostle says, 1 Cor. xv. 56. *The sting of death is sin ; and the strength of sin is the law*. Now, it will be acknowledged by every Christian, (the Socinian hath not, I think, a good title to that denomination) that Christ came under the strength and power which the law gives to sin ; and that the sting of sin was truly and fully in the death which he underwent, in order to unsting it to his people. Now, this amounts to as much as to say, that he was under the reign of sin in so far, and in the sense that hath been explained ; and that in regard to him, sin reigned unto death.

Further, this view makes the connexion clear between this and the preceding verse, yea, that connexion seems to make this sense necessary. He had said, ver. 9. that *Christ dieth no more ; death hath no more dominion over him*. It is plain, that the words here, ver. 10. are intended to give the reason of this ; and, by the interpretation given, the reason is clear and strong. Death derives its dominion, mentioned ver. 9. from the reign of sin : and where sin hath no right or power to reign unto death, there death can have no dominion. So it is then that Christ, by dying and expiating sin, satisfied fully the law ; and so the law gives no more strength to sin to reign over him unto death ; and death can have no more dominion over him ; which is the thing asserted, ver. 9. that is meant to be proved by this argument, ver. 10.

As by once dying he took away sin,—even that guiltiness by which his people, and himself, when substituted in their stead, became obnoxious to death,—he at the same time became dead to sin once for all and for ever; that is, he became free from the reign of sin, so that sin cannot, and death by virtue of sin cannot, any more reign, or have dominion over him.

With respect to the explication that hath been given, there may occur to some a difficulty, arising from the connexion that hath appeared, in the case of mankind universally, between being under the curse of the law, or the reign of sin, as it reigneth unto death, and being under the practical dominion of sin, with regard to inherency in nature, and prevalence in practice: so that to say, Christ was under the reign of sin, in the one respect, would give cause to say, he came under its dominion in the other respect also, which were very absurd.

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

There remains the second clause of this 10th verse, *In that he liveth, he liveth unto God.* The meaning of this will be more clear, by what will be largely and more fitly suggested in explaining the latter clause of the following verse. Here I give for it the short note of the judicious

Samuel Clarke. *He liveth unto God*—an immortal, heavenly, glorious life, in the presence of God, and to the glory of God.

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

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

As to the first clause, it is not, ye are obliged to die, or be dead to sin, but RECKON *yourselves to be dead* INDEED *unto sin* : not merely by virtue of profession, vows, and gospel-obligations, as if matter of duty were meant ; but through Jesus Christ, and by virtue of union and fellowship with him ; it being the advantage and blessedness of the believer's state, through Christ, that the apostle means. So Calvin chooses to render it more precisely according to the Greek (*ev Xριστω*) *in Christ*, as more expressive of our ingraftment into Christ, and our union with him, by virtue of which we have fellowship with him in his death, so as to be dead with him, rather than as others render *per, by, or through Christ*. But in the one way or the other, it comes to much the same thing. He had said, ver. 10. that Christ *died unto sin* ; and it is with a view to the union of Christians, and their communion with him in his death, that now, ver. 11. he directs Christians to infer, and *reckon themselves to be dead indeed unto sin*. Christ being dead unto sin, that is, having become free from the reign of sin he had been under, sin cannot any more reign over him unto death. In like manner, the believer being in Christ, in union and fellowship with him, and so dead with him unto sin, it cannot reign over him unto death. The law, which is the strength of sin in this respect, will never give it strength or power so to reign over the believer.

But doth not every Christian, even the best, die ? True ; but there is nothing penal in their death ; whatever there may be of fatherly chastisement in the circumstances of it, there is nothing of the reign of sin in it. By a constitution of divine wisdom, (happy for the general interest of this sinful world,) it is appointed for all men once to die. With regard to them who are under the law and its curse, there is in their death the reign of sin. Not so in the death of those who have interest and fellowship in the death of Christ.

Tribulations, afflictions, sickness, and death, came originally by sin, and the curse of the law for sin; for the breach of the first covenant. But now these are adopted by the new covenant, not for penal, but for salutary purposes. Sin did originally reign in them. But now the reign of sin, as to penal effect, being at an end with regard to true believers, what succeeds to that reign is, (Rom. v. 21.) that grace now reigneth. Tribulations, afflictions, and death, do, in their case, belong to the reign of grace, terminating in eternal life. There is no sting of sin in their death, nor is it by the strength that the law gives to sin that they are chastised, or die.

Follows the second clause, *But alive unto God*. The sense of this clause, is, I think, to be taken from these words of our Lord, in arguing with the Sadducee concerning the resurrection of the dead, Luke xx. 37, 38. *Now that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto him*. It is plain that our Lord doth not mean this merely to prove that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob lived, as to their souls, in their separate state; which indeed the Sadducees did also deny; but to prove the resurrection of the body, against which they had on this occasion pretended to bring their argument, which the existence and life of their separate souls would not prove. Now our Lord argues from God's covenant of grace, by which he became the God of Abraham and of all his spiritual seed; and from this he argues, as ver. 38. *He is not a God of the dead*; that is, they who are dead, in a state of death, dead in the eye of God, and by his righteous destination; God cannot be supposed to be, nor can be called, their God. He would be ashamed to be called their God, to have been the God of such as perish. If he is the God of any, they must be supposed to be living, that is, in God's eye, and by his destination, and by the grace of his covenant. So it is said, John iii. 36. *He that believeth—HATH everlasting life*; and John xi. 26. *Whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die*.

As to the word *all*, in the last clause of Luke xx. 38. the universality of its meaning is to be restricted (as in innumerable instances) according to the subject and argument, and the clause to be understood thus: For all who have part in the covenant, and to whom the Lord is their God, do live

unto him ; they are in a state of life in his sight ; they have passed from death to life ; they are by divine grace entitled to life, and so shall be raised in their bodies to eternal life, which was the point which our Lord's argument was designed to prove.

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

This may satisfy us concerning the true meaning of the words concerning Christ in ver. 10. *In that he liveth, he liveth unto God*. To interpret this, as some have done, merely of his living a life acceptable to God, and to his glory, doth not come up to the present purpose and argument. He lived such a life before his death and resurrection as truly as after these. Whereas it is evident, the words mean some special thing that is the proper consequence of his death, by virtue of which it was that he became dead unto sin, and liveth to God ; and a consequence of his resurrection, viz. that he is entitled to, yea possessed of, an eternal life, out of the reach of the reign of sin, and of that dominion of death mentioned in the immediately preceding words of ver. 9.

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

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

PARAPHRASE.—9. Having said, (ver. 8.) that in consequence of our fellowship in the death of Christ, being dead with him, we shall certainly live with him, I come now to explain that matter by a few words concerning his living and ours. So it is then, as we know with the utmost certainty, that Christ having, in his resurrection from the dead, overcome death, he is no more obnoxious to it. If he was once, for a time, under its dominion, it now can no more for ever have dominion over him.

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

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

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

EXPLICATION.—The apostle now proceeds to exhort the believers against sin, and to the practice of holiness; and insists to that purpose to the end of the chapter. Having represented the privilege, advantage, and blessedness of the state of the believer, of the sincere Christian; what he had

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

Besides, it is to be remembered what was said before, viz. that while one is under the reign of sin, as it by virtue of the law reigneth unto death, he is at the same time under the dominion of sin, as a slave in its service, and no longer. So the apostle, having asserted that believers are made free from sin in the former respect, his exhortation proceeds on this view, that they are made free from it, at the same time, in the latter respect also ; which he is to bring forth more clearly a little hereafter, in order to be explained and established.

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

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

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

are not quite eradicate, it should be the care of the Christian to resist their motions carefully and seasonably, and to endeavour, through divine grace, that they do not take effect, or prevail.

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

The word *body* is often used in the same manner. So Rom. xii. 1. *Present your bodies, (that is, your persons, or yourselves) a living sacrifice.* 1 Pet. ii. 24. *Christ bare our sins in his own body (in his own person, or, on himself,) on the tree.* Exod. xxi. 3., of the Hebrew servant it is said, *If he came in with his body, (so the Hebrew and the English margin) he shall go out with his body; justly rendered in both clauses by himself.* So the Hebrew in the last clause of ver. 4. *he shall go out with his body; which we render as before, by himself.* Thus, also Matth. vi. 22. *Thy whole body, (i.e. thy whole person) shall be full of light; for otherwise the body in itself is not luminous, nor hath visive faculty.* So James iii. 6. *The tongue defileth the whole body; that is, the whole person.* According to this use and meaning of the expression, the apostle is to be understood thus: *Let not sin reign in your mortal persons; or, in you, in this your mortal state.*

It appears then, that from the mention of *mortal body* in this place, Mr L. had not good cause to say, that sin hath its source and root in the body. However, Dr T. had the same view; for his paraphrase gives it thus: 'I exhort you—not to suffer *sin* to have a governing power in your mortal

'bodies, by yielding obedience to it, in gratifying the appetites of a corruptible mass of flesh.' Was there indeed no danger of sin, but by the appetites of the corruptible mass of flesh? One might think from these notions and expressions, that these writers have had very narrow and restricted views of sin, and that a great deal of sin had escaped their observation.

It has, I know, been observed, that the gender in the Greek makes it necessary to connect and construct these last words, *the lusts thereof*, not with *sin*, but with the word *body*. True; as *body* is mentioned, the word constructed with it behoved to be of the same gender. But that makes no reason against the interpretation of *mortal body*, here given. The last clause, consistently with that interpretation, may well be understood thus: *The lusts thereof*, that is, of your mortal persons; or the lusts which remain in you, in your mortal state.

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

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

PARAPHRASE.—12. Alive you are, I say, unto God, through Jesus Christ; through him, and by virtue of his resurrection, entitled to eternal life, to a happy immortality; when there will be no molestation or danger from sin; no cause of fear. But on this side of that, in your present embodied mortal state, there is much danger of sin. It remains in you, its law is in your members, and its various lusts, as the particular commandments of that law. But as you are made free from its reign, as it reigned unto death, and at the same time made free from its dominion by which it enslaved you, and so are brought into a capacity to resist it, and maintain war against it; let me earnestly exhort you to maintain your

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

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

EXPLICATION.—The apostle's exhortation in these two verses implies two things. First, that the Christian, now dead to sin, was come to a capacity of avoiding and resisting sin effectually, and of declining its service. In the next place, made free as he was, that possibly he might, much to his own hurt, return, in too great degree, and in too many instances, to the service of sin. The freed man, anciently called by the Romans *libertus*, might perhaps retain a considerable attachment to the master he had served, and perhaps a great liking to the service he had been used to, so as voluntarily, habitually, and commonly to do the service, yea, the meanest and coarsest drudgery of his former master. As to a Roman freed man, gratitude might make a good and laudable reason for such conduct ;

but sin is a master to whom, being once made free, we owe no gratitude, nor can expect better from its service than hurt and mischief to ourselves, with the charge of the greatest ingratitude and undutifulness to Him whose grace hath made us free.

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

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

Now, as servants or soldiers should sist themselves with their arms or tools (*οπλα* signifies both) to their sovereign or master, to be employed in his service ; so the apostle here exhorts Christians not to sist or present (so the word we render *yield*, more properly signifies) their members as weapons or tools for serving sin ; but first to sist or present their whole selves to God, and then to sist or present all their members, that is, powers of soul and body, to be the instruments of righteousness by which he is served.

Upon the word *obey*, in the preceding verse, I observed, that obedience implies being unforced and willing. This is still more to be observed concerning the word here, which

signifies to sist, or present. For a man to sist or present himself, or his members, to sin and its service, it implies as when one man says to another—I am at your service, that is, quite willing and ready to serve you. This is the real disposition of an unregenerate man's heart—the prevailing disposition; however conscience may remonstrate and check, however conscience, aided by considerations that may be ascribed to prudence rather than to conscience itself, may give restraint, especially as to the outward work. But the prevailing disposition and purpose of the sincere Christian is according to the latter part of the verse.

The argument by which this is urged, is insinuated in these words, *as those that are alive from the dead*. It is the happy state of all true Christians, as ver. 11. that they are dead, not in sin, but to sin, and alive unto God: and the words here, ver. 13. are so evidently used with a view to these words, ver. 11. that if we restrict the words in ver. 13. *alive from the dead*, to a particular sort of Christians, we must also restrict the meaning of ver. 11. to them; which it were unreasonable, yea, absurd to do. However, the Greek, *ἐκ νεκρῶν*, Mr L. renders, *from among the dead*; and in his note interprets thus: 'The Gentile world were dead in sins—' those who were converted to the gospel were raised to life 'from among these dead.' This is according to his general view of the chapter, as addressed to the Christians of the Gentiles separately, and as contradistinguished to the Jews; and is one instance of wrong interpretation that that general view of the chapter led him to. Yea, this is one of the things in this chapter, by which he pretends to support that notion. But if the expression may on some occasions perhaps signify *from among the dead*, yet the learned writer would not say, it should still be so rendered. For in one verse, chap. viii. 11. Mr L. himself in his paraphrase renders it twice, *from the dead*. So then, as in the introduction to this chapter, I have proved that *dead in trespasses and sins* is the natural state of all men, Jews and Gentiles, it is plain there is nothing in the expression here, *alive from the dead*, to support Mr L.'s notion, that this chapter is designed peculiarly for Gentile converts.

PARAPHRASE.—13. And do not present or sist the faculties, affections, and powers of your soul, or body, to sin, that usurper, to be the tools of unrighteousness in his service; but present your whole selves to God, in a constant and willing readiness for his service, who is your rightful Lord; and

that as becomes those who by his wonderful grace are dead unto sin, (made free from its reign,) and are become alive unto God: and present all your powers to God, as weapons or tools fit and ready for the warfare and work of righteousness in his service.

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

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

Divers commentators appear to think that this is the dominion of sin meant here, ver. 14. Mr L., indeed, in his note on the first clause, interprets thus: 'Sin shall not be your absolute master, to dispose of your members and faculties in its drudgery and service.' This is according to the second sense of dominion above mentioned, and respects what I have called the practical dominion of sin. In his note, however, on the next clause, in a sort of paraphrase, representing the obligations Christians are under not to be the slaves of sin, but to yield themselves up to God to be his servants, in a constant and sincere purpose and endeavour of obeying him in all things; he adds, 'This if ye do, sin shall not be able to procure your death, for you Gentiles are not under the law, which condemns to death for every the least transgression, though it be but a slip of infirmity.' According to this, the dominion of sin here is its procuring death to transgressors. These two notes of the learned writer seem to give very different views of the matter.

Dr W.'s paraphrase gives the whole verse thus: 'And say not, this is beyond your strength, seeing the law in your members leads you captive to sin; *for sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the pedagogy of the law*, which gives the knowledge of sin, but not sufficient strength to mortify it; *but under that economy of grace* which affords that spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which frees us from the law of sin and death.' The words, *pedagogy* and *economy*, should not have been here, for reasons that will probably be suggested in another place; otherwise

this paraphrase is right. But though in his note the Doctor calls this a pious sense, he adds, 'but seems to give no place for the following objection. Others, therefore, paraphrase the words thus.' And after giving that paraphrase, he interprets the text concerning the power that sin hath by the law to condemn and give death for transgression. What the occasion is of the objection in the following verse, we shall see when we come to it; and that there is not for that a sufficient reason for the Doctor's receding from what he calls the pious sense. Mr John Alexander, in his posthumous commentary on this context, follows Dr W.'s interpretation in his note; and I think Dr Doddridge's interpretation, especially in his note, goes much the same way. The paraphrase of this verse given by the judicious Dr Guise is too large to be inserted in this place. It gives the sense of the text in a clear and just manner. I much wish the learned writer had added a note to support his interpretation, which would probably have been done by him with greater advantage, than it is likely to be done here.

However, as I am convinced that the dominion of sin here, means that power which sin hath in the nature and practice of persons under the law, by which they are its slaves, obey it, and do its service; I come now to give my reasons for understanding it so.—

1. I observe, then, in the first place, that the apostle appears to have much in his view, a dominion of sin by which men are its servants, (slaves, as was in those times the common condition of servants) doing its service and obeying it. So ver. 16. *His servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death*;—ver. 17. *Ye were the servants of sin*;—ver. 18. *Being made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness*;—ver. 20. *When ye were the servants of sin*;—ver. 22. *Now being made free from sin, and become servants to God*. Now, as having dominion, and being slaves, are characters and states that are correlates, that is, have mutual relation; as it is the scope of the exhortation that begins ver. 12. to exhort Christians not to obey sin, but to serve and obey God; and as he encourages Christians with this consideration, that having been the slaves of sin, they had been made free from that slavery and dominion; and with this consideration, that sin shall not have dominion over them; it is exceeding clear, that the whole drift and scope of the discourse and reasoning leads us to understand, by

the dominion of sin here, ver. 14. that dominion by which it holds men as its slaves, and employed in its service.

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

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

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

This point is exceeding clear by what hath been observed; and its evidence doth by no means depend on what I now further suggest and submit to the judgment of learned readers. I observe, then, that in the preceding context of chap.

vi. when there is mention of sin reigning, the word is βασιλευειν, to act the king, from βασιλευς, a king. But the word in our present text, ver. 14. is κυριευειν, to act the lord or master, as a man over his slaves. These words represent quite different ideas.

A legal kingly government receives direction and limitation from law, and is to be exercised by fixed established law; so if sin is said (chap. v. 21.) βασιλευειν, to act the king—to reign unto death, it doth so according to law, and by authority of law. Again, under a legal and limited kingly government, the subject enjoys liberty, more or less, and the kingly government is supposed to be founded, in some sort, on the consent of the people who are the subjects of the government; so here, (ver. 12.) the exhortation, not to let sin, βασιλευειν, to reign, or act the king,—is addressed to Christians by divine grace made free, in whom sin could not attain considerable prevalence, or reign without their consent.

The case is very different when the ruler is κυριος, as here, ver. 14. or, δεσποτες, lord or master. Then the government is despotic; the subjects are all slaves absolutely, and cannot claim benefit by laws, but are governed by the mere arbitrary will of the sovereign or lord. That is the only rule of his government, and of their subjection, which hath no other limitation. Thus, in our present text, ver. 14. the dominion of sin is expressed by κυριευειν, to act the lord or master, as over slaves, who are absolutely in the power of their lord; and must act according to his will, whatever service or drudgery he shall put them to.

Mr John Alexander allows, that the dominion of sin here is such dominion as one hath over his slaves; but he makes it to mean ‘the power that sin acquires, in consequence of this (of obeying it in the lusts of the flesh,) to destroy his captives, and which he exercises with a merciless hand.’ But besides that among men, from whom the similitude is taken, such power was very rarely exercised, and was not consistent with justice or the law of God, it hath been already shown that this dominion of sin is not that by which it gives death to its slaves, but that by which it commands their obedience and service; which is made very clear by the several verses and expressions of the context above observed, and adduced to that purpose.

The next inquiry is, What is meant by being *under grace*? Mr. L.’s paraphrase gives it thus: ‘You are not under the law, in the legal state, but are under grace, in the gospel-

‘state of the covenant of grace.’ The expression here seems to respect different dispensations or states of the covenant of grace, the gospel-dispensation of it, and a previous dispensation, which may be justly denominated the legal dispensation of the covenant of grace. Mr. L. indeed, does not seem to understand the legal Mosaic state to have been a state or dispensation of the covenant of grace. Of this more hereafter. But as to his expression here, when he says, the gospel-state of the covenant of grace, to what other state or dispensation of the covenant of grace doth he contradistinguish this gospel-state of it? Any who shall take pains to inquire into his sentiments will find things inconsistent, yea, absurd enough, with the learned writer concerning this point; some of which may come in our way hereafter.

Meantime, in his note he gives the sense of the last clause, *under grace*, thus: ‘You Gentiles are not under the law, which condemns to death for every the least transgression —but by your baptism you are entered into the covenant of grace; and being under grace, God will accept of your sincere endeavours in the place of exact obedience.’

As to this, though we are far from thinking that sincere endeavours do now come in the place of exact and perfect obedience, in what concerns the sinner’s justification, yet it is certain, that the sincere endeavours of believers in a justified state are now acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. From the beginning of the world, all they who believed in the promised Saviour, and in the promise concerning him, being justified, their sincere endeavours were accepted. Yea, faithful Israelites under the Mosaic law, being justified through faith, as was their father Abraham, themselves and their sincere endeavours were accepted, when they were far from exact and perfect obedience. This, therefore, is not peculiar to the gospel-state; nor is there any thing in it of privilege peculiar to Gentile converts, as contradistinguished to the Jews, as Mr. L. would have it.

To understand being *under grace*, merely of being under a dispensation or constitution of grace that accepts sincere obedience and pardons imperfections, will make the apostle’s declaration in our text not consistent with truth. For how many millions are under grace in that sense, who are under the dominion of sin, and perish? Some may endeavour to make this right by giving it thus: If you decline obeying sin, and endeavour to mortify it,—and if you shall yield your

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

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

Though it hath been observed, that grace doth commonly signify favour, even free unmerited favour, yet in this place grace certainly signifies more than being in favour at present with God. Being at present in favour with God would not secure things for the future, as in our text. Whilst Adam continued in his innocence, he was under Divine favour; but this did not secure against his falling under the dominion of sin. If the apostle meant nothing here, but that Christians, being under grace, would be secure against falling under the dominion of sin, upon certain conditions, depending merely and altogether on themselves, the comfort would amount to little. If man in his state of perfection fell short of the conditions prescribed to him, how likely would fallen man be to fall short? But the grace of the new covenant doth, as chap. v. 21. *REIGN unto eternal life*, and makes it *sure to the seed*. So chap. iv. 16. *It is of faith, that it might be by GRACE, (the consequence is,) that the promise might be SURE to all the seed.* The first covenant, though it promised much good, upon most reasonable and

equitable conditions, yet it made nothing sure. But the grace and promise of the new covenant made all sure. It secures to the believer eternal life, and the safety and success of his course and way to the enjoyment of it, according to Jer. xxxii. 40.

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

There remains this clause of ver. 14. *Ye are not under the law.* But this falls to be explained at some length in the explication of the following chapter; and it is not fit to anticipate here what must be there said. See on chap. vii. 4.

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

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

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

PARAPHRASE.—15. What, then, may I suppose that a Christian, who mistakes my doctrine, or inclines to abuse it, or that an adversary of grace, may infer or object? Possibly,

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

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

EXPLICATION.—One might readily think at first sight, that the apostle doth not here answer so directly and clearly to the objection and argument in the preceding verse as might be wished. But on considering this text closely, we shall find two things in it. First, that the apostle doth here insist in the exhortation he had begun, ver. 12; and next, that he doth so in such manner in this verse, as to make a very sufficient answer to the argument or objection in the preceding verse.

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

It was observed before, that the word we render by *yielding*, properly signifies to *sist*, or present one's self, with his arms or weapons, to a master or commander. So Mr L. observes, and, long before him, Beza. I also observed, that

one's thus sisting, or presenting himself, is something fully, voluntary, and deliberate. In the latter context of chap. vii. there is much represented of the motions and strength of sin. But there is much regret, sorrow, conflict, and outcry of misery. The case directly opposite to that is here hinted; the case of one deliberately and voluntarily sisting or presenting himself, and his faculties, to sin and its service. A Christian may sin through mere infirmity, or by the surprise and force of temptation; the effect of which becomes afterwards very bitter to him. But for a man to present or sist (deliberately, voluntarily) himself and his faculties to the service of sin, whether in his general course of life and practice, or in the service of a particular predominant and indulged lust; this makes a very ill case, against which Christians are here earnestly exhorted, and this enforced by a strong argument.

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

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

ment will yet reach him with fearful effect. Thus, ver. 16. contains this very pointed and striking answer to what was suggested in ver. 15.

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

PARAPHRASE.—16. But let me not be diverted from the exhortation I have begun ; but let me still earnestly entreat you not to obey sin in the lusts thereof, nor to sist your faculties to its service ; but to yield yourselves, with all your faculties and powers, to God and to righteousness, in way of obedience. For if I have said that ye are not under the law, it was far from my meaning that you might withdraw yourselves from the authority and obedience of the holy commandment, which is the rule of righteousness ; so that nothing can be counted righteousness, or the service of God, that is not obedience and conformity to that rule. Let me then enforce my exhortation by the consideration of what you know,—what every one knows ; viz. that to whom one sists himself voluntarily and habitually to obey and serve him, he thereby proves, that he whom he so serves and obeys, is indeed his master and lord, whether it be sin, who gives death for wages, (ver. 23.) or God, in way of obedience to his will, commandment, and institutions, in order to complete that service of righteousness, which will issue in eternal life. Have you then been sensible of the great wretchedness of being the servants of sin, and of the great good that grace hath done you, in making you free from that thralldom ? be warned to keep yourselves at the greatest distance from that way of practice that would give suspicion that you are again entangled and engaged therein.

Now, will any say, because persons are not under the law, but under grace, that therefore they may freely and safely go into a course of sin ? surely if any, with the high praise, perhaps, of grace in their mouths, shall so believe, and shall presume so to live, the reproach and real abuse of grace will recoil, and fall with fearful weight on their heads. There is

no fallacy in the promises of the new covenant, or in the doctrine of grace; but there may be much fallacy and deception in men's notion and opinion of their own state. They who so argue, and so live, as I have been just saying, will prove nothing truly dishonourable to grace; but they will prove, to their own confusion, that they have not been truly under grace, but indeed under the law in the flesh, under the dominion of sin, serving it; for which the stroke of the law will reach them fearfully; especially in the great day of the vengeance of grace, and of the *wrath* of the *Lamb*; when grace, which they have so much counteracted and affronted, will not interpose to screen them from the righteous judgment.

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

EXPLICATION.—When the apostle says here, that they had been *the servants of sin*, it may give occasion for some question concerning the ground on which he says so. If the Roman Christians had been universally converted immediately from heathenism, some might suppose he had no other in view than their former state of heathenism. But that was not the case. There were in that church a good many Israelites, or Jews, as appears in chap. xvi. who were brought up in the church of God. There might be also a good many who were brought up from childhood in a state of proselytism, and in the early knowledge and faith of the holy scriptures, as was Timothy, under his pious and believing mother and grandmother. Though these Romans, who had been converted from heathenism, had certainly been the servants of sin, yet how comes he to say of that church universally, and without the hint of any exception, that they had been formerly the servants of sin? If he addresses the churches he writes to, under the character and designation of believers, without giving the hint of any exceptions, there was reason for this from their profession, and from the favourable judgment of charity. But such Jews, and persons brought up from childhood in proselytism, as were members of that church, had not been by profession the servants of sin; nor would the judgment of charity direct or permit him to call them so, if he knew them not better, and their having universally proved by their practice that they were so, than it is likely the apostle did, who had at that time never

been in Rome. How, then, can we account for it, that he says of them universally, that they had been without exception, *the servants* (the slaves) *of sin*, but on this ground that it is the common and natural condition of all men to be the servants of sin?

The last clause of this text, *which was delivered you*, is as Castellio renders, and which Beza calls a perverse rendering. He would probably have spoke more softly of our translation; though he and the Vulgar had good reason to render otherwise. The word rendered *form*, doth signify, form, rule, or pattern. Sometimes it signifies a mould; and it seems to be here determined to that sense by the expressions connected therewith; which, as they run in the Greek, are to be thus rendered, *into which ye were delivered over, or cast*. Here are very different ideas. Obeying respects the authority of the doctrine. Being delivered over, or cast into it, respects the doctrine under the notion of a mould, which gives its own a new form to that which is cast into it. This verse, then, doth in the general, represent the doctrine of the gospel, and men's obeying it, yielding it the obedience of faith, as the great means of sanctification, and of freedom from the slavery of sin:—*Ye were the servants of sin; but ye have obeyed*.

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

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

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

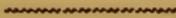
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TEXT.—18. *Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.*

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

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

PARAPHRASE.—19. You have, through the infirmity of your present condition in the flesh, such disadvantage and weakness of understanding, in conceiving spiritual things, except they be set before you under the similitude of things earthly, (John iii. 12.) that I have judged it needful to speak of what concerns your spiritual condition, with regard to sin and holiness, in language, and under a similitude taken from the manner and affairs of men, respecting masters and their bond-servants, which you Romans are well acquainted with. Upon the same view to your infirmity—though I might, upon comparing both sorts of service together, reasonably require of you a zeal, fervency, and assiduity, in the better service of righteousness, incomparably beyond what you showed in the service of sin; yet, as this perhaps goes beyond any attainment which, in your present infirmity in the flesh, you are likely to reach—and so might, through your weakness, occasion your forming conclusions too unfavourable and discouraging concerning your condition—let me exhort you to some purity, at least, of endeavour in the better service you are through grace engaged in; and that as you have heretofore yielded your members servants to impurity and iniquity, to the practice and increase of iniquity; so now that you sist all your faculties, affections, and powers, servants of righteousness, to the practice and advancement of holiness.



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

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

18.) to maintain your liberty from the dominion of sin, not to allow it to prevail with you in any sort, to yield yourselves, or your members to its service ; but that ye should, as I have been exhorting you, be faithful and assiduous servants to your new and better Master, ever sisting all your powers of soul and body ready for his service, in the practice of holiness ?

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

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

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

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

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

It hath been observed before, that the notion of *servants*, according to these times, includes the notion of *slavery*,—by which a servant was the property of his master, as to his person ; and behoved to be absolutely subject, as to his service and employment, to his master's will, to be commanded and disposed of as he pleased. The servant of God is absolutely his, as to his person, and that by the original right of creation and sovereignty, and by the superadded right of grace and redemption. Yea, the servant of God hath freely and fully, by his own choice, given himself up to the Lord, to be his, as a man's bond-servant is his, being bought with his money, or born in his house. So the Psalmist acknowledges, Psal. cxvi. 16. *I am thy servant, and the son of thy handmaid.* But there is otherwise great odds, with regard to the liberty of mind and spirit, the confidence, consolation, and hope, very opposite to a state of slavery or bondage, which the Christian hath in the service of his natural and rightful Lord ; whom he is, at the same time, to consider as his Father, and himself as a son by the adoption of grace, and an heir. On these accounts, though the Christian is the absolute property of his Lord, and absolutely subject to his sovereignty and will, yet his state is not that of slavery and bondage. To him the law, which expresses his Master's will and is the rule of his service, is *the perfect law of liberty*, James i. 25.

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

called a practical dominion—a dominion by which sin powerfully holds sinners its slaves, employed in its service.

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

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

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

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

Let this be further observed. The apostle had said of men's sins, ver. 21. that *the END of those things is death*. So

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

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

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

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

# INTRODUCTION

TO THE

## EXPLICATION OF ROMANS VII.

SHOWING

*That the Apostle's doctrine and reasoning in this Chapter, do not respect the Mosaic ceremonial law, or the abolition thereof.*

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

Many have understood it of the Mosaic law. This, in the largest sense, comprehends the whole system of laws given to Israel in the wilderness. But more strictly, it signifies the law that prescribed the ordinances of worship, the rites, ceremonies, and peculiar observances of the church of Israel; commonly called the *ceremonial law*. When I observe every place in this epistle in which *law* is mentioned, I do not see cause to think, that the ceremonial law is meant in any one of them, or that the apostle's explications and reasoning have respect to it. If in some places he hath at all in his eye the Mosaic law, as chap. v. 15, 20. it is only the Mosaic, or Sinaitic promulgation of the moral law he means: his argument doth not appear to have any respect to the ceremonial law. In proving the sinfulness of the Gentiles, chap. i. they are only sins against the moral law he mentions; as indeed they could not be charged with transgression of the ceremonial law, which had not been given them. It is plain it is the same moral law that was common to Jews and Gentiles, (chap. ii. 14, 15.) that he hath in his eye, even the law of which some light and impression remained in the consciences of the Gentiles, when he says, chap. ii. 26. *If the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?* It is plain that the ceremonial law is excluded from all concern in the argument, for the uncircumcised had not access to observe the ceremonial law. As this concerning the uncircumcision is a part of his reasoning with the Jews, it shows that in his reasoning with the Jew in the preceding context he meant no other than the moral law.

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

The apostle doth indeed manage his argument, respecting justification, in such way, that he had no occasion to mention the ceremonial law; at least, when he might take occasion to mention it, it is evident that he avoids it. For making this clear, it is to be observed, that moral and accountable agents may be justified in one of two ways. 1. Such may be justified, as personally and perfectly righteous; and so the angels, who kept their first state, stand justified before God, according to the law they are under. It is a point the apostle labours much, that no man, Jew or Gentile, can be justified in this way, as he proves that all have sinned. 2. The way, and the only way, for the justification of the sinners is by grace: and he shows that this grace in the exercise of it, is founded on expiation, or redemption, even *the redemption that is in Christ, whom God hath set forth as a propitiation, through faith in his blood*; so he says, chap. iii. 24, 25. Here indeed he might have taken occasion to treat of the expiations and purifications of the Mosaic law, and to have proved their insufficiency for taking away sin, or removing the guilt of sinners. This indeed he does in the epistle to the Hebrews. This was especially needful for them, the Jews of Palestine and the east, who were so exceedingly zealous for the Levitical service and Mosaic institutions. But the Romans were a church of Christians, who were, for most part, of the Gentiles, whose liberty from the ceremonial law had been declared before this time. This liberty the Gentiles had cause to value much: and it appears that the apostle saw no occasion for proving to them the insufficiency of the ceremonial expiations (which they had nothing to do with) for the justification of sinners; and it is evident, that in treating of that subject in this epistle he doth not touch that point at all.

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

giving an instance only of a transgression of the moral law : so ver. 7.

It hath, however, been the opinion of divers interpreters, that in the first context of this seventh chapter the apostle asserts the abrogation of the Mosaic ceremonial law. Dr Hammond says, on ver. 1. ‘ The design and matter of ‘ the discourse is discernibly this, to vindicate his doctrine, ‘ (charged on him, Acts xxi. 21. it is not certain whether ‘ then truly or no, but without doubt now professedly ‘ taught by him,) that the Judaical law was abolished by ‘ the death of Christ, Eph ii. 15, 16. Col. ii. 14. and so ‘ was not now obligatory to a Jew.’ This certainly the learned author means, not of the moral, but of that called the ceremonial law. Downwards he says, ‘ This abolition of ‘ the law to the Jews is here evidently proclaimed.’ Grotius and Whitby have the same view of the general scope of this context.

Now, when Dr Hammond says, that it is uncertain whether the preaching that the Judaical law was abolished, and was not obligatory to the Jew, was charged on him truly or no on that occasion, Acts xxi. 21. but that now without doubt it was professedly taught by him in this epistle ; this clearly implies, as if the writing of this epistle was posterior to that story related Acts xxi. But it is evident, that here the learned man hath fallen into an inadvertency scarcely excusable. We learn from Rom. xv. 25, 26. that the epistle was written when he was in his way to Jerusalem, with the contribution for the poor saints that had been made by them of Macedonia and Achaia : it was thereafter, when he was actually arrived at Jerusalem, with these contributions, that the things happened, of which we have the story, Acts xxi. Certainly, any who will consider the apostle’s conduct on this latter occasion, may be well convinced, that to interpret any passage in this epistle, as declaring or asserting the abolition of the Mosaic law, must be mistaking his meaning. Of this more hereafter.

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

1. That a sinner is not justified by the law, or by the works of the law. This he proves by principles and arguments that have no respect particularly to the Mosaic law and institutions, or to the abolition thereof. This is the sub-

ject of the first five chapters to the Romans ; wherein he establishes the one way of justification, common to both Jews and Gentiles.

2. He proves, that the Gentile converts were relieved by the gospel from the necessity of undergoing the Mosaic yoke. This he is zealous about, and considers it as an essential point of the gospel. The truth is, as the Mosaic or Judaical law was originally given to the Jews, and not to the Gentiles, there were divers institutions in it which it was morally impossible for the Gentiles generally to observe ; for instance, the three great annual feasts in Jerusalem. The case was, that the wisdom of God thought fit to have, in these times, one nation only for his church ; and so he appointed ordinances of worship, and other various institutions, suiting that one national church. If particular persons of other nations came to be converted, and would enjoy the privilege of members of the church of God, they behoved to accede to that one national church, and submit to its rules and institutions. But when, under the gospel, the church became catholic, consisting of people of all nations, it was thought fit by divine wisdom, that those of other nations, the Gentiles, should be declared free from the obligation of Mosaic ordinances, which were not suited to such a state of things ; and should enjoy the privileges of the church of God, without submitting to these.

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

way very comfortably favourable to the interest of the Gentiles, yet I do not see that the freedom of the Gentiles from the Mosaic law is his proper and direct subject ; so that Mr L. certainly had not cause to consider that as the main scope and drift of the apostle's discourse and reasoning in a great part of this epistle, as much as he does. Viewing matters so much in that light, has given him a wrong bias in interpreting many texts, and has occasioned his falling often short of the true meaning, in a manner very detrimental to the faith and comfort of Christians.

There are yet two things fit to be considered respecting the case of the Gentiles during the Mosaic and Old Testament times.

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

2. This disadvantage did not amount to so much, but that persons of the Gentiles, enlightened with the faith of the church and word of God, and fearing God, were in these times truly accepted of him, without being circumcised, or coming under the Mosaic yoke. Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple, 1 Kings viii. 41, 42, 43. gave reason to think so long ago. But the matter is clear in the case of Cornelius, Acts x. when the Lord said to Peter in the vision, ver. 15, *what God hath cleansed, call not thou unclean ;* that is, though he be not purified or cleansed by the blood of circumcision. The apostle thus instructed, says, ver. 34, 35. *Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons ; but in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.* To say, or infer from this, that persons who know not the true God, or the way of salvation he hath revealed, may, walking honestly according to the light of their own religion and conscience, be saved, hath no foundation in the words of the apostle Peter. He is by no means speaking in that latitude of meaning. He is speaking of what God had cleansed ; of Cornelius, (whom even Dr Whitby considered as a proselyte of the gate,) and such as he, of whatever nation, who were enlightened with the true faith, as the same was revealed and professed in

the church of God, and who, by the influence and direction of that light feared God, and wrought righteousness, though they were not Jews, nor initiated by circumcision into the Jewish church. But though the sentiment just now mentioned hath no foundation in the apostle Peter's words, yet it may be justly inferred from what he says, that whatever might be the advantage of being members externally of the Jewish church, yet believing and pious Gentiles might, without that, and without coming under the yoke of the Mosaic institutions, be accepted of God, and be saved, even during the Old Testament times.

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

However, Dr Hammond says, ' That asserting the liberty of the Gentiles from the Mosaic yoke, and preaching the gospel to them, did both together, by way of interpretation, and necessary consequence, contain under them this of the unobligingness of the law to a Jew ; for the law of the Jews commanding a strict separation from the Gentiles, all that were not their proselytes and circumcised, and Paul and others being Jews, their conversing with, and preaching to the Gentiles, could not be allowed on any score, but that of the abrogation of the Jewish law, which accordingly was of necessity to be revealed to St Peter in a vision, Acts x. (and so seems to have been to St Paul, Eph. iii. 3.)'

There is an evident mistake here. We have seen that the thing revealed to the apostle Peter, Acts x., was no more than this, that the Gentiles were to be preached to, and to be admitted members of the church, without being subjected to the Mosaic yoke. The mystery made known by revelation to the apostle Paul, Eph. iii. 3. was no other, as himself tells expressly, ver. 6. than *that the Gentiles should be fellow-*

*heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel.* There is nothing in either place of the abrogation of the Judaical law, with regard to the Jews themselves, to whom it was given.

But the learned writer supposes this to be implied in the other ; for the Jews could not so much as eat with the Gentiles, by reason of certain rules and prohibitions of their law, except that were abolished. But this seems to have been provided for in the decree of the synod of Jerusalem, which required (not the Jews to neglect any rules of their own law, as no longer obligatory, but) that the Gentile converts should abstain from things strangled and from blood. It has been pretty commonly said, that this was ordered to prevent too great offence of the Jews. But I do not see what this could amount to, as to the offence of those who were zealous of the Jewish law, whose offence no concessions could prevent, without the Gentile converts submitting to circumcision, and the whole Mosaic yoke. But it did much to obviate this difficulty, how Gentiles, and such Jewish converts as were zealous of their own law, yet agreed to the liberty of the Gentiles, might, members as both now were of the body and church of Christ, converse and eat together, notwithstanding the distinctions and prohibitions of the law of Moses respecting meats. I doubt not but the Gentiles would understand, from the general reason of it, that the injunction was meant to extend to all meats, which by the law of Moses were prohibited. Thus Jewish and Gentile Christians might converse and eat together freely ; which they could not do, if it were not for this limitation, wisely put, for a season, on the liberty of the Gentiles. So the asserting the liberty of the Gentiles from the Mosaic law, did by no means imply the abrogation of that law, with respect to the Jews ; as necessary in order to the believers of the Jews and Gentiles conversing and eating together.

Having premised these things, in order to clear our way, let us now come more close to the subject and question, concerning the abolition of the Mosaic law, as alleged to be meant by the apostle in his seventh to the Romans. That that is not meant or asserted by him in it, is very evident from his reasoning in it concerning the law. He does, ver. 4. consider men's being *dead to the law, or delivered from it*, as necessary in order to their having part in Christ, or, as he expresses it, *being married to him* ; as necessary to their *bringing forth fruit unto God, not in the oldness of the letter, but in*

*the newness of the spirit.* Yea, he intimates, chap. vi. 14. that being under the law, gave advantage to sin to have dominion over them. Now, if all this is to be understood of the Mosaic law of ordinances, rites, and ceremonies, surely the apostles would not have preached the gospel at all to the Jews, without intimating to them clearly and loudly, that the abolition of the Mosaic law, their being free from it, and renouncing it, was absolutely necessary for their salvation. For I scarce think that any will deny the things I have mentioned to be so, especially when the gospel was so fully revealed. Yet if we observe the preaching of the apostles to the Jews, and their discourses to them on divers occasions, as set down in the book of the Acts, we shall not find any thing to that purpose in them all. Instead of that, the thousands in Jerusalem and Judea, who believed, continued zealous of the law; and it does not appear, that the apostles or elders, who dwelt among them, or resorted to them, did at all disturb them with declaring the abolition of the law. So far from it, that the apostle Peter was influenced by the brethren, who came down from Jerusalem to Antioch, to behave in a manner that tended to betray the liberty of the Gentiles, with regard to the Mosaic law, which had been first intimated by revelation to himself;—so far were the apostles from touching the law, as to its obligatory force with respect to the Jews. Could this have been their conduct, if the freedom of the Jews from that law had indeed been necessary for purposes so essential to salvation, as are mentioned, chap. vii. by the apostle Paul, in his discourse concerning the law?

But there is something very clearly decisive on this subject in that story, Acts xxi. here before mentioned. Let us now consider it. Sometime after writing this epistle to the Romans, Paul having arrived at Jerusalem, James and all the elders being present, they said unto him, ver. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24. *‘Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe, and they are all zealous of the law. And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles, to forsake Moses, saying, that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. What is it, therefore? &c. What! zealous of the law, under the law, and married to the law, and yet believing, and so married to Christ? Could the fidelity of the apostles allow them to connive at such pernicious, inconsistent pretensions? Would it not be expected,*

that, on this occasion, they would have asked the assistance of the apostle Paul, who had been so successful among the Gentiles, and have endeavoured to awaken his zeal to exert himself to the utmost to recover his countrymen who believed, from this sad mistake? Instead of that they gave Paul, and Paul observed, an advice of very contrary tendency.

But what is it now that the Jews of Jerusalem were informed of concerning Paul? The very same thing that Dr Hammond, and others before and after him, assert that he did actually in this epistle to the Romans, that was written before that time, and on other occasions; viz. that he taught the Jews, which were among the Gentiles, that they ought to forsake Moses and his law; and that this was a liberty that they ought to stand to, and assert, on considerations of the utmost importance to their salvation.

Let us now consider the advice that is unanimously given by James and all the elders present. It is, that he should confute these reports, which the Jewish Christians had heard, and which, according to Grotius, Drs Hammond and Whitby, all three learned men, were very true reports; and that he should give the most effectual proof, by avowed public practice, that these things of which they were informed concerning him, were nothing,—had no foundation in truth, and that himself walked orderly, and kept the law; and the apostle Paul, we see, did punctually observe this advice.

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

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

Dr Whitby, on Acts xxi., doth not take notice of the objection arising from Paul's conduct there related, against his own interpretation of Rom. vii. But he seems to have it in his view, and to be greatly at a loss to account for the apostle's conduct on that occasion; at least, that is likely to be the case by the considerations he suggests to that purpose, annot. on ver. 26, 27. they fall so very far short of the purpose: as, '1. That the vow of Nazaritism being only a stricter sort of separation from all pollution to the service of God, and to be holy, and free from all kind of defilement, seems very consistent with the spirit and design of Christianity.'

But if we consider the moral and spiritual design of Mosaic institutions, which of them is it that was not consistent with the faith, spirit, and design of Christianity? The pre-

sent question doth not concern what was moral or spiritual in these institutions, but respects the external administration and observance of ceremonial ordinances. Now, what can be named in all the system of Mosaic laws, that was more peculiarly Mosaic and ceremonial than the appointments concerning Nazaritism? Were the Jewish Christians to believe and assert their liberty from all the Mosaic ceremonial laws, (as the Doctor and others say is taught the Romans here,) and yet might they voluntarily use these very ceremonial regulations of Nazaritism, when the Mosaic law itself, when in its fullest force, left them free not to vow Nazaritism at all?

‘2. Observe,’ says the Doctor, ‘that the offerings of the temporary Nazarite, at the completion of his vow, being a burnt-offering, and a sin-offering, and a peace-offering, Numb. vi., 14. and two of them being sacrifices not appointed for expiating sin, but offerings of thanksgiving to God, who had enabled them to perform their vow, and of acknowledgment of God’s sovereign dominion—this action seems to have little or nothing inconsistent with the doctrine of St. Paul.’

*Little or nothing?*—I think, considering the person, and the advice by which he acted, the Doctor should not have discovered any disposition to yield, that there was even a little, or any thing at all, in the action, inconsistent with St Paul’s doctrine. But let us consider the matter more closely. The law concerning the sin-offering, Lev. iv. is so express to that purpose, that none can deny (nor do I know of any that doth deny) that it was expiatory, and designed to make atonement. The two sacrifices, then, which, according to the Doctor in this place, were not expiatory, were the burnt-offering, and the peace-offering. It is likely to be the former that he means, by the offering of acknowledgment of God’s sovereign dominion; and the latter, by the offering of thanksgiving. Thus some others of the learned have spoke; though without good reason. For though they were not intended to be offered for expiation of particular sins and trespasses, there is good reason to think they were offered for expiation of sin in general. As to the burnt-offerings not being expiatory, that notion is of set purpose, and fully confuted by Dr W. himself, in his notes on Eph. v. 2. and on Heb. ix 19. to which I refer. I wonder it should be denied by any who considers Lev. i. 4. and I think it strange that any should suppose the burnt-offering of the morning and even-

ing sacrifice, accompanied with the burning of incense in the holy place, not to have been expiatory, and, indeed, the most common solemn type of the expiation to be made in due time by our Lord Jesus Christ. These daily sacrifices signified clearly, that God would accept of no service or worship from men, but by means of the expiation of sin. That all bloody sacrifices were in some sort expiatory, is, I think, very plain from what the Lord says concerning the blood, when he prohibits the common use of it, Lev. xvii. 11. : *For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls : for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.* It is reasonable to think, that in this all the bloody offerings of the Old Testament did typify that one great sacrifice that hath truly expiated sin.

But to what purpose doth the Doctor here mention expiation at all ? Is it, that it would be ill to account for, that the apostle should concur in offering an expiatory sacrifice, as being inconsistent with the gospel-faith of a complete expiation having been actually made by the blood of Christ ; but that the offering of burnt-offerings and peace-offerings (neither of which, as he, in contradiction to himself insinuates, was expiatory) was not inconsistent with that faith, or with the abolition of the Mosaic law, said to be asserted by the apostle here, chap. vii. ? What else could he mean ? and yet if this was his meaning, it is evidently ridiculous ; especially as the sin-offering was expiatory at any rate.

To this second observation, he adds : ‘ And the advice ‘ here not being personally to make, or present these offerings, ‘ but only to purify himself,’ (how purify himself, say I, but according to the purification of the Mosaic sanctuary ?) ‘ and to help the Nazarites in bearing some part of the ‘ charges of these offerings.’ He infers as above, that there was little or nothing inconsistent with the doctrine of St Paul.

But these Nazarites were Jewish Christians. Did he tell such at Rome, Rom. vii. that they were *dead to the law*, (that is, as he and some others interpret) free from the obligation of the Mosaic institutions ; and this liberty was needful to be asserted, in order to their being married to Christ, and bringing forth fruit unto God ? and doth he now contribute to confirm such persons at Jerusalem in their conscientious regard to that law, and its institutions, by officiously contributing to the expense of their sacrifices ? These things

are not quite consistent: besides, that this assisting merely to the expense hath no foundation in the story.

3. The third consideration by which Dr W. endeavours to account for the apostle's conduct on this occasion, he expresses thus: 'Though St Paul knew that these constitutions were not now obligatory in themselves; yet, seeing they were rites belonging to that temple, which was yet standing, and God had not, by any express declaration made to the Jews, prohibited the continuance of them, St Paul might lawfully submit to this compliance with them, to prevent the scandal of the unbelieving Jews, which might divert them from that Christianity they had embraced.' There must be an error of the press here, (edit. 4.) I suppose he meant to say, who had *not* embraced Christianity. But how comes the Doctor to say, that God had not prohibited the continuance of these ordinances by any express declarations made to the Jews? Surely, according to his interpretation of Rom. vii. which was written before that time, the declarations there made are express enough to that purpose. If then the apostle thought it his duty, to make these declarations sometime before to the Jews at Rome, in addressing them (separately, as is alleged) in that chapter, in writing which, he was under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, it is likely to have been as much his duty to have made these declarations to the Jews at Jerusalem, instead of confirming them in the opposite sentiments and way, by such thorough and remarkable compliance with them, in a very solemn instance of practice. As to giving offence to the Jews, by refusing such compliance, let us but consider how great offence it would give to believing and unbelieving Jews, when they should have occasion to observe the inconsistency between his doctrine, Rom. vii. (as that hath been interpreted,) and his posterior practice at Jerusalem.

The Doctor concludes his annotation on Acts xxi. 26, 27. with these remarkable and very instructive words: 'Whence we may learn, what great condescendence in lesser matters may be used for the *promotion* of the salvation of others.' The condescension he means here to recommend, seems, from the nature of the subject, not to be the condescension of men's forbearing to impose and urge practices contrary to the sentiments and consciences of their brethren, but the condescension of others, in complying with the use of rites, ceremonies, observances, and practices, which they think

ought not to be imposed ; and which, perhaps, they think cannot be complied with by them, as their light and views are, without sin. Indeed, if the apostle thought, that being free from the Mosaic law and institutions, and asserting that liberty was needful for such reasons and ends, as are mentioned Rom. vi. and vii., I cannot help thinking, that the compliance mentioned Acts xxi. was a great deal too much, and was an example not safe for a Christian to follow, by any principles or rules for keeping good conscience, or concerning offence, that I can learn from the writings of the apostle himself, or from the scripture otherwise. However, such was, according to the Doctor, the apostle's doctrine, Rom. vii. And so did he conceal, yea, contradict, that doctrine, by his solemn practice, Acts xxi. in compliance with the dangerous error of the Jews and Jewish Christians, and that for the *promotion* of the salvation of others. Alas, for these poor peevish persons of our times ! some ceremonial institutions (little, very little ones, matters quite indifferent in the eyes of the imposers, and so might be well wanted,) are prescribed, not indeed by an authority altogether so venerable as that which had enjoined the Mosaic ordinances. We see how Paul condescended and complied. But these modern precisians will not comply with these ceremonial institutions for the *promotion* of themselves to livings, dignities, &c. in the church, or in the state, (at the peril, as these poor narrow souls conceive, of their salvation,) or to save themselves from low circumstances, and much needless expense !

Yea, the Doctor hath brought his own account of things, respecting the apostle's conduct, under very great difficulty, by what he hath in the immediately preceding annotation on Acts xxi. 20. There he says, ' The zealots among the believers were urgent for the circumcision of the Gentiles ; —But the whole body of the converted Jews, bishops, elders, as well as the laity, were zealous for the observation of the laws and customs by the Jews.' Then he brings quotations from Philo and Josephus, to show how much the Jews would suffer, rather than abandon God's ordinances. These are very needlessly brought, since godly persons of all nations and times have agreed, that it were better to die, than to desert, or renounce, or counteract divine institutions and appointments. Then he tells, that the Jewish Christians knew of no revelation made by God—that the Mosaic institutions were to cease after the death of the Messiah.

Downwards he hath these words: ' Yet it pleased God not yet to convince them of this error, by any revelation, or any afflatus of that Spirit which many of them had received.' But was there not any revelation, or afflatus, or divine inspiration, when the apostle had some time before written according to the Doctor's paraphrase, thus, Rom. vii. 4. *' Wherefore, my brethren, as the woman is free from the law of her husband by his death, even so ye also are become dead to the law, and so free from it by the crucifixion of the body of Christ, which hath dissolved your obligation to the law, as the death of the husband the obligation of the wife to him; that ye should or may be married to another ?'* There is no removing these difficulties arising from the apostle's conduct, Acts xxi. according to the Doctor's account of things. But upon a just view of matters, there is no real difficulty at all—no inconsistency between the apostle's conduct, Acts xxi. and any doctrine he had previously taught. He practised, Acts xxi. according to the law of Moses, being an Israelite. But he had not before that time, in Rom. vii. or on any other occasion, publicly taught, that Israelites were made free from the obligations of that law. Yea, his practice, Acts xxi. which we have been considering, is an unanswerable argument, that in Rom. vii. he did not so teach; and that he is misunderstood by those who interpret him in that way.

To what hath been said, we may add what the apostle offered on different occasions, for vindicating himself to the Jews, or to others, against the accusations of the Jews. We are told, Acts xxv. 7. that *the Jews laid before Festus many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove; and, ver. 8. He answered for himself, neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple—have I offended any thing at all.* It could not be accounted for, that any man of common honesty, who had in so public manner, as in an epistle to the church of Rome, asserted that the law of the Jews was abrogated, and, consequently, that the service of the temple ought to be no longer celebrated,—would now, before the seat of judgment, assert, that he had not offended against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple. Nor do I see how, in the supposed case, his ingenuity could be vindicated, when he said, some time after this, at Rome, to the chief Jews of that place, (when it is not unlikely that some of the Christians might have been present, to whom he had sometime before addressed this epis-

tle) *I have committed nothing against the people or customs of our fathers*, Acts xxviii. 17. What ! committed nothing against the customs of their fathers ! if, in the epistle he had written some time ago to the Christians of that place, he had asserted the abolition of all these customs !

For my part, after all the closest attention I was capable of, to all that is said of the law, or of any particular matter respecting it, in this epistle to the Romans,—I am well satisfied that there is nothing in it of the abrogation of the Mosaic law with regard to the Jews, or their exemption from its obligation,—that it is nowhere therein asserted,—that it is not a principle from which the apostle argues,—nor a conclusion he infers from any principles.

I see nothing in this epistle to the Romans, that can be urged with any appearance of force, as importing the abolition of the Mosaic law ; if it is not what we have in the 14th chapter. There appears in it a considerable difference in the practice of Christians about meats and holy days. This matter was the occasion of judging and condemning upon one side, and of contempt and uncharitable neglect upon the other ; and the peace of the church was much endangered by the difference. This we may learn from these words, ver. 19. *Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace.*

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

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

There is nothing in this 14th chapter but may be well accounted for, by understanding these weak persons to have been believers of the Gentiles; nor is it at all unreasonable to think, that there were of them such weak persons. It is to be considered, that a great many of the Gentiles, who had been converted by the gospel, had been proselytes to Judaism, and perhaps had been the children of such, brought up from childhood in that way, as Timothy had been. Although these might agree to the declaration of the liberty of the Gentiles, as to the main of things, yet we may easily suppose that something might stick with them. They had received divine revelation, the word of God, and the faith, by which they expected to be saved, from the Jews. It is no wonder if for this they did retain a great veneration for that people, and for their institutions. Besides, they might think that the distinction of meats, clean and unclean, had a more early authority, and more extensive obligation, as the distinction of beasts clean and unclean, had been mentioned by God in his directions to Noah. Nor need we wonder, if they retained a regard for the Jewish holy days. We know how tenacious Christians have been to this day, of ancient festivals, which derive their origin, some of them from Judaism, some of them from heathenism itself. Although they knew themselves to be by the gospel happily set free from these peculiar institutions of the church of Israel, to which they were obliged, when, as proselytes of righteousness, they were admitted by circumcision to be members of that church; yet they might think themselves still obliged

to these rules, which, not being members of that church, but proselytes of the gate, they had carefully observed ; such as the distinction of meats, and some other things comprehended under these, called the precepts of the sons of Noah. It may also be easily conceived, that they would be likely to retain a regard for the sanctity of these days, on which the annual feast, and the several great festivals were solemnized. This may be the more easily conceived of some Gentile converts at Rome, if we consider that the Galatians, Gentiles as they were for most part, were so prone to desert wholly their valuable liberty, and to submit to the whole law of Moses, as appears in the epistle addressed to them.

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

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

but a public, clear, express, and well vouched divine revelation.

When the gospel was first preached, we do not find in the book of Acts, that the apostles mentioned on any occasion, that the gospel was to supersede the obligation of the Mosaic law, as to the Jews. Therefore, such Jews as received the gospel observed the Mosaic law, and were zealous for it; and we find that the apostles were so far from giving disturbance or offence on that account, that they ordinarily joined with them in that way of worship. Grotius, on Rom. vii. observes, that for a while after the synod of Jerusalem, Paul contented himself with intimating wherever he came, their decree concerning the liberty of the Gentiles. As to declaring the liberty of the Jews from the law of Moses, he says, *Nondum erat tempus*; it was not yet the proper season: and I say that this was the case when the epistle to the Romans was written, and for some time thereafter. Although there is no reason to doubt that the apostles themselves did, by this time, know, (at least Paul probably did know) that the Judaical ordinances were to be abolished, they did not, however, think it yet the fit season for giving out the revelation they had of this to the Jewish converts, nor were they directed yet to publish it; and that for such good reason as their blessed Lord had mentioned to themselves, John xvi. 12. *I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.* They might give instruction concerning this matter to more advanced Christians; and it might be a part of that wisdom which Paul did speak among them that were perfect, (grown up from childhood to be men in Christ); but being under the direction of divine wisdom, they did not think fit to give out openly, that it was the will of God to abolish wholly the Mosaic system of ordinances, ceremonial service and observances, with respect to the Jews themselves, until the gospel-faith should be well established, and take deep root with the Jewish Christians.

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

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

In that epistle to the Hebrews, who of all the Jews had the warmest zeal for the Mosaic institutions, revelation speaks clear and full of the abolition of these. There the inspired writer shows the Mosaic sacrifices to be ineffectual for the purpose of expiating sin. There he proves, from the scriptures of the Old Testament, that God intended to set up a priesthood different from the Aaronic; and to constitute Christ a high priest after the order of Melchizedek. From this he argues in a manner clear and just, chap. vii. 12. *The priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.* So with the abolition of the Levitical priesthood, the whole system of the Levitical and Mosaic institutions fell down, and were no longer of force.

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

of, and the dissolution of that marriage, will make it clear in what sense he means being delivered from the law.

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

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## EXPLICATION AND PARAPHRASE

OF

## ROMANS VII.

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

**EXPLICATION.**—THESE writers who suppose the apostle was, in the 5th and 6th chapters, speaking to the Gentiles separately, and as contradistinguished to the Jewish converts, do at the same time suppose, that, in this seventh chapter, he speaks to the Jews separately, and as contradistinguished to the Gentiles. There were indeed a good many Jewish converts in the church at Rome. But as the apostle doth all along consider the Romans as a church of the Gentiles, and commonly addresses them as such; to say, that in a particular place, without distinctly intimating that view, he turns aside to speak to the Jewish converts separately and apart, would need to be supported by good reasons. Two things they adduce from this verse to that purpose. One, that he calls them *brethren*, for such the Jews were to the apostle by nation and descent. The other, that he supposes them especially to *know the law*; as indeed the Jews valued themselves much upon the law, and their knowledge of it.

But these things do by no means make out the point. The apostle does commonly call Christians of any nation, *brethren*. In the beginning of chap. x. he uses the compellation, *brethren*, to the Gentiles, when he is speaking to them concerning the Jews. No church was more to be denominated Gentile than that of Thessalonica. For of the conversion of the Jews in that place, it is said, Acts xvii. 4. that *SOME of them believed*. The conversion of the Gentiles is related in these words: *Of the devout Greeks* A GREAT MULTITUDE. If we suppose, as we reasonably should, that the devout Greeks, or proselytes, were not idolaters, it would seem that a great number were, after this good beginning, soon converted from heathenism, as it is said, 1 Thess. i. 9. that they *turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God*: so that few comparatively of that church were Jews by nation. Yet in his first epistle to them, which is a short one, compared with this to the Romans, he uses the compellation of *brethren* to them in common, no less than sixteen times.

In his supposing that they knew the law, whether he means the law concerning marriage, of which in the next verses, and which was common to the Jews and other nations, or the law in general; there is nothing in it but what will suit the Roman Gentile Christians, as well as those who were Jews by nation. Such of them as had been proselytes, had been directed to study the Scriptures. Timothy was brought up from childhood in the knowledge of them; and the Ethiopian eunuch returning homeward, and sitting in his chariot, he read in the prophecy of Isaiah. Christians brought from the darkness of heathenism, did doubtless greatly value the rich treasure of light and knowledge they found in the scripture, and studied it carefully. So that, whatever knowledge the Jews had of the law, or of any divine things by revelation, was communicated to the converted Gentiles by the scripture; and there, as in the fountain, they had divine truth, without that mixture of traditional and superstitious trash, by which the Jews pretty commonly explained, darkened, and perverted the Scripture. The Gentile converts had likewise the more easy access to the Scriptures, to which the preachers of the gospel did so commonly remit them, that they were then extant in a language (the Greek) pretty commonly known in all civilized nations. So the two things above mentioned make no reason at all for thinking

that he speaks here to the Jews separately,—a conceit that has greatly perplexed things in explaining this chapter.

As to the purpose the apostle now enters upon, it appears to be this: He had said, chap. vi. 14. *Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.* This insinuates, that whilst persons are under the law, they are under the dominion of sin. There was great need to explain this. The law is the rule of holiness, and strictly requires it. Sin is the transgression of the law, and is prohibited by every precept of it, under a heavy sanction. Whereas, on the other hand, grace aboundeth in the pardoning of sin. Now, to say that sin hath dominion over men, by occasion of being under the law, that thus prohibits it, and denounces wrath and judgment for it; and that men become free from the dominion of sin, by being under grace that pardons it, hath, at first sight, great appearance of paradox, or mystery. It is indeed the mystery of the gospel, in what concerns sanctification; which the apostle saw it of great consequence to explain; as he doth in the following context. In the first thirteen verses, he carefully vindicates the law from being in any sort blameable for the sinfulness, or actual sins of men. He at the same time shows, that all the light and authority of the law is so far from subduing sin in men, that it doth, as thereby awakened and irritated, the more exert itself, and show its extreme wickedness.

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

The only thing besides that I have occasion to observe in this verse is, that the last clause, *as long as he liveth*, is so expressed in the Greek, that it may be connected with *the law*, thus; *as long as it* (the law) *liveth*, or is in force; or with *man* thus; *as long as he* (the man) *liveth*. Without determining precisely in favour of the one way preferably to the other, there seems to be occasion rather to observe a special skill in the apostle's forming his expression in this part, so as that the last clause may be connected at once with both the antecedents, thus: *The law hath dominion over a man, as long as liveth* the law, (which hath here the place of the husband,) or the person that hath the place

of the wife in relation to that husband. To take the expression thus, suits the nature of the subject; as marriage is dissolved by the death of either party; and though in setting forth the similitude in the two following verses, he mentions only the dissolution of the marriage by the death of the husband, (here representing the law) yet in the 4th verse he asserts the deliverance of Christians (meant by the wife in the similitude) from the law by their being dead to it.

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

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

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

PARAPHRASE.—1. I have said (chap. vi. 14.) that *sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace.* I come now to explain the important subject to you: and I begin to lead you into the understanding of my meaning and doctrine, somewhat in the allegorical way, and by a similitude taken from a matter of which you cannot be ignorant. For I presume that all of you, my dear brethren, and fellow Christians, being believers, members of the church of God, and having his word for the rule of your faith, and the subject of your study and meditation; that, I say, you know the law, and this principle concerning it, that the law hath dominion over a man, such as a husband hath over his wife, (*εφ' οσον ζησιν*) for so long time as liveth either the law, or the person who hath been under the law, and no longer; for the death of either party dissolves the marriage covenant and relation, and the obligations arising therefrom.

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

riage-law and covenant, by which she was bound to her husband.

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

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

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

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

bearing witness, and their thoughts accusing or excusing, according to the degree of light they had. In what they thought their duty, they could have satisfaction, and an agreeable self-approbation. By doing ill, the peace of their mind was disturbed; their consciences accused them, and they were self-condemned. As sin abounded in them, there was a secret misgiving and fear. They made a shift to make life as agreeable as they could by the amusement of speculation, or by exercise and employment, or by temporary earthly enjoyments; in which pretty commonly they went to a length, in various sorts of self-indulgence, according to their abilities and opportunities, that was extremely criminal. By such means they often smothered and overcame apprehensions, against which they knew not the true comfort, or proper remedy.

But it appears that in the heathens, this habitual latent fear, that ever attends a state of condemnation, was easily awakened, so as to rise to a high degree, and to be the cause of much superstition, and of some horrible methods for appeasing the wrath of heaven, and averting judgments.

The church of God anciently had a much more clear and extensive knowledge of the law, and of judgment for transgression, and that by the solemn promulgation of it at Sinai; and afterwards by the scripture, which contained the explanation and enforcement of it from time to time by the prophets. Though the apostle doth not mean here to restrict his doctrine and argument to any law that was peculiar to the Jews, yet in speaking of the law, he seems to have in his eye that clearer light of the law by revelation, which the Jews enjoyed; as we have cause to think from his mentioning a commandment expressly set forth in the decalogue, in which the sum of the law was given them, *Thou shalt not covet.*

In the scriptures of the Old Testament, we find men, on divers occasions, expressing the conviction of sin, and fearful impression of judgment, which they conceived by the law in their consciences. In the first time of the gospel, it was the impression and authority of the law in their consciences, roused and awakened by the sermon of the apostle Peter, Acts ii., that caused his numerous hearers, pricked in their heart, to cry out to him, and to the other apostles, ver. 37. *Men and brethren, what shall we do?* Though the jailor at Philippi was a heathen, and so a stranger to that light of the law that shined in the church, yet it was the convic-

tion of sin, and impression of judgment, that was by the law in his conscience, suddenly and powerfully awakened, that made him cry out to Paul and Silas, Acts xvi. 30. *What must I do to be saved?* And the law hath still the same effect to produce in souls that have been at ease in their sins, to awaken them to a serious concern about their salvation. All men are,—every man singly is, as to his real spiritual state, either under the law, and under the curse and wrath that it denounces for sin; or, by being in Christ, united to him truly by faith, under grace, in actual grace and favour with God. They are these who are not thus under grace, but under the curse, having the wrath of God abiding on them, that are under the law in the sense of the apostle here; as we shall see in considering the several verses of this context.

As I have given my view of what the apostle means here by the law, and by being under the law, I desire the reader to observe, as we go along, if there is any thing in this context that doth not suit this view; there certainly is not. Some learned men, who, from attachment to their particular system, are averse from this view, and endeavour to turn things another way, to the ceremonial law and dispensation, or to something or other peculiar to the Jews, do an ill-office to Christians, and labour to shut up from them a source of much useful instruction. Certainly, several things are here said of the law, and of being under it, that cannot be applied to any thing peculiar to the Jews, or to the Old-Testament dispensation, without much absurdity. The evidence to this purpose will come in our way, as we go along.

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

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

But it is the explication of the remaining points that are proposed to be the subject of inquiry on this verse, that will fully explain the meaning of being *dead to the law*; and that

will, at the same time, show a special reason why the apostle expresses, being made free from the law, and from its dominion as a husband, by being *dead* to it. Without anticipating things out of their more proper place; let us now be satisfied with the general view of the matter that hath been given, and proceed to the next point.

3. *How is to be understood being married to the law, and being married to Christ.*—The special thing which Dr W. supposes to be in view under the metaphor of *marriage*, is, the *subjection* of the wife to her husband, and so the subjection of persons to the law, who were under it and married to it. The Mosaic law he means, for he was far from thinking that persons are disobliged from subjection to the precepts of the moral law. His paraphrase runs thus: ‘ver. 2. *The woman which hath an husband, is bound by the law to be SUBJECT to her husband—But if the husband be dead, she is then free from the law of SUBJECTION to her husband.*—And ver. 3.—*If her husband be dead, she is free from that law, which bound her to be in SUBJECTION, and yield conjugal affection to her husband only.*—And ver. 6. *that being dead wherein we were held in SUBJECTION, as the wife is to her living husband.*’ Here it appears, that the Doctor understood, as indeed several others have done, the apostle’s scope and meaning to be, to show the freedom even of Jews and Jewish converts from the Mosaic ritual and ceremonial law; and from the obligation or subjection thereto. This notion has been sufficiently disproved in the introduction to this chapter.

In order to reach the apostle’s meaning, it is fit to consider the special things that do naturally arise from the marriage covenant and relation between a woman and her husband.

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

ject and design in this place, it comes to this: That persons married to the law have had dependence on that husband for support and protection, and his providing for their welfare; and this as connected with subjection to the rule of that husband, and obedience to his commands.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The sense of the expression is now pretty clear ; and, as the Lord said to our first mother, *Thy desire shall be to thy husband*, so, according to the apostle's similitude and style, if sinners are married to the law, the consequence is, their desire is to that husband ; they confide in and depend on that husband (the law) for protecting them, for securing their standing before God, for providing and insuring happiness to them, in consequence of their obedience to the commandments of that husband. But, alas ! this wife hath broken her covenant with her husband ; she hath gone astray from him, and preferred the interest and gratification of others, to his commands, honour, and pleasure ; she hath disregarded his commands, and dealt most undutifully with him. Whatever imaginary hopes she may still entertain of good from him, being insensible of her own ill behaviour, she hath indeed nothing to expect from him but just rigour and wrath. This, viz. that the sinner cannot attain justification, or any of its comfortable consequences, by the law, hath been the apostle's subject in the first four or five chapters of this epistle. But though the explaining the apostle's similitude of marriage led us to say so much of the matter, and that by the way we found occasion to offer light concerning some texts of scripture, yet, if we consider somewhat closely, we may be soon satisfied, that that is not the particular matter in his view in the present context, chap. vii. 1. 13 ; and that it is another consequence of the marriage covenant and relation that he hath in his eye.

In the next place, then, the wife expects to be fruitful by means of her husband. That this is the particular point now in the apostle's view is evident. During the former marriage with the law, the fruit was, as ver. 5. to *bring forth FRUIT unto death*. But, as in this 4th verse, the consequence of the dissolution of the marriage with the law, and of being

married to Christ is, to *bring forth* FRUIT unto God; and being delivered from the law, the Christian is enabled to serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. This evidently suits what is generally observed and acknowledged to be the scope and design of this context, viz. to explain what the apostle had said, chap. vi. 14. where in enforcing the exhortation to holiness, he suggests this encouragement, *Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace;* which clearly implies, that whilst under the law, and married to it, sin having dominion over them, they could not bring forth fruit unto God.

These things have no special respect to the peculiar institutions of the Mosaic law. The case plainly is, that men in all times are concerned with the law of God, particularly the moral law; which includes under its authority, and in the comprehensive meaning of its precept, all positive divine institutions, whether before the fall or after it, whether under the Old or the New Testament dispensation. The marriage with the law is dissolved but in one way here mentioned. Every one is married with the law, and is under the dismal consequence of being so, as matters stand with sinners, until they be delivered from the law in the way here suggested.

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

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

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

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

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

4. *How the marriage with the law is dissolved; and by what means.*—The apostle, in setting forth the similitude, by

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

The law itself contributes its part to this event. So the apostle says, Gal. ii. 19. *I through the law am dead to the law.* The law, the first husband, is indeed dead itself, as to the power of effecting the design of marriage. Never was any more dead than the law is, as to the power of giving justification, or fruitfulness in holiness, to sinners. Yet it lives in the fearful sanction of death and the curse to sinners : and they must all have died by its hands, in rigorous and just revenge of their undutifulness and disobedience, if a way had not been found for their relief. A sinner, whose ear hath been opened to the law, and his conscience and heart awakened by it, finds its demands, as to a justifying righteousness wholly beyond his reach ; and that there can be nothing to him from it, but wrath and destruction, as he is a transgressor. If it requires fruitfulness in holiness, it is as a hard task-master, and doth not afford the means and assistance necessary for the work. The sinner, receiving a just view of this with deep impression, can no longer have his desire to that husband, or have his dependence on him, for any good to himself. Despairing of himself, and of the law, he must look another way for relief.

God himself, of his manifold wisdom, uncontrollable sovereignty, and rich grace, hath provided a way of relief. Matters having failed between mankind and this first husband he had assigned them, he hath provided a second husband for them, even Christ. So in our text, ver. 4. *Ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ ;* that is, by Christ crucified. By this most properly and effectually are persons made dead to the law. The law itself hath its subserviency, as we have seen, in separating sinners from that its first husband. But by the body of Christ crucified is the happy event truly brought about. If the first husband had a claim of justice against them for their undutiful behaviour, the crucifixion of the body of Christ, whereby sin hath been expiated, and which is the consummation of that righteousness by which he hath fulfilled the law, hath answered the claim of the law. So the resentment of that first husband cannot reach them. They are, as by death, delivered from it ; as a bond servant is by death delivered

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

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

Now as to all this blessed fruit of Christ's death and resurrection, we are not to think that it did not at all take place until he was actually crucified, died, and rose again; or until the subsequent more full display of gospel-light. These things are indeed now set forth by the gospel in a much more clear light, and are better understood than under the former more dark dispensation. The grounds of our confidence and our liberty are now fully exhibited to us; and since Christ ascended up on high, and hath received gifts for men, the fruits of his death and resurrection are much more abundant and plentiful to the church. But we are not to connect the disadvantages of being *under the law*, here mentioned, with the legal pedagogy of the Old Testament; or to suppose that the advantages by Christ, here set forth under the figure of being *married* with him, do solely belong

to the gospel times and dispensation, and are connected with the abrogation of the Mosaic law. They who understand the apostle's scope and meaning in that way, do, in explaining the matters contained in this context, bring themselves into absurdity and embarrassment, out of which there is no disentangling them on their general view of the apostle's argument. This may be somewhat understood by what hath been said, and will be more and more clear as we proceed in the consideration of this context. It is certain, that as Christ is called *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*, his expiatory sufferings and death have had effect from the beginning of the world, for remission of sins to all true believers. In like manner, his death hath had effect for the sanctifying of his people by his Spirit, from the beginning. As it was the Spirit of Christ who spoke by all the ancient prophets, 1 Pet. i. 11., so did his Spirit operate powerfully in the hearts of his people, to make them fruitful in holiness. We may then confidently conclude, that the apostle doth here, by being married to the law, by the dissolution of that marriage, and by being married to Christ, set forth, as to the substance of things, and as to what is most essential, the different conditions of men, in the state of nature, and in the state of grace; both under the legal pedagogy of the Old, and under the gospel-dispensation of the New Testament.

The last thing in this verse that I proposed to explain is,

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

Though the explication of this verse hath come out to such

length, yet it is not fit to leave it without taking notice of the interpretation given by Mr John Alexander, in his posthumous commentary on this context, lately published. He will have it, that sin is meant here as the husband. In the account he gives of the sense of these three verses, he says, in a sort of paraphrase of ver. 4. ' You have been formerly ' under engagements to sin, to whom the law hath bound ' you as to the husband of your choice, in a connexion ' which nothing but the death of one of the parties could ' dissolve.' A few lines thereafter he says: ' When they ' (men) forsake their sins, and turn to God, they become ' dead to the law.' And in the next sentence,—' There are ' two ways (saith he) by which a sinner becomes dead to ' the law; either by breaking off his sins, or by suffering ' the punishment due to them.' But our text doth not ascribe one's being dead to the law to his breaking off his sins, but to the *body of Christ*. That one should become dead to the law by undergoing the punishment it prescribes, is not easily understood, except he meant that that punishment is annihilation; which, indeed, by putting an end to the sinner's existence, would withdraw him from the power and dominion of the law. This, however, is one way of escaping punishment, rather than undergoing it. But if a sinner exists under punishment, he is certainly not dead to the law, or *delivered from it*, as is the expression, ver. 6. but the dominion and power of the law is exerted upon him, so long as he is under punishment.

Leaving this, let us look again to this fourth and the two preceding verses. There, after setting forth the similitude of marriage, ver. 2, 3. he adds, ver. 4. *Ye are become dead to the law—that ye should be married to another*. It is death that dissolves the first marriage, and leaves one at liberty to make a second marriage. The believer is dead to the law, in order to be married to another. Can any one doubt that the first husband here is the law?

Mr Alexander's thought had been much more congruous and just, if he had considered sin as the adulterer, and the wife as incurring the guilt and infamy of an adulteress, by complying with him, to the dishonour and injury of the husband to whom God had joined her. But how came these parties to be joined and bound together, sin and the sinner? We have that in the author's paraphrase above cited: ' To ' whom (*viz.* sin) the law hath bound you, as to the hus- ' band of your choice.' This, truly, is telling an odd tale of

the law. The dominion which sin hath in a sinner we know that the law cannot break or subdue, or set him free from it. That is what the apostle asserts and proves in this context. But the sinner having made such a vile choice, as of sin for a husband, that the law should bind them together, so that nothing but death should part them,—that till then the wife (the sinner) should be obliged to love, honour, and obey this husband (sin), as all these are due from a wife to her husband, and that in opposition to the authority, right, and holiness of the law itself,—is a very strange way of thinking and interpreting.

What, then, is the death that dissolves this marriage with sin? This he gives in these words of the paraphrase before mentioned: ‘For which reason you have been crucified with Christ, that the body of sin, which was the former husband, being destroyed, you might be freed from those fatal engagements, and be joined to him who is risen from the dead.’ So, according to him, it is the death of the husband (that is, of sin) that dissolves this first marriage. But what occasion, then, did the apostle’s subject, or argument, give him to mention those who held the place of the wife, being made dead to the *law*, in order to be married to another? I do not see that he does, or can give, an account of this. There is enough of this interpretation, of which one might think there needed no other confutation than to represent it. As to some errors in doctrinal sentiment, that are more than hinted in this writer’s comment on this verse, this is not a proper place to consider them.

PARAPHRASE.—4. So accordingly it hath happened to you, my brethren, as to your condition and state. You have, indeed, been married to the law by the first covenant, according to which, that husband, in consequence of your dutiful obedience to his will, was to protect you, and to secure your standing before God, and to make you fruitful in all holiness, and happy for ever. At the same time, from the sentiments that were naturally in your minds, and the principles that naturally prevailed in your hearts, your desire was to that husband, your dependence was on him for justification and protection, and for fruitfulness; and this, when, for your undutifulness and disobedience to him, you had the most fearful things to expect from him, when, through the weakness yourselves had incurred, ye were become incapable of fruitfulness by his instructions or authority. But now there is a happy change in your condition. You are made

free from that marriage covenant, and from your relation to the law as a husband. The law itself (Gal. ii. 19.) hath had its subservience in bringing this about on your part, by convincing you of the sad things you had to expect from it, and that as a husband it could not help your wretched state; so that you was determined to betake you to the better hope which the gospel set before you, even Christ crucified; and by the crucifixion of the body of Christ it is, that the demands of the law being satisfied, he hath acquired you to himself. So that, by your fellowship with him in his death, having died with him, you became dead to the law, so far as concerns marriage therewith, and its consequences; and you having risen together with Christ, are married to him, and through faith your desire is towards him, your dependence is on him, as your most loving husband,—who, by his resurrection from the dead, and its glorious consequences, is capable, as to secure your favourable standing before God, so to dispose and enable you to bring forth fruit unto holiness and righteousness in the service of God, and to his glory, and to make you eternally happy with himself. These ends and purposes, once you became sinners, could not be attained by your marriage with the law.

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

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

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

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

1. The epithet and character of *carnal* or *fleshly* is given to the Mosaic ordinances or institutions. The epistle to the Hebrews calls the ceremonial law, *the law of a carnal commandment*, Heb. vii. 16.; and by *purifying of the flesh*, or a *fleshly purifying*, appears to mean an external ceremonial

purification, Heb. ix. 13. In these ordinances there was much external labour, and great variety of external observances; and the Levitical institutions and worship had in them great external ceremony, stateliness, and pomp, which suits the disposition of the flesh, and hath been ever, and continues to be, most agreeable to men that are carnal, whose hearts are not sufficiently well disposed for spiritual worship. Hence, it hath happened, that a prevailing carnal disposition, which increased as men's relish of spiritual worship decreased, hath introduced into the Christian church and worship much external ceremony, pageantry, and pomp. Many, in latter times, have complained, that the reformed churches have made divine worship too naked, simple, and unadorned. The great men of the world seem to think as if there ought to be that stateliness in the house of God that becomes their own courts and attendance; and carnal men are commonly of the same disposition and way of thinking. But as we think it most right and safe that the Lord should not have occasion to say of any thing in our worship, *It is what I commanded not, neither came it into my mind*, Jer. vii. 31.; so we reckon, that external plainness and simplicity is, in its own nature, most suited to the worship of God, who is a Spirit, and desires to be worshipped in spirit and in truth; and most suited to the more spiritual gospel dispensation.

It is agreeable to the notion which scripture gives us, to call the Old Testament state of the church, its state of childhood, or nonage; and the Lord condescended to the weakness of his church in that its childhood, in appointing ordinances suited to it. As in the case of the Corinthians, the apostle doth, to the notion of their being *babes*, join that of being *carnal*, so to the childhood of the church the Lord accommodated carnal ordinances. But then there is a great difference between being, in some sort and degree, *carnal*, and being in the *flesh*, which is the expression here, ver. 5. The former is said of the Corinthians who were in Christ, and saints, 1 Cor. iii. 1. 3. and who could not be said to be in the flesh. They indeed are said to be *carnal*, for the carnal lusts, passions, and divisions that prevailed among them. But though the Old Testament ordinances are called *carnal*, I do not see that even *carnal* or *fleshly* is given as the character of the Old Testament church, or of men as members of it. But to be *in the flesh*, can by no means be understood as their character; as will appear by explaining that expression hereafter.

Yet some learned men, who understood the apostle as reasoning here concerning the Mosaic law, and the abolition of it, endeavour to bring about this of being *in the flesh*, to be the character and state of the Old Testament church and its members; and for this do found, in some sort, on the character of *carnal* given to the Mosaic ordinances. Dr Whitby attempts this; but somewhat awkwardly. His paraphrase gives the fifth verse thus: 'For when we were in the flesh, (*i.e.* when we lived under the carnal ordinances, without the assistance of the Spirit,) the lustings of sin,' &c. But by what warrant, or for what reason, would he connect these things, to be under the Old Testament ordinances, and to be without the assistance of the Spirit? The Doctor himself is not satisfied with this; and he corrects it, for a good reason mentioned in his note. 'I judge, saith he, that *when we were in the flesh* here doth not only signify to be under the carnal ordinances of the law, for so were all the pious Israelites, from Moses to the gospel times.'—If, say I, true Israelites, Israelites indeed, were pious, free from the dominion of sin, and holy men, as there were many such under the Mosaic ordinances, carnal as these ordinances were, then surely the abolition of these ordinances and of the Mosaic law, was not necessary, in order to free men from the dominion of sin, and of carnal lusts.

The Doctor goes on: 'But more especially relates to them who, living under these ordinances, were themselves carnal, and without any assistance of the Holy Spirit—And if of such only we understand the apostle's following discourse in this chapter, the sense will be clear.' But in that way the sense will be far from being clear; yea, the apostle's argument will be quite perplexed and unintelligible. The Doctor, and several other learned men, make the design of the apostle's argument to be the abolition of the Mosaic ordinances, making the church free from the obligation of that law; and to give reasons for it. But what subserviency will this ver. 5. have, according to this interpretation, to that scope and purpose? As there were many pious Israelites, holy men, having the assistance of the Spirit, so there were many who were carnal themselves, and had not the assistance of the Spirit. But what doth this say for the abolition of the Mosaic ordinances, more than it would for the abolition of gospel-ordinances, that there are now under these many who are carnal themselves, and have no prevailing assistance of the Holy Spirit?

Dr Doddridge's paraphrase gives it thus : ' *When we were in the flesh*, that is, under the comparatively carnal dispensation of Moses, a variety of sinful passions,' &c. If the character of *comparatively carnal*, should be allowed to be given to the Mosaic dispensation, yet that makes no good reason for holding, that men for being under it were *IN the flesh*, or that these mean the same thing, to be *in the flesh*, and to be under the *comparatively carnal* Mosaic dispensation ; as will fully appear in explaining a little hereafter what it is to be *in the flesh*. The worthy writer certainly did not reach the true meaning of this place.

2. The *flesh* is sometimes mentioned with respect to men's false confidences before God, and the grounds thereof. So of the true circumcision it is said, Phil. iii. 3. that they *have no confidence in the flesh*. Dr Whitby paraphrases it, ' *no confidence in the circumcision of the flesh.*' I see no reason he could have for restricting the matter to *circumcision* ; since, a little below, the apostle puts a great deal more in the grounds of this carnal confidence, particularly his *zeal* ; and that *touching the righteousness which is in the law*, he was *blameless*. As he doth, ver. 3. to *confidence in the flesh*, oppose *rejoicing in Christ Jesus*, so, ver. 9. he represents, as the true ground of a sinner's confidence before God, that *righteousness which is by the faith of Christ*. So, upon the whole, we may justly reckon, that by *carnal confidence*, he means every thing different from this righteousness by the faith of Christ, upon which carnal self-deceiving hearts may found their confidence, such as external privileges and advantages, and men's own righteousness, which tends to self-exaltation, and so is agreeable to the temper and disposition of carnal hearts. As to the evangelical grounds of confidence, these are the things of the Spirit ; and so it is the illumination and influence of the Spirit that prevail with our hearts, and effectually direct us to found upon them ; according to Gal. v. 5., *We, through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith*. Every confidence different from this is what natural principles, and the self-exalting disposition of the heart, lead men to. As the flesh draws a quite different and opposite way from the Spirit, in what concerns purity and holiness, so it doth also in what concerns men's confidence, and the grounds thereof.

How far *fleshly*, or *carnal confidence*, is concerned in the subject of our context, we may see hereafter. But certainly it is not in view in this fifth verse, where being *in the flesh*

is mentioned in view to the *motions of sin*, and *bringing forth fruit unto death*.

3. Most commonly the *flesh* (used in a moral sense) signifies the corruption of nature, the evil principle of sin in men; or human nature as corrupted by sin. The word *flesh* may have been transferred to this use and meaning, from a view to the body, and the excitement it gives to various evil affections and lusts, which are accomplished and gratified by the body. It was in this part that the moral depravation of nature was most obvious, striking, and sensible; which might have occasioned the corruption of nature in general to be called *the flesh*. But it would make odd work in language and interpretation, to confine the meanings of words to what they would import by their derivation and original meaning. The sense of words is to be determined by the use of speech, and the meaning of scripture-words is to be determined by the scripture-use especially.

If we observe the scripture-use, we shall find the *flesh*, and the *lust of the flesh* in a more restricted sense. So 1 John ii. 16., the *lust of the flesh* means that sort of lust, in particular, which receives its excitement from the body, is accomplished by, and brings special defilement and dishonour on, the body. But the ill moral meaning of the *flesh* is not to be restricted to this. In 2 Cor. vii. 1. if there are *filthinesses of the flesh*, there are also *filthinesses of the spirit*; and the Lord doth, John viii. 44. mention to the Jews the *lusts of their father the devil*. But there is in scripture mention of the *flesh* in so large a sense, as to comprehend filthinesses of the flesh and of the spirit; yea, all sinful lusts, and corrupt unholy affections whatsoever. In this large sense of the word is *flesh* mentioned, Gal. v. 19, 20, 21., where we have a numerous list of these called *works of the flesh*, some of which, it is plain, have place in creatures that have no body, no connexion with flesh in their personal constitution.

But what is it to be *in the flesh*? We have several similar expressions in our own language. A man is said to be *in good humour*, when good humour is prevalent in him; to be *in wrath*, or *in anger*, when wrath or anger is prevalent in him; to be *in drink*, when the influence and effect of drink is prevalent. This would lead us to think, that to be *in the flesh*, signifies to be under the prevalent influence and power of that corrupt principle or depravation, which, we have seen, the scripture means by the *flesh*.

The apostle Paul directs us, in a very clear manner, to

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

Here it is evident, that being *in the Spirit* doth not signify merely having a temper and disposition conformed to Christ, and suitable to the spirituality of the gospel. It imports to have the Spirit of Christ,—the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelling in a man, as ver. 10. even that same Spirit by whom (as in that same ver. 10.) God shall quicken the mortal bodies at the resurrection; which doth not dwell in any that are under the curse of the law, or in any but those he hath brought unto union with Christ, who are born of the Spirit, and so are renewed in the habitual and prevailing temper and disposition of their hearts. It is clear, in the apostle's words, that it is by that Spirit, and by his operation and influence in men, that they come out of their carnal state, and from being in the flesh. Being *in the Spirit*, and *having the Spirit of Christ*, upon the one hand, and being *in the flesh*, destitute of the Spirit on the other, are the characters and states of men that are contradistinguished. As the Spirit cometh not by the law, they that are under the law, being without the Spirit, must be in the flesh; and they who, having the Spirit, are led by him, (Gal. v. 18.) are not under the law, as is there said. By being *in the flesh*, is certainly meant a character and state commensurate to being *under the law*. This evidently suits the apostle's scope, and his view of explaining these words, chap. vi. 14. *Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law*. But what concerns the Mosaic ritual and ceremonial law hath in this, none of the learned, who suppose it to be here meant, have been able to explain to the satisfaction of any, who are not disposed to take things from them implicitly.

Let us now look to Mr Locke's interpretation of being *in the flesh*. His paraphrase gives it thus: 'When we were

‘ after so fleshly a manner under the law, as not to comprehend the spiritual meaning of it—our sinful lusts,’ &c. But the apostle is speaking in general of being under the law, and married to it; not of being under it in a particular *fleshly* manner. Indeed, in the latter times of the Old Testament, the Jews did become generally ignorant of the spiritual meaning of the Mosaic law. But the true seed of Abraham, the truly faithful, in all times of the Old Testament, were not so. Yea, in that very evil time of the Jewish church, when the Son of God came in the flesh, there were such as Zacharias, Simeon, Anna, and many others, who waited earnestly for the consolation of Israel, Luke ii. 25. and those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem, ver. 38. who certainly understood much of the spiritual meaning of the Mosaic law and institutions. It appears, then, that being under the Mosaic law did not of itself disable men to understand the spiritual meaning of it. So there is nothing here, according to this interpretation, that can be connected with the general purpose, as this writer understands it, of the necessary abolition of the Mosaic law.

The same writer says in his note: ‘ The understanding and observance of the law in a bare literal sense, without looking any farther for a more spiritual intention in it, St Paul calls being *in the flesh*.’ But it has been here proven, that that is not Paul’s meaning. In the latter part of that same paragraph, he doth, with respect to the ritual law, refer to Heb. ix. 9, 10. and adds, ‘ Which whilst they lived in the observance of, they were *in the flesh*. That part of the Mosaic law was wholly about fleshly things, Col. ii. 14 —23. was sealed in the flesh, and proposed no other than temporal fleshly rewards.’ But if that part of the Mosaic law employed men outwardly about fleshly things, were they not, at the same time, *shadows of good things to come*? Heb. x. 1. Did not the Mosaic sacrificial service assure them of a future real expiation of sin,—yea, foreshadow heavenly and eternal blessedness? The enlightened holy persons, who understood in some good degree the spiritual meaning and intention of the law, (as there were such in every part of the Mosaic period) were they indeed *in the flesh*, according to the meaning of the context under consideration? This learned writer makes great show of his method of studying, and the rules he observed in interpreting the parts of Scripture he wrote upon; but we may observe, on divers occasions, that these rules were better observed by former writers,

whom he does not mean to advance in the esteem of his readers. If he meant to interpret Paul by Paul himself, (which is one principal rule he frequently mentions) he had not far to go, in this same discourse of his, to find the apostle (chap. viii. 5, 8, 9.) interpreting very clearly what he meant by that expression, being *in the flesh*, as hath been shown here above.

As these things are so clear, I cannot but wonder that Dr Hammond should thus paraphrase this fifth verse: 'This, (viz. to bring forth fruit unto God, ver. 4.) while we lived under the pedagogy of the law, was not done by us—For while we were under these carnal ordinances, though all sinful practices were forbidden by that law—yet our sinful desires and affections—that law had not power to subdue.'

Some men write, as if being under the *pedagogy* of the law, and being *under the law* in the sense of our context, (in that sense in which they who are under the law are under the dominion of sin, chap. vi. 14.) were the same thing, which is very wrong. The true church of God, the heir, (Gal. iv. 1, 3.) whilst a child, was under that dispensation and pedagogy. But we must not say, they were *in the flesh*, in the sense the apostle here evidently means, and wholly destitute of the *Spirit*; or that there were so many holy men in these times, without the sanctifying grace of the *Spirit*. Some men do not allow the *Spirit* his proper work, in sanctifying men under the New Testament dispensation. It would sometimes seem as if they thought, that under the Old Testament, men pleased God, and became good men, without the *Spirit* altogether. This needs be the less wondered at, that they suppose that heathens may please God with their virtue, without any revelation of the law or gospel, or of the promise of the *Spirit*. But the scripture gives another view of things. If under the gospel dispensation men are destitute of the *Spirit*, as very many appear to be, they are in the flesh; and men under the Mosaic pedagogy, who proved by their disposition and practice that they had the *Spirit* of God dwelling in them, they were not in the flesh, nor under the law, as *law* is meant in this context; but, as to the real state of their souls, under grace, and in favour with God. Though still, as hath been said formerly, allowance is to be made of greater abundance of the *Spirit*, and of spiritual blessings, in the period that hath succeeded the actual propitiation by the blood of the cross, and the ac-

tual resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ. What a strange interpretation, then, is this of Dr Hammond! Did not believers anciently, the true seed of faithful Abraham, did not the heir, though a child, yet being truly a child and heir, bring forth fruit unto God? If the law did not subdue sinful desires and affections then, neither is it the law (to the authority and obligation of which men are still subject) that doth now subdue and mortify these desires and affections.

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

The expression that falls next to be considered is, *the motions of sins which are by the law*. The Greek word *παθηματα*, signifies more precisely *passions*, or *affections*, as the English margin gives it; and the *affections of sins*, a Hebraism, is the same as, sinful affections, or lustings. These are naturally in men, but they are considered here as put in motion, or excited; and this by occasion of the law. Mr L.'s paraphrase hath it, 'That remained in us under 'the law;' and he brings some instances in which *διὰ* is so used. Our rendering *BY the law*, which is according to the most common meaning of that preposition, he says in his note, 'is a very literal translation of the words; but leads 'the reader quite away from the apostle's sense, and is fain 'to be supported by interpreters that so understand it, by 'saying, that the law excited men to sin by forbidding it. 'A strange imputation on the law of God.' But this is said without any good reason.

It is just to say, that the precept, prohibition, and fearful threatening of the law, do, instead of subduing sinful affections in an unrenewed heart, but irritate them, and occasion their excitement and more violent motion. Nor is this a strange imputation on the law of God, which is not the proper cause of these motions. These are to be ascribed to the corruption of men's hearts, which the apostle insinuates, when he ascribes these sinful motions by the law to men in the flesh. The true state of the case between the flesh, or the evil principle of sin, and the law, is, that the flesh or sin worketh death in a man by that which is good, as is represented here, ver. 13. The matter has been often illustrated

by the similitude of the sun, by whose light and heat roses and flowers display their fine colours, and emit their fragrant smell; whereas by its heat, the dung-hill emits its unsavoury steams and ill smell. These various and opposite effects are from the different objects, and their different natures. So the law, which to a sanctified heart is a mean of holy practice, doth, in those who are in the flesh, occasion the more vehement motions of sinful affections and lustings, not from any proper casualty of the law, but from the energy of the sinful principles that are in men's hearts and nature. There was great wrath and sinful passion in Jeroboam, by the reproof of the prophet, 1 Kings xiii. 4. This was not to be imputed to the prophet, but to Jeroboam, a man in the flesh. In David, a man of very different character, Nathan's very sharp reproof had no such effect. If the apostle meant here, ver. 5. only motions of sins *under* the law, this would give him no occasion to vindicate the law, as he does, ver. 7. *Is the law sin? God forbid.* Dr W., in answering Mr L. concerning this point in his note, says, 'Is this any more an imputation upon the law of God, than it is an imputation on his providence, that it provides the corn and wine, which carnal men abuse to drunkenness and excess?'

Mr John Alexander's late commentary before mentioned, says on this verse, 'To ascribe the motions of sin directly to the law of God as their origin, is not more impious than it is nonsensical.' (It is not to the law, but to the flesh, that interpreters ascribe sinful motions as to their origin.) He goes on: 'And to account for this afterwards by the proneness there is in man to break through the restraint of a law, merely because it is a law, and something commanded, is, to say the least, highly ridiculous.' (Not *merely* because it is a law, but because it commands what the corrupt heart is averse to, and prohibits what the corrupt heart loves.) In his next paragraph he says, 'To ascribe the existence of sin to the law of God inciting and irritating it, must be quite out of the question—I do not say with an inspired writer, but with any writer of common sense.' But none ascribe the *existence* of sin to any influence of the law of God. It exists as an evil principle in the corrupt nature of man, and exerts itself in sinful affections and lustings by occasion of the command, prohibition, and threatening of the law. I do not think there needs any more answer to this writer than hath been already suggested. The young man's heat put forth strong words, (impious, nonsensical, highly

ridiculous, and contrary to common sense.) But when he was so warm for the honour of the law, would he not have been in great commotion if he had heard a man say, even of the gospel itself, that to some (2 Cor. ii. 16.) it was the *savour of death unto death?*

For the last clause of this verse,—*did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death*, Dr Doddridge's paraphrase hath thus—'were active in our members to produce visible sinful actions.' So indeed they do, very commonly, in men who are in the flesh. Yet I do not see that the Greek words suggest any thing about visible external actions. One sense, and indeed the primary sense, of the verb *ενεργειν*, is, *intus efficere*, to effect inwardly. According to this one sense given by Erasmus and Vatablus (in Poole's Synopsis) is *secreto agebant; nam occulta vis* (so is added there,) *dicitur, ενεργειν, velut in semine, et vis mentis in homine*—acted secretly; for a hidden power is meant by the Greek word, such as is in the seeds of things, or in the human mind. The interpretation our Lord gives of the seventh commandment, Matth. v. 28. proves that sinful lusts may be very effectual, bringing forth fruit unto death, when there is no outward or visible action. A particular reason for my taking notice of this here may appear hereafter.

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

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

EXPLICATION.—The expression, ver. 4. was *dead to the law*—here it is, *delivered from the law*. The sense in general is the same. But there is some question about the right reading of the next clause,—*That* or *it* (viz. the law) *being dead wherein we were held*. If we take it not thus, there will be this seeming inconvenience or impropriety,—

that, though in setting forth the similitude he had mentioned—marriage to be dissolved by the death of the husband, without any mention of the death of the wife,—yet there is nothing of the death of the husband (the law) in the application of the similitude to his subject. This seeming impropriety is avoided by our reading, which is supported, as some of the learned relate, by one ancient copy, (that of Vienna) and by the authority of Chrysostom; and thus later writers do commonly take it. There is besides a suitability in the expression to that of ver. 2. which tends to favour our reading. There, setting forth the similitude, he says, *If the husband be dead, she is loosed (κατηργηται) from the law of her husband.* So here, ver. 6. where, according to our reading, there is mention of the death of the law, the expression is (κατηργηθημεν,) *we are loosed or delivered from the law.*

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

*Concerning serving in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.*—The last part of the verse comes now to be considered,—*That we should serve in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.* It is plain the apostle hath in his view the difference in practice of those who were under the law and married to it, and of those who are disengaged from that first marriage, and married to Christ. He had represented, ver. 4. the consequence of being dead to the law, to be, *to bring forth fruit unto God.* Here he so varies the expression as to give the hint of the particular sort and manner of fruitfulness;—it is to *serve God in newness of spirit.* But as to these who are married to the law, shall we say,—they had no religion at all—no design to bring forth fruit unto God, or to serve him? this is not to be thought, yea, were scarce consistent with being married to the law. But they served in the oldness of the letter. When was it, then, that men served in the oldness of the letter? In the general, according to the opposition here stated, it was when they

were not delivered from the law—when they were under the law, and in the flesh—as we have seen these things conjoined. As the flesh hath its impurity and wickedness, it hath its religion too; but this is not to be connected with the Old Testament dispensation, as peculiar to it. If many were carnal in religion under that dispensation, many are likewise now carnally religious under the New Testament dispensation.

It will make matters the more clear respecting this sort of religion, called here, *serving in the oldness of the letter*, that first we understand what it is to *serve in newness of spirit*. It is in general, to serve God sincerely from such principles, dispositions, and views, as the Spirit of God gives to hearts renewed by him, and under his influence. More particularly, it is to serve God with faith and love; with thankfulness; with entire submission and resignation; with supreme purpose to honour and please God; submitting every desire and interest to the chief end of the advancement of his glory; with a sincere purpose and course of uniform, universal, and cheerful obedience, joined with a true hatred and fear of sin. This new way of serving God hath in it spirituality of desire and affection, raised above the earth and earthly views; purity of aim and intention; a most self-abasing humility, and self-denial, that suppresses the carnality of self confidence, with respect to our righteousness or strength; and founds a solid confidence on Christ only, for both righteousness and strength, which is the sort of confidence the Holy Spirit directs to, and which he inspires into all that are taught by him, and under his influence.

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

Opposite to this is, *serving in the oldness of the letter*. Let us now consider what this is. Some have said, that this is serving according to the literal expression of the law, in outward work and service only. But this doth not define

the subject justly. The literal expression of the law reaches farther than to outward work and service. The law says in plain and literal expression, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and thy neighbour as thyself*; and the sincerity of neither is in serving according to the oldness of the letter.

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

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

The word (*γραμμα*,) signifies *letter*, as we render it, but is often put for *writing*; and seems to be so meant here, where the discourse is of the law *written—in stones*. *He hath made us able ministers, not of the writing*; that is, not of the law written in stones. Wolfius on this place (2 Cor. iii. 6.) relates, that some of the learned would have the word we render *letter*, rendered simply *law*. He adduces some instances to this purpose, and gives a particular passage of Isocrates, which is to this sense: That wise rulers should be careful to have the love of justice implanted in the hearts of their people, rather than (*τας στοας επιπλασαι γραμματα*) to have their public galleries filled with letters, or writings; that is, with laws published by writings on their walls. According to this, the apostle's words to the Corinthians, ver. 6. may be thus understood: God hath made us able ministers of the new testament, not of the law, which conveys nothing to the hearts of men, to give it effect, but of the gospel, which is the ministration of the Spirit.

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

The consequence is, as the Spirit cometh not by the law, that serving God in the letter is; such service as the law, by its authority, light, and terror, can procure from one under

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

If there is in any such persons the semblance of good affection and devotion towards God, with a serious design to do well, yet to such we cannot ascribe any thing that cometh not but by the special sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit. Such indeed may sometimes bear amiable appearance and character in the world, and be useful in it. Such doubtless, was that rich virtuous young man in the gospel-history; which relates, that Jesus loved him; yet being put to trial, his insincerity soon appeared. Though Paul asserts of himself before the Jewish council, *I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day*, yet, whilst he was under the law, he or his righteousness were not pleasing to God, nor pleasing to himself, when he came to be better instructed. The unbelieving Jews had a zeal of God, and followed after the law of righteousness; yet their religion was wholly carnal, there was no true holiness in it. Men may have their minds well furnished with sublime sentiments concerning the amiableness of virtue, and with this abound in external works of righteousness, and be in condition to recommend the virtuous course, from the peace and self-approbation men may have in that way; and yet all the time their righteousness be essentially defective, not rising above the oldness of the letter, nor having at the root of it in the heart the necessary and essential principles of true holiness. In the meanest soul, united and truly married to him that rose from the dead, there is (often with great disadvantage otherwise) a sincerity of holiness, as to inward principles and uniform practice, that makes his righteousness to exceed the righteousness of the scribes.

Mr Alexander, in his note on this verse, says, *γρημια*,

‘ which we translate the *letter*, denotes the writing or contract supposed to be made between sin and sinners.’ Well ; marriages are wont to be preceded by contracts. This is fanciful enough ; but to what hath been said on this, nothing needs be added.

At the same time, I cannot but somewhat wonder at Dr W.’s way of expressing himself. He says, (annot. on Rom. vii. 3.) ‘ That Israel was married to the law, or to him that put them in subjection under it, and were his spouse, Jer. iii. 14. and so obliged to serve God in the oldness of the letter.’ I think it very clear, that *servings in the oldness of the letter*, is of very different kind from that service which men in every state and time have been *obliged* to, even after all the allowance that is to be made of a greater abundance of the Spirit under the gospel dispensation. But the learned writer thought it was the Mosaic ceremonial law that the apostle meant in this context ; a notion which hath been shown to be quite destitute of foundation. According to this notion, he seems to have thought, that serving in the old manner of the letter, or law, was serving God in the ceremonial service of the Old Testament. But that service certainly was not incompatible with serving in spirit, according to the degree of these times. Whereas here these two ways of service are set forth as opposite and incompatible ; and it is plain, that *servings in newness of spirit* here, ver. 6. is the same with *bringing forth fruit unto God*, ver. 5.

Let us observe how the Doctor doth in his note on this verse explain *servings in the newness of the spirit*. He says, To serve God in the spirit is, 1. To serve him with a freedom from the prevalency of the flesh, by virtue of the Spirit. 2. To serve God, not chiefly with bodily service, and carnal ordinances, but in the spirit of our mind. 3. To serve him by the assistance of the Spirit, so as to live and walk in the Spirit. But did not the Lord require under the Old Testament, that all these three things should be in the service of his people ? and did not holy men indeed so serve him ? I know the Doctor would acknowledge so. According to him, then, persons under the Mosaic law were obliged to serve God with all that he includes in serving in newness of spirit, and were, at the same time, obliged to serve in the oldness of the letter ; which doth by no means consist with the apostle’s way of representing things here.

PARAPHRASE.—6. But we believers in Christ Jesus are now delivered from the law, by which we were held fast, to

be dealt with as to life and death absolutely according to the conformity or nonconformity of our behaviour to its will and command, though it could not enable us to bring forth good fruit, or do acceptable service; and we are so delivered by its being dead to us, (or, our being made free, as by our own death, from our relation to it, and from its consequences); and this in order that we, being married to Christ, might serve God in a new manner, agreeable to the principles and disposition of souls renewed by his Holy Spirit, and under his influence; not according to the old manner of a carnal religion, produced by a fleshly heart, under the mere influence of the light, authority, and terror of the law, which can produce or procure no true holiness or acceptable service.

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

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

These words, *Thou shalt not covet*, are the general expression of the tenth commandment; and the apostle may mean,

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

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

But then it is likely that the apostle meant something more

than to say, that it was the prohibition of the law that showed him this to be sin in its own nature. If he meant no more than that, he might as well have given the instance of some outward work, as, *Thou shalt not steal*; as the sinfulness of any work, outward or inward, consists in its contrariety to the law. But he seems to design not only to say, that by the law he knew what was sin in itself, but that it was the law that showed him sin in *himself* that he had not been sensible of. He had been a Pharisee, and with great zeal and earnest effort serving in the oldness of the letter, as he understood it. His mind being biassed by corrupt teaching and sentiment, he thought himself chargeable with no sin, until the law struck at his heart within him, as subject to its authority and direction no less than the outward man. Then, (as if he had said) alas! how much sin had continued in power, and at rest within me, unreprieved, unresisted, under the cover of external righteousness, and screened with the most full self-approbation; until the law entered, and darted its light into my heart with awful authority, and found there what proved me a wretched sinner, as it says in the sense of every commandment, *Thou shalt not lust*. Until then he thought all his works were good. Now he sees all his works, taking into the account the evil principles, and the concupiscence which, in various forms, was set at the root of all his works, to be evil. Instead of keeping all the commandments from his youth up, he then saw he had truly fulfilled none of them.

Grotius, and after him Dr Hammond, were of opinion, that in this context the apostle doth but personate others, and represent their case as if it had been his own; and in thus thinking, they, and some others since, do proceed on a very imaginary supposition, as if the apostle had used this method to avoid the offence of the Jews, yet adhering zealously to the Mosaic law; though it is indeed, they suppose, the case of these Jews he means. We do not, however, see that the apostle is so very artful, or shy of displeasing the Jews, when he is explaining and defending the truth against them, in matters wherein their salvation and his own fidelity were much concerned. If any Jews were to read the ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters of this epistle, I dare say themselves would not think that he much feared their displeasure.

Possibly there was something more than they express that pinched these learned men. Perhaps they had so good opinion of Paul's religion before he knew Christ, (for he here

speaks of that time,) that they could not think such things as he mentions could be applicable to him, even when he was in that condition and way. For if Paul, who, having the advantage of revelation to direct him, laboured so hard and with zeal of God to be righteous, even before he knew Christ, had no true holiness, nor was acceptable to God, or in the way of salvation,—will not this tend to bring very low, on the one hand, our opinion of the powers of nature and free will, and our opinion, on the other hand, of the salvation of virtuous heathens and Mahomedans, who never in this life come to the knowledge of Christ? I leave to the living to explain themselves on this matter when they please.

I see that Dr Doddridge falls in with the notion of the apostle's personating others even in this first context of chap. vii. In his note on this text, he says, 'The character assumed here is that of a man first ignorant of the law, then under it, and sincerely desiring to please God.' Those under the law, as the apostle represents, are persons in the flesh; and there are great exceptions to the sincerity of persons in the flesh, as to desire to please God. 'But finding, to his sorrow, (so the Doctor goes on) the weakness of the motives it suggested, and the discouragement under which it left him, and, last of all, with transport discovering the gospel, and gaining pardon and strength, peace and joy by it.' It is the Mosaic law, and the condition of persons under it, that the Doctor means, as appears fully by his paraphrase and notes on this context. Now as to that, allowing still that there is greater degree of light, comfort, and strength by the gospel and gospel dispensation, yet, I would ask, did not Abraham—did not his spiritual seed, the faithful of the Old Testament, under the Mosaic law, perceive, in the promises made to him and them, (which the law did not annul, Gal. iii. 17.) motives very powerful to engage them to holiness? did they not receive pardon and strength, peace and joy, by these promises, by which they were encouraged and supported in a course of holiness, integrity, and fruitfulness, until, through faith and patience, they at last actually inherited the promises?

The Doctor concludes that paragraph and note thus:— 'But to suppose he speaks all these things of himself, as the confirmed Christian that he really was when he wrote this epistle, is not only foreign, but contrary to the whole scope of this discourse, as well as to what is expressly asserted, chap. viii. 2.' So he. It is plain, that these things

the apostle speaks here of himself in the past tense ; he speaks not of himself as the confirmed Christian and true believer. But being the confirmed Christian, when he wrote these things, he had that experience on both sides, under the law, and under grace ; in the flesh, and in the Spirit ; which, on different occasions he has brought forth, sometimes in the past, sometimes in the present tense, under the direction of the Spirit of God, for the benefit and instruction of the church to the world's end.

Before we leave this verse, there is yet one thing fit to be observed respecting that question, What sort of concupiscence or lusting is here meant ? The Papists, and some others, have held, that the very first motions of lusting, which spring up spontaneously in the heart, previous to all deliberation, and that are not entertained or consented to by the will, are not sin. Concerning this I see in the Synopsis, on this verse, a passage of James Capel, a French divine, which is to this purpose and sense. He speaks here, saith this writer, of that concupiscence which Paul would not have known but by the law, as is here said. But Paul could not be ignorant of that which was known even by the heathens, viz. that a determined purpose of committing a wicked action is sin, or that avarice, which is also called concupiscence, is sin. He must therefore be understood to mean, the indetermined will of sinning, or the very first motions of appetite, by which the will is tickled and provoked ; which, because it is not in our power to prevent them, many have believed not to be sin, nor had Paul known them to be sin, if he had not looked more closely into the meaning of the law. For it is this sort of concupiscence that is meant by the prohibition of the tenth commandment, as the former sort is in the preceding commands. So that learned professor of Sedan.

As to these things, it may well be doubted if there is any so spontaneous and indeliberate motion of concupiscence of any sort, that hath not, in some degree, the consent of the heart and will ; and there is good appearance of reason for thinking there is something of will in the very first motions of irregular appetite. And if the law of God enters, with its proper light and authority, it will surely find that the very first and spontaneous motions of irregular desire are contrary to the purity and rectitude which it requires, are to be ascribed to the pravity of the heart, and consequently are sinful, and so are comprehended in the sin of which Paul got the knowledge by the law. But the matter seems

not to be restricted to this. It appears, by what our Lord says, in interpreting the seventh commandment, (Matth. v.) that there were those who then held, that inward lusting, however much entertained, was not sin. There is a further proof of this in that passage of Josephus, the Jewish historian, mentioned by Dr W. and by others before him, wherein that historian says, that the sacrilegious purpose of king Antiochus was not sin, as it was not brought to execution. Some heathens may have known better than so. But there hath been sometimes occasion to observe, that a preconceived and darling opinion or principle hath occasioned men's overlooking, and even denying, truths very evident in the scripture, and known by the very heathens. If I mistake not, we shall see notable instance of this before we have done with the very next following verse. Paul, having been brought up in the Pharisaical school, he might have it to learn, by the entrance of the light and authority of the law into his conscience, that any inward lustings, however much entertained, were sin; which some of that sect, as Josephus in particular, did not think to be so.

PARAPHRASE.—7. What shall we think then of this account of our former state, as we stood in relation to the law, and of my mentioning motions of sins which were by the law? Some will say, that this great absurdity may be justly inferred, that the righteous law of God doth indeed favour sin, and is a cause of it: but by no means—I can relate from my experience, that it was by the law that I received the knowledge and conviction of sin in every instance. The law forbids it, and that not only in the outward work, but in the first appearance of it in the heart, in the secret workings of irregular desire, and the very first motions of irregular affections. It is by its prohibition that I came to know lust inwardly, more or less consented to and entertained, to be sin, as the tenth commandment says, *Thou shalt not covet*, and as every commandment implies the prohibition of every inward lusting in opposition to the duty commanded, or that hath the remotest tendency to the outward sinful work forbidden; and it was by the law discovering sinful lustings and affections within me, and directing its sharp reproof and awful threatening against them, that I, who had been very righteous in my own eyes, saw first my great sinfulness and very dangerous condition. It being then the truth of the matter, that the law is so adverse to sin, surely the cause

of sin, and of sinful passions and lustings in the heart, is to be looked for elsewhere than in the law.

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

EXPLICATION.—In the fifth verse there is mention of *the motions of sin which were by the law*. Here it is, *Sin taking occasion by the commandment*. The one place explains the other. If there are, as ver. 6. *motions of sin by the law*, that is not that the law is the cause of sin, but, as here, that *sin taketh occasion by the commandment*.

The word rendered *occasion*, Grotius renders *impunity*,—sin having impunity by the precept or commandment; and he adduces a place of Thucydides, where he thought the word signifies so. The dictionary mentions no such meaning; and Raphelius, cited by Wolfius, shows that Grotius did mistake the place referred to, where the word hath no such sense.

However, Grotius understanding it so in this text, explains himself by saying, Because to that commandment (respecting inward lusting, *Thou shalt not covet*) there was no punishment annexed, as to the commands forbidding adultery and theft, therefore it was despised. Dr Hammond, who very commonly follows the other learned writer, speaks full to the same purpose.

But if the Lord, the Lawgiver of the commonwealth of Israel, in prescribing to them the punishment they should inflict on these transgressions of his laws which should come under their cognizance, did not prescribe punishment of transgressions which did not come under their cognizance, such as inward transgressions and impurities; shall we therefore say, that the law of God allows impunity to inward unholiness and impurity? or that the Supreme Judge, who sees men's hearts, is not to punish it? Dr W. brings for one reason against this interpretation, that it contradicts the words of the law, which pronounces a curse on every one who continues not in all things that are written in the law to do them.

But notwithstanding what Grotius and Dr Hammond have said of the impunity of *inward* transgressions, yet it must be agreed to on all hands, in the general, that the law denounced punishment for sin. Dr Hammond makes use of this too for explaining the present subject. Sin had, or took occasion, or advantage, from this, according to him, that the

law prescribed punishment without giving the hope of pardon. So sin took occasion from impunity, and likewise from the apprehension of punishment. Though he is wrong as to matter of fact, (so I may call it) with respect to the law, on both sides; yet on the general and abstract view of the matter, these things are not inconsistent. For as to them who are *in the flesh*, which is the common character of persons *under the law*, in the sense of this context, if through the delusion of their mind there is confidence of impunity, or if there is despair of mercy, sin dominant in such souls will take occasion, in the one case and the other, to exert itself, and show its great power and malignity.

By the *law*, it is the law of Moses that these writers mean. Concerning it, it is needful, before we go farther, to observe a distinction that is proper to be made. First, the *law* may be understood to signify, the whole system of religion in the Mosaic times of the Old Testament. Dr Hammond expresses it thus, (annot. on Matth. v. 17.): ‘ In scripture the *law* signifies sometimes, yea often, in one general notion, ‘ the whole way of economy among the Jews under the ‘ Old Testament, (taken precisely by itself, without opposition to the reformation wrought by Christ, and that ‘ way that men were put into for their eternal weal)—the ‘ Old Testament course, the religion of the former age,— ‘ the whole body of their religion.’ 2. The *law* may be understood, in a more narrow sense, to mean the system of precepts, or commandments, statutes, and judgments, which God gave to Israel by Moses, to be the rule and practice. Again, as to this last, the law may be understood of the moral law, which hath been, and continues ever to be in force, in all times: or it may signify the ceremonial or ritual law given by Moses, which was peculiar to the church of Israel, and times of the Old Testament: which last is most strictly the Mosaic law.

Now, to answer on the question about remission of sins, according to this distinction; the case was, that the preceptory moral law contained nothing about remission of sins; nor doth it now. The moral law is still in force, and hath annexed to it the curse and denunciation of wrath against transgressors; the consequence of which it is, that *he who believeth not the Son, hath the wrath of God abiding upon him*. It cannot be inferred from this, that there is no remission of sins now. For remission of sins, and the happy consequences of it, come not, at this time, by the law, but by grace. Thus as to the ancient Israel; if remission of sins came not by the

law, yet they had then the hope of remission, of acceptance with God, and of blessedness, and that by grace, and by the promise, which was manifested to Abraham for himself, and for his spiritual seed, the faithful ; and which the law afterwards given could not disannul, as Gal. iii. 17. Now, if in the religion of the former age, the whole body of the Jewish religion, as Dr Hammond speaks, that is, in the law in the comprehensive sense, which is the first sense he gives of the law, there was ground for the hope of the remission of sins ; it is not just to say, that sin took occasion by the law of Moses, as not giving the prospect of pardon ; or to mention that at all, in interpreting what he takes to be a reasoning concerning the abrogation of the Mosaic law ; as if that was needful for giving men the prospect of remission ; and thereby encouraging them to repentance and reformation. It is undeniable, that Israel, under the Old Testament, were encouraged to repentance by the promise of forgiveness ; nor is it in this that the difference consists between the Old and New Testament. Let us, however, consider more closely how Dr Hammond expresses himself concerning this matter.

Thus then he writes in his paraphrase of chap. vi. 14. ‘ It were the vilest thing in the world for sin to have dominion over you, who are no longer under the weak un-  
 ‘ efficacious pedagogy of the law, (which could only forbid  
 ‘ sin, and denounce judgment, but never yield any man  
 ‘ that hope of mercy, on amendment, which is necessary to  
 ‘ the working reformation on him, or checking any sin that  
 ‘ men are tempted to,) but under a kingdom of grace, where  
 ‘ there is pardon for sin unto repentance.’

This passage must be meant of sin in outward practice ; as the writer allowed, with Grotius, that the law allowed impunity to the inward working of unholy lusts. But what meant he by the *pedagogy* of the law ? The word is taken from Gal. iii. 24. *The law was our schoolmaster* (*παιδαγωγος*, *pedagogue*,) *to bring us unto Christ*. Now, if the children, the heir, was under tutors or governors, (Gal. iv. 1, 2.) or under a pedagogue during the Old Testament, surely we are not to say, that it was his condition by this pedagogy, not having the remission of sin, to be only under judgment and wrath. The apostle gives us to understand otherwise, but that it was to the Jewish church a pedagogue to bring them unto Christ ; except any shall be so absurd as to say, that the Mosaic law had this tendency and effect only when the gospel was revealed, and the law came to be abolished ; but that,

whilst it subsisted, it had no such effect to those who were under it.

It is plain, that if in the pedagogy of the law there was denunciation of judgment, there was also the hope of mercy through Jesus Christ; and that the special use of the law, as a pedagogue, was to lead men to Christ, that they might be justified through faith. This was the way in which Abraham was justified, and so he became the father of all them who believe, particularly of those who, being of the circumcision, did also walk in the steps of the faith of their father Abraham, Rom. iv. 12. Certainly the Doctor would not deny that there were many such under the pedagogy of the law; so that it was quite wild for him to say, that the pedagogy of the law denounced judgment, but gave not the hope of mercy.

But some men speak of the pedagogy of the law as if they who were under it had been under a proper and strict covenant of works, that gave no hope to transgressors. This is very wrong. God did never make a new promulgation of the law, by revelation, to sinful men, in order to keep them under mere law, without setting before them, at the same time, the promise and grace of the new covenant, by which they might escape from the wrath which the law denounced. The legal and evangelical dispensations have been but different dispensations of the same covenant of grace, and of the blessings thereof. Though there is now greater degree of light, consolation, and liberty, yet if Christians are now under a kingdom of grace where there is pardon upon repentance, the Lord's people under the Old Testament were (as to the reality and substance of things) also under a kingdom of grace.

Terrible as the appearance was at giving the law from mount Sinai, yet when the Lord was to renew the writing of the law on tables of stone, Exod. xxxiv. 1—9. he declared his name, and proclaimed, *The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, &c.* There certainly could be no religion or sincere worship in the Mosaic, or in any times, without the prospect of forgiveness. So David understood, Psal. cxxx. 4. *There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.* With what earnestness and humble confidence did the Psalmist, as often in his other psalms, so in Psal. li. plead for pardon, even when his prayer was for the pardon of sins in particular, for which the Mosaic law had provided no sacrifice, but had ordered capital punishment? Which

shows, that in the case of presumptuous sins, for which capital punishment was ordered; yet, even in such cases, that the penitent was not precluded from pardon.

Now, if there was under the legal Mosaic dispensation that grace manifested, that taketh away sin and pardons it, it is certain there was nothing in the Mosaic institutions to intercept from the Lord's people the comfort of that grace. Though there was not in the Mosaic sacrifices a true expiation, but instead of that a remembrance kept up of sin, as not yet truly expiated, yet in these Israel had the assurance and pledge of a true expiation promised and provided. This was according to the import of the name which Abraham gave to the mount on which the temple was afterwards built, JEHOVAH-JIREH, *The Lord will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering*, Gen. xxii. 14. Such language had all the sacrificial service in that place, until at length He appeared, who was to be the true burnt-offering, and the Baptist marked him out to the people, saying, *Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*, John i. 29. The virtue of this sacrifice availed to the Lord's people from the beginning of the world, for the remission of sin.

But did Dr Hammond indeed think that the Mosaic legal pedagogy did not yield to men the hope of mercy, and that it is only now under the gospel dispensation that men are under a kingdom of grace, in which there is pardon upon repentance? How should I then understand what he says in the passage quoted above, that the law, in the most comprehensive sense, signifies that way that men were put into for their eternal weal—the religion of the former age? Could men be put into any way for their eternal weal, without the remission of sins? These things that the learned writer hath, concerning the Mosaic pedagogy and law, are by no means consistent.

What hath been said, makes it evident that the advantage which sin hath, to have dominion over men who are under the law, and to work in them all manner of concupiscence, is not to be understood of the Mosaic law; and that the apostle's reasoning in this context, Rom. vii. 1—13. proceeds on a quite different view.

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

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

Concerning this Dr Doddridge says in his note: 'It must surely be acknowledged, that all lust does not arise from hence, (viz. from sin taking occasion by the commandment) much being previous to all possible knowledge of God's law, whether revealed or natural.' This will be readily agreed to, that all lust doth not thence arise, nor does any say that the apostle means so. But sin, the evil principle or corruption that is in the heart, previous to all knowledge of God's law, (as the worthy writer says) is ever lusting one way or other, but most remarkably when the law presses hard upon the conscience.

Mr Alexander says, 'In the most corrupted ages of the world, laws have a natural tendency to lessen the number and prevalence of crimes.' True, as to crimes outwardly committed. But as the apostle is speaking here of inward concupiscence, it requires something else than the laws of men, even than the law of God itself, to restrain and subdue that.

Of the last clause, *without the law sin was dead*, there hath a strange interpretation been given of late. Mr Locke gives it thus in his paraphrase: 'Without the law' (he means the law of Moses) 'sin is dead, not able to hurt me.' And in his note he says, 'Without the law, which annexes death to transgression, sin is as good as dead, is not able to have its will of me, and bring death upon me.' But as I am, to the explication and paraphrase of this verse, to subjoin an essay on the penal sanction of the law, and his notion concerning it, I say no more of it here.

In the mean time, what I take to be the true meaning of this clause I give as follows. The first part of the verse

represents sin as not subdued by the law, but (on occasion of the law entering with force into the conscience) exerting itself vehemently against the authority of the law, in all manner of concupiscence. This, doubtless, behoved to give the sinner great disturbance of mind, between the authority of the law pressing hard upon one side, and the opposite vehement motions of sin on the other. The apostle seems to mean by the last clause a very different and opposite case. Whilst the law did not enter into the man's conscience with its light, authority, and force, sin was asleep, or even as dead, and gave no more trouble or uneasiness than a dead ravenous beast, that he carried, would do. If it had its motions inwardly, as it certainly had, they were not violent, or much observed. That they were little observed was in part from the love of sin, in part from ignorance of the law, and lastly, from the absence of the law, with regard to the authority and force of its precept and threatening in the conscience; so that sin was not ruffled, nor disturbed by it. In this condition sin was as a strong man keeping his palace, and having his goods in peace. Yea, what increases this deadness of sin is, that it is often coloured, or covered, and as it were screened, under the cover of some sort of self-righteousness, that keeps it quite out of view; yea, perhaps, under the cover of some fine-spun sublime speculation and theory concerning virtue; as there are many who seem to have little of the force of the law in their conscience, who have a great deal of virtue in their head. The opposition that appears in this text, between sin, by occasion of the law, working in a man all manner of concupiscence on the one hand, and, on the other, sin dead without the law, gives good reason for understanding the last clause according to this interpretation.

PARAPHRASE.—8. Certainly the law, which prohibits all sinful motions and affections, is not a proper cause of these in the hearts of men. I hinted to you the true cause, when I said, ver. 5. that the vehement prevailing motions of sins, which are by the law, do happen in persons who are in the flesh. Take some explication briefly thus: Sin, or the flesh, that evil principle in corrupt nature, which is enmity against God and his authority, and not subject to the law of God; but being roused and awakened by the strict prohibition and fearful threatening of the law; and not finding, in its commands or terrors, what would subdue it, and withdraw the heart from its dominion; did but take occasion, from the law,

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

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## AN ESSAY

CONCERNING THE PENAL SANCTION OF THE LAW, IN VIEW TO THE NOTION OF MR LOCKE, AND OF SOME OTHERS, CONCERNING THAT SUBJECT.

IN explaining the 8th verse of Rom. vii. we have seen how Mr L.'s paraphrase gives the last clause thus: 'Without the law sin is dead, not able to hurt me.' A reader, who knew that Mr L.'s view of the law in this place was restricted to the Mosaic promulgation of it, could not be surprised at such a sentiment. Mr Locke's notion comes now to be represented and considered.

It has been the opinion of divers learned men, that the apostle's reasoning, Rom. vii. 1—13., respects the Mosaic ceremonial law. But as there appears nothing particular in that context that can be understood to have any respect to the rites and ceremonies of Moses' law, others of late, still retaining the general notion that it is the Mosaic law that is meant, have supposed that it is something peculiar to the Mosaic promulgation of the moral law that is especially in the apostle's eye; and having fallen in with an opinion that hath been first broached (for aught I know) by Mr Locke, I shall, for the reader's more full satisfaction concerning their views, represent his sentiments; then these of Dr W.; and thereafter these of Dr Taylor of Norwich, in their own words; and then suggest some arguments against their opinion on the subject.

Mr Locke expresses his mind thus, in his paraphrase of Rom. v. 13. 'There is no certain determined punishment affixed to sin, without a positive law declaring it.' And in his note there, he writes thus: 'Sins can never be taxed, or a rate set upon them, but by the positive declaration and sanction of the Law-Maker. Mankind, without the positive law of God, knew by the light of nature, that they transgressed the rule of their nature, reason, which dictated to

‘ them what they ought to do. But without a positive declaration of God their Sovereign, they could not tell at what rate God taxed their trespasses against that rule: till he pronounced that life should be the price of sin, that could not be ascertained, and consequently sin could not be brought to account. And therefore we see, that where there was no positive law affixing death to sin, men did not look on death as the wages or retribution for their sins: they did not account that they paid their lives as a debt and forfeit for their transgressions.’

At first sight, one might readily suppose the author meant no more, than that *men* could not know or determine what is the punishment of sin, except that was determined by the law itself, or by the declaration of the Lawgiver otherwise. But it means more when he says, that sin could not be brought to account. That he so meant, is very clear and express in what he says in his note on Rom. v. 14.: ‘ In this verse (saith he) St Paul proves that all men became mortal by Adam’s eating the forbidden fruit, and by that alone, because no man *can incur* a penalty without the sanction of a positive law declaring and establishing that penalty; but death was affixed by no positive law to any sin, but the eating of the forbidden fruit: and therefore men’s dying before the law of Moses, was purely in consequence of Adam’s sin.’ Here we are to observe, that *positive law* is not meant in the ordinary sense; as positive law is commonly meant of a law enacted for a time by the mere will of the Lawgiver, in contradistinction to a law moral in its own nature and of perpetual obligation. It is plain, the author, by *positive law* here, means a law clearly revealed, and fully promulgated, expressly determining the punishment of transgression. We see then in the passage last cited, that Mr L. held that no man can incur any penalty without the sanction of a positive law declaring and establishing that penalty; and that from giving forth the command concerning the forbidden fruit, which alone enacted death for the transgressing of it, death was denounced for no sin till the law given by Moses: and we have seen, that in his paraphrase of Rom. vii. 8. and in his note on it, he said, that without such law, and previously to the law of Moses, sin could not hurt a man or bring death upon him.

Thus also he writes in his note on Rom. v. 13.: ‘ This is plain, that St Paul’s notion of a law was conformable to that given by Moses; and so he uses the word *νομος*, in

‘ English, *law*, for a positive command of God, with a sanction of a penalty annexed to it; of which kind there never having been any one given to any people but that by Moses to the children of Israel, till the revelation of the will of God by Jesus Christ to all mankind—no penalty,’ &c. So, according to him, till Moses’ time, no man could incur a penalty for any sin, except that of eating the forbidden fruit. These things are exceeding crude. However much the celebrated name of Mr Locke, or the interest of an hypothesis, may give to some a bias towards these notions, I must for myself confess, that it gives me concern to see a man who wrote so accurately and judiciously on divers subjects, fall into such absence of thought and reason, as to be capable of writing at this rate. However, he hath, as to this subject, had his followers.

According to this notion of Mr L.’s, the Lord made his chosen people Israel unhappy beyond all people, by giving them that law, by which, for every sin, yea, as he speaks somewhere, for the least slip of infirmity, they were obnoxious to death, which, by his sentiments, persons of other nations were not. But he pretends to prove, that there was no hardship in this to the Jew, but a privilege; and what cannot be proven by so great a master in reasoning? In his note on Rom. v. 20. he thus states the matter: ‘ All mankind was in an irrecoverable state of death by Adam’s lapse. It was plainly the intention of God to remove the Israelites out of this state (viz. this irrecoverable state of death) by the law—By the law the children of Israel were put into a new state—their remaining under death, or their recovery of life, was to be the consequence, not of what another had done, but of what themselves did.—In their former state, common to them with the rest of mankind, death was unavoidable to them. But by the law they had a trial for life. Accordingly, our Saviour to the young man answers—Keep the commandments.’ Here, one might ask, Did the law, in giving them a trial for life, give them a chance of avoiding death wholly? No; they were to die at any rate, in consequence of Adam’s sin. But the author means, a chance of continuing irrecoverably under death or recovering life, according as they should behave. But was it easy, or even possible, for an Israelite to keep the law so perfectly, that he would not, by some deed of his own—some one transgression, or slip of infirmity, bring death on himself irrecoverably? If this was neither easy nor pos-

sible, the privilege in the case evanishes quite. Even Dr T. ventures to say, that here Mr L. has a wild conceit.

The objection arising from this did not wholly escape Mr L.'s observation. In his note on Rom. vii. 8. he writes thus: 'Laying aside the figure, (viz. sin's being set forth as a person) the plain meaning here of St Paul is this: Though the law lays a stricter restraint upon sin than men have without it, yet it betters not my condition thereby, (may the well meaning Jew say) because it enables me not wholly to extirpate sin, and subdue concupiscence, though it hath made every transgression a mortal crime. So that being no more totally secured from offending under the law than I was before, I am under the law exposed to certain death.' So our author supposes a Jew to argue and object; and this objection he supposes the apostle means to obviate. In his note on Rom. vii. 13. he says, 'In the five foregoing verses, the apostle had proved that the law was not sin. In this, and the ten following verses, he proves the law not to be made death, but that it was given to show the power of sin which remained in those under the law, so strong, notwithstanding the law, that it could prevail on them to transgress the law, notwithstanding all its prohibition, with the penalty of death annexed to every transgression. Of what use this showing the power of sin by the law was, we may see, Gal. iii. 24.' The words of that text are, *Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.* Well, this is a good use and design of the law. But if Jews did not fall in with this design of the law, were not actually brought to Christ, or justified by faith, did not they die irrecoverably, for their own sins, according to the sanction of their own law, which men of other nations were not under? It showed the power of sin, that it prevailed on men to transgress, notwithstanding the threatening of death. But still it is not proven that the law did not give death to the transgressing Jews, or that they were not, by being under such a law, in worse condition than men of other nations, on whom their personal sins could not bring death, as not being under a law fenced with such a sanction. They indeed, by wanting such a law, wanted the schoolmaster to bring them to Christ that the Jews had. But at the same time, according to this writer's notions, they did not so much need Christ for a Saviour as the Jews did.

I go now to observe how Dr Whitby thought on this

subject. He gives this paraphrase of Rom. v. 13. 'For it must be indeed confessed, that *until the law, sin was in the world*; but it must also be acknowledged, that *sin is not generally then imputed to death, when there is no law condemning men to death for it.*' And in his annotation, he says, 'I add *generally*, because, though all men died after Adam, all were not punished with death for their own personal sins, but only the antideluvians and the Sodomites.' We shall hereafter observe, that a great many besides these died for their own sins before the Mosaic promulgation of the law. But if a whole generation of mankind, except eight persons, were destroyed by the flood for their own personal sins, as the scripture asserts, Gen. v. it shows, that all mankind were then, before the law of Moses was given, under a law by which they were obnoxious to death for their own sins; and when was that law repealed?

In the next paragraph Dr W. says, 'Here also note, that the apostle cannot be rationally conceived to assert, as Mr L. suggests, that no man can incur a penalty, without the sanction of a positive law declaring and establishing that penalty.' It seems indeed to be a strange argument that the Doctor here suggests against Mr L.: 'For, says he, this assertion entirely destroys the obligation of the heathens to perform any duty, since no man can be obliged to do that which he may omit without fear of punishment, and renders the heathens, who had no positive law given them, incapable of incurring any penalty by any sins they had committed.' This were indeed absurd. Yet doth this entirely destroy the obligation of the heathens to do their duty? Are men indeed under no obligation to duty, but what arises from the consideration of punishment? However, as this writer asserts here, that no man can be obliged to do that which he may omit without punishment, one might readily think, that such a writer should necessarily hold, in consequence of such a sentiment, that nothing could be accounted a law that had not a sanction prescribing punishment.

Let us, however, observe the Doctor's paraphrase of Rom. vii. 9. which is precisely thus: 'For I the seed of Abraham was alive, or indeed lived *without the law once*, before the law was given, I not being obnoxious to death for that, which the law had not threatened death; *but when the commandment came*, forbidding it under that penalty, *sin revived, and I died*, i.e. it got strength to draw me to sin,

‘and to condemn me to death.’ Here there is only mention of the seed of Abraham, in the interval between him and the giving of the law by Moses. But if they whose sin was aggravated by the advantage they had of divine revelation in that interval, were not obnoxious to death for their sins, much less the heathens, who, as the Doctor says, had no positive law given them, nor revelation, in that interval, or until the times of the gospel.

I now observe the Doctor’s paraphrase of Rom. v. 14. which is thus: ‘*Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, the giver of a new law, threatening death to the transgressors of it, even over them who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression; i.e. men were all the while subject to death, though they sinned not as Adam did against an express law, threatening death to them for it, and therefore death must reign over them for the sin of Adam.*’ We have seen the Doctor contradicting Mr L.’s notion; but wherein does he differ from him, if it is not that Mr L. says, a man could not incur *punishment*? Dr W. says, a man was not obnoxious to *death*, until the law was given by Moses, for his own personal transgressions, as no law until then was given to mankind threatening death. However, if a man was not obnoxious to death, unless the law he was under did denounce death for transgression expressly, as Dr W. thought, certainly there is as good reason for saying a man could not incur punishment unless he was under a positive law denouncing punishment expressly for sin. Upon the whole, it is evident, though these writers contradict one another, that they were on the main of the same opinion. Dr W. contradicts Mr L.’s notion, and brings arguments against it; and yet adopts it when he finds use for it to explain some texts, without hurting his own hypothesis and opinion in a matter of doctrine.

Let us now observe the sentiments of Dr Taylor of Norwich on this subject. The writings of this author are now in the hands of many; and with some he bears the character of a masterly critic. We shall here have a swatch of his skill in that way, and of the accuracy of his notions and expression. Dr T. held, that Christ did not undergo the punishment of our sins in order to redeem us from punishment for our sins, and so to satisfy the sanction of the law, which denounced punishment and death for transgression. Suitable and helpful to this doctrine, (hitherto held by the Christian church to be very heretical) is this notion, That a sanction

denouncing punishment and death for sin, is not essential to the law itself; but that the law hath been for many ages without having any such sanction or threatening annexed to it. There is no cause then to wonder he should very readily fall in with this notion of Mr L.'s. This is not the only instance that gives occasion to say, that Dr T., mounted as it were on the shoulders of Dr W. and Mr L., has pretended to see farther than either of them, and to reject every particular article, almost even the most essential, of Christian faith and gospel doctrine.

In the general, he acknowledges that every transgression of the law doth, in its own nature, and in strict justice, deserve death. It may seem hard to think that the other two writers did not think and mean so too. Yet how could they say, that a man could not incur punishment or death for his sin, but by virtue of a positive law expressly threatening it? which amounts to this, that however men's sins deserved punishment and death, yet they could not incur it; or, which is the same thing, God could not punish, according to their deserts, the sins of the far greatest part of mankind, to whom such a law, as hath been mentioned, was not given.

To proceed distinctly, it is fit to represent this writer's account of the different senses of *law*. In his note on Rom. v. 20. he says, 'The apostle uses the word *law* in various senses; sometimes for a rule in general; sometimes for the whole Jewish code, or the Old Testament; sometimes for a rule of action; sometimes for a rule of action with the penalty of death annexed, as here, Rom. v. 20., and chap. vi. 15.; vii. 4. &c. Such a law Adam was under, (*In the day thou eatest thereof, dying thou shalt die;*) and such a constitution the law of Moses was subjecting those who were under it to death for every transgression.' In like manner, (*Orig. Sin*, p. 390, ed. 3.) he says, 'By *law*, the apostle here (Rom. v. 13, 14.) doth not only mean a rule of duty, but such a rule with the penalty of death threatened for every transgression of it. Such was the covenant at Sinai, or the law given by Moses —and such was the covenant under which Adam originally was.' I wish he had proven this last assertion. The penalty of death was indeed annexed to one special precept respecting the forbidden fruit. But I see not in the history, in the first chapters of Genesis, the mention or hint of such threatening annexed to the law in general, or to any other particular precept. So, for aught that is

mentioned there, Adam might, according to this writer's notions, have transgressed a thousand times, and not be obnoxious to death, if he had not meddled with the forbidden fruit. I would be glad to see how one of his sentiments would prove Adam to have been under a covenant or law, making him obnoxious to death for every transgression, so as not to prove that men in all times were under such a law.

Law, with the penalty of death annexed to the precept, is what this writer calls rigour of law; and Adam having been under such a law, he says it was abolished upon his fall. So he says, (*Orig. Sin*, p. 389.) 'That covenant (under which Adam was) was the covenant of works, the same in nature with the Sinai covenant. Under this covenant Adam was when he sinned. But it was disannulled immediately after that. For even before God passed sentence upon Adam and Eve, grace was introduced by that promise, Gen. iii. 15.' According to him, then, from the time that promise was given, all mankind were under grace, until the matter was altered, with respect to the Jews, by the law of Moses. 'From Moses to Christ (saith he, *Orig. Sin*, p. 394.) the Jews were under the law. But the rest of mankind, though they always had a rule of action, yet never were under the law, in the sense above explained.' That is, not under a law fenced with a threatening of death. All mankind, according to him, have been, from the time of the first promise, under grace.

So, then, by this writer's notion of things, the first promise, Gen. iii. 15. disarmed the law of its penal sanction, and disannulled the covenant of works. But this is a great mistake, and is asserted without any warrant or good reason. It is true, the law, or covenant of works, by its tenor could not be a covenant of life to sinners. Grace showed them a way to escape the wrath denounced by the law for sin; and we know by gospel-light, that this was such a way as did not abrogate or disannul the penal sanction of the law, but satisfied it. Though man transgressed, and broke the covenant of works, there is no reason to say, that that covenant was disannulled, or the law disarmed of its penal sanction. The case plainly is, grace being manifested, it took effect from thenceforth, for the salvation of those who laid hold of it by faith, and improved it for salvation. But the penal sanction of the law continued in force, takes effect at all times, and for ever, against the impenitent and unbelievers.

Law, and the penal sanction being, as he says, abolished,

let us observe some of the consequences. Dr T. hath (*Orig. Sin*, p. 393.) as follows: ‘When he says, (Rom. v. 13.) *But sin is not imputed when there is no law*, or, when law is not ‘in being, he means the sins of those persons (from Adam ‘to Moses) were not imputed to them, so as to subject them ‘to death, because law, which subjects transgressors to ‘death, was not in being. Take good notice,’ (pray do, reader, for it is a notable sentiment that now comes forth) ‘according to the apostle, and the true nature of things, it ‘is only law which slays the sinner. For did not the law, ‘or the constitution of the Lawgiver, condemn him unto ‘death, he might, notwithstanding his sin, live for ever, for ‘he might from time to time be pardoned.’

Here are rare things. Pardon imports remitting the punishment which the sinner is obnoxious to, and obliged to undergo; and must be so understood in this passage, where pardon is mentioned as that by which the sinner might live for ever, and be saved from dying. But what need of pardon to save a man from death, who is not for his sins obnoxious to it, and is not under a law condemning him to death for his sin? I would likewise ask, if a man was under a law condemning him to death for sin, might not a pardon relieve him, and save him from it? Old Luther and Calvin, who were in use to call things by their proper names, would have called the author of such a passage, *nebulo*. However, according to this author, from Adam to Moses there was no law condemning men to death for their sins; all mankind were, yea, are now under grace, the grace of the new covenant; even pagans, who never heard of grace, or of the promise, or of Christ, through whom grace is conveyed to sinners. We know from what source this notion is derived. But this is not a proper place to enlarge on that subject. Let us now see the evidence Dr T. brings, that such law, as he describes, was introduced among the Jews; for he is at pains to prove it.

In his note on Rom. v. 20. he puts the question, ‘What ‘evidence have we that the law of Moses was law in the rigorous sense, subjecting to death for every transgression?’ I would not have troubled the author with such a question, or have asked a proof of what every one knows, and none, I think, denies. Let us, however, observe how he answers it, and what proof he brings. ‘The apostle (saith he) did— ‘certainly so understand it, as appears by this place here; ‘where, having spoken of Adam’s one *παραπτωμα*, lapse, or

‘ offence, he tells us, that the law entered that the lapse or offence might abound, or be multiplied. Now the law entered only among the Jews, and it could not enter so as to multiply the lapse or offence, which before was but one, if it were not of the same nature with the law given to Adam.’ By the explication I have elsewhere given of this text, it is made very evident, that it will by no means answer this writer’s purpose. (See on Chap. vi. 1.)

Dr T. supposes, that *παραπτωμα*, rendered *offence*, is to be restricted to such as subjects the guilty to death, which he thought sins of men before the Mosaic law, since the fall of Adam, did not; and so, whereas Adam’s sin in eating the forbidden fruit was the only lapse before, yet now the Mosaic law, annexing death to sin, the lapse, or *παραπτωμα*, was multiplied to as great a number as all the sins of the millions who were under that law. But what warrant had he to make this distinction between lapses and other sins! He did not, he could not say, that *αμαρτια* had any thing special in the sense of it more than our language expresses by the word *sin*. Yet every one knows, that these two words are interchangeably used, yea, are so in the very verse he is commenting on. The first clause is, *The law entered, that the offence (παραπτωμα) might abound.* The next clause is, *But where sin abounded.*—It is plain, that *sin* in the one clause, and *offence* in the other, are words of the same meaning. It were vain to say, that as the words are different, they mean differently. The evident design and scope of the verse will not allow it; and the matter is put beyond question by ver. 16. the last clause of which is, *The free gift is of many offences unto justification.* Here the word is *παραπτωμα*, the same as in the first clause of ver. 20. And it is plain, that the word, ver. 16. includes the offences of men of all nations and times, who are justified or pardoned. It appears, then, though the word is used in this context, concerning the one sin of Adam, that there is no good reason for restricting its meaning in the first clause of ver. 20. since in the last clause of ver. 16. in the same context, the word appears without restriction to Adam’s sin, or to sins against the Mosaic law; but includes sins that are neither the one or the other of these.

To this he subjoins another argument, to prove that the law of Moses subjected the transgressor to death for every sin; thus: ‘ Besides this, (saith he) he (the apostle) gives a substantial and undeniable proof, taken out of the law

‘ itself, Gal. iii. 10. *Cursed is every one that continueth not,*  
 ‘ &c. This denunciation of the law we find, Deut. xxvii.  
 ‘ 26.’ A few lines downwards he argues and says, ‘ This  
 ‘ curse, without doubt, rendered the transgressors obnoxious  
 ‘ to death.’ It certainly did so. But did he indeed think  
 that the law which the Gentiles were under, which was not the  
 law of Moses, did not assign the curse to transgressors? Alas! many were the sad symptoms that proved that the  
 curse lay heavy upon them. He might in Gal. iii. a few  
 verses below that cited by him, have observed, ver. 13, 14.  
*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse.*—The Galatians were  
 Gentiles who had not been under the law of Moses. The  
 apostle all along considers them as such, and warns them  
 to hold fast the privilege and liberty he had been asserting  
 for them as Gentiles. But how vainly had he said to them,  
*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being*  
*made a curse for us,* if the law they had been under, not  
 that of Moses, did not subject them to a curse for their  
 sins? Thus far, in order to be the better acquainted with  
 Dr T.’s way of reasoning and criticism, we have followed  
 him in the arguments he brings laboriously to prove what  
 none ever denied, viz. that the law of Moses denounced  
 death and the curse to transgressors, which he calls *law* in  
 the rigorous sense.

Let us now proceed to observe the consequence to the  
 Jews, of law in the rigorous sense being introduced among  
 them. The effect of it is thus expressed by Dr T. (*Orig.*  
*Sin*, p. 292.): ‘ When the commandment came with the  
 ‘ penalty of death annexed to it, then sin, the sting of death,  
 ‘ revived; then it acquired full life and vigour, and the Jew  
 ‘ died, *i.e.* was a dead man in law, upon the first transgres-  
 ‘ sion he committed.’ Alas, for the peculiar and favourite  
 people! How could a man of Israel, or the nation subsist  
 for a day, under such a law, which, according to our author,  
 no other nation were burdened with? But the author (we  
 thank him) soon relieves our anxiety for the Jew, in the  
 next following words: ‘ Though he had the relief of the  
 ‘ gospel as well (so this author) as the rest of mankind, to  
 ‘ heal the deadly wound.’ I can understand that the Jew  
 had relief by the gospel; for the gospel (according to Gal.  
 iii. 8.) was preached to Abraham; but it is not so easily un-  
 derstood, how the rest of mankind (during the peculiarity  
 of the Jews) had the relief of the gospel. However, by this  
 account all is well for the Jew; now we see the difference, as

to their spiritual state, between the Jews under rigorous law, and the Gentiles. The Jews, obnoxious to death by the law they were under, might attain salvation by the grace they were under at the same time. The Gentiles, continuing impenitent, were to perish eternally, Rom. ii. 12. which they could not be adjudged to, but according to the law they were under. Is this now all that Dr T.'s critical labour on this point has produced ?

Having given a view of the sentiments of these writers, with such remarks on the several passages as occurred, I now come to consider more closely and distinctly the subject itself. The truth which we hold is,—That every man, of all nations and in every time, hath been obnoxious, for sin, to death, in all its extent and meaning, by the law of God, and its just sanction. The opposite notion is,—That as no man is obnoxious to, or can incur death or punishment, but by a positive law, expressly determining that punishment ; so no man or nation, since the fall of Adam, hath been under such a law, adjudging them to death for their personal sins, until the law given by Moses, under which the Jews alone were.

The case of the antediluvians and Sodomites do strongly contradict this notion. Dr W. speaks concerning the former thus, (note on Rom. v. 13.) ‘ To say that they who were swept away by the flood with an untimely death did not die for their own sins, but for Adam’s sin, is to contradict God himself, saying, *I will destroy man from the earth ; for the iniquity of man is very great,*’ &c. Gen. v.

Something hath been said on this case before. Mr L. answers, (note on Rom. v. 15.) and says, That some have been led so far out of the way, as to allege, that men in the deluge died for their own sins. Was this going far out of the way, or was it not true? His own very next words do so acknowledge. ‘ It is true,’ says he, ‘ they did so ; but it is as true, that by their own sins they were not made mortal : they were so before by their father Adam’s eating the forbidden fruit. So that what they paid for their own sins, was not immortality, which they had not, but a few years of their own finite lives ; which having been let alone, would every one of them in a short time have come to an end.’ This answer is far from being satisfying. Men became universally mortal by Adam’s sin. But the infliction of actual death on the antediluvians for their own personal sins, as is asserted in Scripture, behoved to be by a law they were under, which assigned death to men for their

personal sins ; and by that sad instance, it appears to have been a law that would have adjudged them to death, though they had not been in a state of mortality before. But I say further, when the law of Moses entered, threatening death to the men of Israel for every transgression, was it by this law the men of Israel became mortal ? This will not be said. It might then be said of the men of Israel, of the Mosaic period, as Mr L. says of the men of the former period, what they paid for their own sins was not immortality, but a few years of their own finite lives. As to those who held that no more was imported by the death threatened for eating the forbidden fruit, than mere natural death, or the dissolution of their natural frame, I would ask one thing yet : Did the Israelites under the Mosaic law undergo death more, or in a more terrible manner, than other nations ? For if Israel was brought under a law, with such a sanction, which other nations were not under, we might reasonably think the consequence would be—more dying, more of sudden and premature deaths, death in a more terrible manner and form, than in any other nation. But as to the ordinary course of things, this distinction did not appear. Other nations were cut off by sword, famine, and pestilence ; and death appeared among them in every terrible form. If, on some occasions, Israel were subjected to distinguishing judgments, this was owing to the special aggravations of their sin, to God's special care of them, and his special attention to their behaviour and welfare, (Amos iii. 2.) ; yet when he made an end of other nations, he did not so deal with them to this day. These things give good cause to think, that Israel were not brought under any penal sanction but that which other nations were under.

Dr W. says, (on Rom. vii. 9.) that in the antemosaic period, the seed of Abraham were not, by any law they were under, obnoxious to death for their personal sins. But here are two notable instances, even of the seed of Abraham, who suffered death for their personal sins in that period, Gen. xxxviii. 7. *Er—was wicked in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord slew him ;* and ver. 10, *The thing that he [Onan] did displeased the Lord, wherefore he slew him also.*

In the period before giving the law at Sinai, when, according to these writers, none of mankind were obnoxious to death for their personal sins, Pharaoh, and a great army of Egyptians, were put to death in the Red Sea, for their personal sins, by the immediate hand of God. The Mosaic

law could not be a rule of conduct or judgment respecting the seven nations of Canaan ; yet, when the measure of their iniquity came to be full, they were appointed to be destroyed, Deut. vii. and chap. xx. ; and the whole nation of the Amalekites were ordered to utter excision for other sins than that of Adam.

One argument respecting this subject from Gal. iii. 13, 14. has been urged before, and it has been proved by it, that the Gentiles, who were not under the Mosaic law, were nevertheless under the penal sanction and curse of God's law, by the law they were under. I go now to observe what the apostle Paul says, Rom. ii. 12. *As many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law ; and as many as have sinned in (or under) the law, shall be judged by the law.* Mr L.'s note on this observes the different words in the first and second clause, *απολουνται*, *shall perish*, and *κριθησονται*, *shall be judged* ; and says, ' St Paul doth not use these so eminently differing expressions for nothing.' The eminent difference of meaning in this place I have not perceived. What he understood himself here by *perishing*, he hath not explained. It is very likely he meant the same with a writer to be presently mentioned, viz. going to non-existence, or ceasing to be. But if this same is what the law they were under adjudged impenitent Gentiles to, that law had a heavy and awful sanction. However, his notion of the word rendered *perish*, is fully confuted by Dr W. and Wolfius on the place. The former, in opposition to the extravagant opinion of Dr Dodwel, brings divers texts, wherein the word is used with regard to persons, who, Dr Dodwel would acknowledge, would be subjected to everlasting suffering and misery, as the reader may see by looking to those texts themselves wherein the word is used, without my saying any thing particular concerning them. Rom. xiv. 15. 1 Cor. viii. 11. 2 Cor. ii. 15. 2 Thes. ii. 10. 2 Peter iii. 9. John xvii. 12. Mark i. 24. Matth. v. 29. chap. xviii. 14. Matth. x. 39. chap. xvi. 25. Matth. x. 28. Dr T. gives this text, Rom. ii. 12. thus : ' They who shall be found to have transgressed against the mere light of nature, shall not come under the same rule with such as have enjoyed an extraordinary revelation.' No, they shall not be so heavily punished as they whose sin is more aggravated. But Dr T.'s paraphrase is contrived to hide much of the light of this text from his reader. The text says, they *shall perish* ; the true sense of which appears by the texts just now cited. Gentiles then

were under a law that adjudged them to perish for sin. As to the latter word, rendered *shall be judged*, it also very commonly means, condemned; of which it is needless to bring instances, as none will deny it. But to what were Jews sinning under the law condemned, but to perish or die eternally?

Further, the point we are upon is very clear by what we have besides in that chapter, Rom. ii. If we trace from ver. 5. there it is said, that the *impenitent do treasure up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath*; when ver. 6. *God will render to every man according to his deeds*; to some, ver. 7. *eternal life*; to others, ver. 8, 9. *indignation and wrath; tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile*. By this it appears, that the Gentile, though not under the law of Moses, was under a law that assigned to him for sin indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish. What we have seen in this chapter, (Rom. ii.) on which these learned writers have been able to say so little, to support their opinion, is as good as a hundred arguments, to confute the strange notion concerning the law that we are considering.

I here observe an odd sentiment of Dr W.'s, or a sentiment oddly expressed, concerning the law, on Rom. vii. 8—11. Arguing against those injudicious commentators, as he calls them, who thought that the advantage which sin got by the law, was because the law assigned no penalty for inward impurities, covetousness, for instance: 'If,' says he, 'the law given them encouraged them to covet, because it had no present penalty annexed to it, they must be more free to covet, or follow their natural or carnal inclination, when there was no law at all forbidding them to covet.' No law at all! when was it so? He must mean, before the Mosaic promulgation of the law; and those at all times, who had not the light of that law. Yet as to the Gentiles, against whom the transgression of that law could not be charged, we find covetousness mentioned among the sins which they are said, Rom. i. 32. to have known, by the light of the law in their own consciences, to have been sins, and worthy of death by the righteous judgment of God; and so, according to what did appear on Rom. ii. 12. for covetousness unpardoned, they behoved to perish by the law written in their own conscience.

Let us now consider what the apostle says of the heathen Gentiles, Rom. i. 32. *Who knowing the judgment of God,*

(that they who commit such things are worthy of death) not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them. On this Dr W. says, 'That murder, adultery, and unnatural lusts deserved death, they knew, not only by the light of nature and of conscience, but by their own laws, condemning them to death.' But in the list there given by the apostle of sins common among the Gentiles, he mentions not only these three very atrocious sorts, but also *covetousness, maliciousness, backbiting, envy, &c.* Therefore the Doctor adds, 'That all these sins, being species of injustice, condemned by the law of nature, rendered them obnoxious to the displeasure of God, who is the governor of the world, and the avenger of all unrighteousness, and so obnoxious to death for violating the law he had given them.' Thus the learned writer, who said on Rom. vii. 9. that even the seed of Abraham, whose sins before the Mosaic law were more aggravated than those of the heathens, were not obnoxious to death for their sins until that law was given,—says here, that the heathens, who were never under that law, were obnoxious to death, even for inward sinful lusts.

This text bears hard on Mr Locke's notion of the law. Let us observe how the learned gentleman endeavours to evade or prevent the objection by a various reading of the text, thus: 'Who knowing the judgment of God, did not understand (*οὐκ εἰσέτασαν*) that they who commit such things are worthy of death.' So he would have the text say the quite contrary to that for which I have adduced it. However, the text, according to this same reading, says, the heathens knew the judgment of God; and (saith Dr W.) what righteous judgment of God could they know to be due to them who did these things, who knew not that they were worthy of death?

Mr L. says, there is another, besides the Clermont copy, that reads so; but tells not which. Beza mentions the Clermont copy, and says, it is according to our common reading in all the Greek MSS. copies besides that he saw; and he saw a great many. Dr Mills, according to his humour of unfixing the reading of every text, when he could find any the least pretence for it, prefers the Clermont reading. Dr W. in his *Examin Millii*, confutes him, and does very sufficiently support the common reading. Wolfius hath done so more lately; and to them I refer, to avoid prolixity.

The Clermont reading seems by no means to suit the apostle's scope. That appears to be, not only to show men's

guilt, but also to show the aggravations of their guilt ; as, that they sinned against light, and the natural notions of God, ver. 20, 21. And so in this ver. 32. it would tend to aggravate, that they knew that, by doing such things, they became obnoxious to death. But to say that they understood not this, tends greatly to alleviate, which is cross to the apostle's evident purpose.

But what could be the view in saying, as this reading hath it, that they *understood not*, or *knew not*, that they *who did such things were worthy of death* ? It doth clearly hint, or insinuate, if they had known so, that they would not have behaved as they did. This were to make the apostle speak contrary to the truth of experience and to the most certain common observation, which shows, that ill men practise in the same way, who know the penal sanction of the divine law, by the most sure and clear revelation ; and it were unreasonable to insinuate the contrary concerning persons of whom it was said, a few verses before, that they were *given up to a reprobate mind*.

After all, if we allow the reading that Mr L. prefers, the text affords a strong argument to the purpose for which it hath been adduced. For,

1. According to it, though they did not know or understand it, yet so indeed the case was, that they, Gentiles as well as Jews, who commit such things, are obnoxious to death. Why should notice be taken of their ignorance, if it was not a point of truth which they are said not to have known or understood ? But,

2. We are not obliged to understand the word, as meaning their ignorance. I find by my lexicon (Hederici) that the word may be understood to import, that they did not advert, think of it, or consider it. So, according to that same reading, the text may be understood thus : Who knowing the judgment of God, (the rule of righteousness God gave them in the precepts of his law, and the rule of his own righteous judging, set forth in the sanction of it,) they, being given up to a reprobate mind, (ver. 28.) did not advert, think of it, or consider duly, that by such practices they became obnoxious to death.

Whichsoever, then, of the readings mentioned shall be chosen, there is still a good argument from this text to prove, that by the law the Gentiles were under, the impression of which was in their consciences, (though they, being fully possessed, and hurried on by their lusts, did

not advert to, or consider it,) they were obnoxious to death for their sins.

We may now judge of the justness of the interpretation given by Dr W. and some others, of Rom. v. 14. I much suspect that this is one of the texts, for interpreting which, without hurt to their own scheme and hypothesis, they are so fond of the notion concerning the sanction of the law we are considering. Dr W. gives it thus in his paraphrase: '*Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression: i.e. men were all the while subject to death, though they sinned not, as Adam did, against an express law threatening death to them for it.*' But by the evidence that hath been brought, it appears that this interpretation cannot stand; as from Adam to Moses, and at all times, the sins of men were against a law that assigned death to them for their sins.

If it be objected or asked, When, or how was the promulgation of the law, with penal sanction of death, made to men universally?—for it cannot be held to be law that is not made known to those concerned, and promulgated—I answer, The sanction assigning death for transgression, was promulgated to mankind when God said to Adam concerning the forbidden fruit, *In the day thou eatest, thou shalt die*; which did sufficiently intimate, that the punishment of all and every transgression of the law of God was to be death. Since that time, besides the divine revelation, of which the church had ever the advantage from the beginning, the sanction of the law appears to have been universally made known by the light and impression of it in the minds of men, of the Gentiles, even of the worst sorts of them, as we have seen in Rom. i. 32. If they had their bloody sacrifices, there hath been observed by the learned, in their writings, and in history, what shows that they considered the victims as substituted in their stead, to save them from the death and destruction they were obnoxious to for their sins. Whatever shift they made ordinarily to keep their minds easy, yet their apprehensions of destruction by the wrath of heaven for their sins were easily awakened. On such occasions they multiplied their sacrifices, and whole hetacombs were offered. If there were greater appearance of judgment and destruction threatened, human sacrifices, sometimes in considerable number, were offered. There is a very shocking instance of such human sacrifice recorded,

2 Kings iii. 27. when the king of Moab saw providence giving the advantage to his enemies against the greatest efforts of him and his people; he, to save himself and them from destruction, and to appease the wrath of heaven, took his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead, and offered him for a burnt-offering on the wall.

But the light and impression of the precept and penal sanction of the law in the minds and consciences of men, having become dim and weak, the wisdom of God saw meet to make to his church a new, clear, full, and very solemn promulgation of the law, and of its sanction, at Sinai, and otherwise, by the ministry of Moses. But by what hath been adduced from the scripture to that purpose, it appears how vainly, and without any good reason, it hath been said, that the Sinaitic and Mosaic promulgation added any thing, as to penal sanction, to what was originally in the law given to mankind, and under which, with different degrees of light and impression, men have been every where, and in all times of the world.

Before leaving this subject, it is fit to say something concerning the death which the law hath annexed to transgression, and concerning the extent of meaning, in which the death threatened is to be understood. Dr Taylor held, (*Orig. Sin*, p. 20.) that in the threatening, and afterwards sentence, intimated to Adam, there was not meant 'any other death but that dissolution which all mankind undergo when they cease to live in this world, whatever that dissolution be.' It seems it was a question with this writer, what the dissolution is which men undergo at death? It has been generally agreed, that it is the dissolution of the union between the soul and body, by which the soul goes into a separate state, and the body is dissolved into dust. In this there appears to be nothing but what is clear, and easily understood. But this writer makes it matter of question, what the dissolution is that happens at death, and seems not to be satisfied with the common notion of Christians concerning it. Did he think or suspect, as some have held, that the soul itself is mortal; and, being material, is dissolved in the dissolution of the body, and hath no existence or life until the resurrection, when the body shall arise, endowed with the breath of life, and with rational powers and faculties? He was shy of giving his mind clearly on this point—only gives the hint by the doubt above mentioned. What important or fundamental truth is

it, on which this author would not, in some sort, blow his baneful breath!

It is true, he speaks of eternal death as meant by the threatening of the law. But let not the reader mistake him. The passage is in his note on Rom. v. 20. There having observed that *law* sometimes signifies a rule of action, with the penalty of death annexed, he says, 'Such a law Adam was under, and such a constitution the law of Moses was subjecting those who were under it to death for every transgression, meaning by death *eternal* death, without hopes of a revival or resurrection.' The death, then, that the law of Moses denounced, was the same death that was threatened for eating the forbidden fruit; and we saw just now, that that death imported no more than the dissolution which men undergo, when they cease to live in this world. So by *eternal* death, it appears that he means here as denounced by the law nothing more than that, undergoing dissolution, they should continue so for ever, without revival or resurrection. However, he also held that Christ procured resurrection to life for mankind universally. But if men shall then be punished with eternal misery for their sins and impenitence, this, according to what we have seen of his opinion, cannot be by virtue of the law, which, by his account, did not threaten or denounce any such thing.

But if the law given to Adam, and that of Moses, were of the same nature, and threatened the same death, there is something in the matter that is not easily understood, or accounted for, if this death were no other than the deprivation of natural life. All mankind were, in consequence of Adam's sin, doomed to death in that sense, and were undergoing it universally, with the certainty that it would so continue to the world's end. This being the case, and the established constant course of things, what occasion for threatening this death by the law of Moses? Is it not impeaching the divine wisdom, to say, that God would with such solemnity give forth the threatening of death for transgression, if that death signified no more than the deprivation of natural life? Why pretend to make a new addition to the law as given to Israel, beyond what was in the law, which other nations were under, if there was nothing in the additional threatening of death, but what Israel and all other nations were in common subjected to from the beginning? Ay, but the law given at Sinai threatened death for every transgression: not so the law given to other nations,

who were only suffering death, not for their own sins, but in consequence of Adam's sin. But what alteration did this make in the state of the Israelites? If they underwent death, those of other nations did so too. If the Lord cut off some Israelites with sudden and fearful strokes, many instances of that sort happened in other nations, who were not under the Mosaic law. Yea, among Israel in the Mosaic period it was observed, that the worst of men passed the course of life often in an easy and prosperous manner, and underwent death without any unfavourable visible symptom. So we see in Psal. lxxiii. Shall we say, that, the law prescribing for men's sins nothing but the dissolution of their frame by death, in the manner common to all men, these men, after passing life more prosperously, and death more easily, than other men, had nothing further to fear as the consequence of their distinguished wickedness? As this will not be said, shall we say that after this life punishment awaited them beyond what the law they were under prescribed? Certainly this were absurd.

Let us then consider what, besides deprivation of natural life, is included in the death threatened by the law. It is a just sentiment, that as the natural life of the human person consists in the union of the soul and body, so it is the spiritual life of the person to be in union with God, enjoying his favour. So Psal. xxx. 5. *In his favour is life.* But sin separates the sinner from God, and from his favour; which must be accounted death by every one who comfortably enjoyed it, by every one who thinks justly. The curse imports so much, though what Dr T. says of it amounts to no more than this, (note on Rom. vi.) 'This curse without doubt rendered the transgressor obnoxious to death; as Saul's curse was understood to touch Jonathan's life.' As to Saul's curse, it could indeed reach no farther than Jonathan's life; but the curse of God, and of his righteous law, can and doth reach much farther. This curse certainly imports, besides deprivation of natural life, to be cast out of God's favour and fellowship, deprived thereof, and of the light of his countenance; which they who judge that in God's favour is life, will certainly consider as a real death. If, according to the scripture, we consider it in that light, what good reason can be given, why it should not be included in the death threatened by the law for sin, which certainly separates between men and God?

But there is what the scripture calls the *second death*,

which imports everlasting pain and misery. As it is called the *second death*, Rev. xxi. 8. so it is expressed by the name of *death*, Rom. viii. 13. *If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die*; and chap. vi. 23. *The wages of sin is death*. Some endeavour to answer, or prevent the argument, by suggesting, that in both places the apostle hath in his eye a course of fleshly living and sinning, continued in impenitently to the end. But though it be allowed that this is the case, as to the two places now mentioned, yet this doth not hinder our understanding the apostle as giving forth a general doctrine or maxim, particularly in Rom. vi. 23. *The wages of sin is death*. What determines the wages of sin is the law. Now we know of no determination of the law on this subject, other than that it determines the curse and death for the wages of sin. Therefore the second eternal death, and the spiritual death before mentioned, must be included in the death assigned by the law as the wages of sin.

Dr T. himself expresses something that tends to this purpose. (*Orig. Sin*, p. 394.) 'And certain it is,' saith he, 'that *now* we are not under the law, but under grace, Rom. vi. 14. Nor will the law be in force, to give sin its deadly destructive power, till the great and terrible day of the Lord, when those who impenitently have lived after the flesh shall die, Rom. viii. 13.' Passing the interpretation he hints of Rom. vi. 14. of which formerly, I now say concerning this passage: 1. Dr T.'s notion, as here expressed, clearly implies, that the law, with regard to its penal sanction, hath not the authority and force of a law till it comes to be executed, which is very absurd. The Supreme Ruler brings men under a dispensation of grace, uses forbearance, delays executing of judgment, and hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world. Is it therefore just to say, that the sanction of the law hath not all along and still authority and force, nor will be in force till the last day? Surely it must be by virtue of the law and its sanction, that it is said of a man in this life, of him that believeth not the Son, (John iii. 36.) that *the wrath of God abideth on him*. For (Rom. iv. 15.) it is *the law that worketh wrath*. 2. The Doctor says, that it is the law that will give sin its deadly and destructive power in the great day. But certainly it could not do so, but as in its penal sanction it adjudges death and destruction for sin. As God hath given to men his law to be the rule of their behaviour, so when he shall come to act as a Judge, he certainly will make that same law his rule in

judging them. It were dishonourable to God as a Judge, to say that he would judge moral agents at last otherwise than according to the law he had put them under when they acted their part in life.

It appears, then, by Dr T.'s sentiment, as set forth in this passage, that the damnation and perdition of sinners at the day of judgment will be by virtue of the sanction of the law, which denounced death for sin ; which proves very clearly, that this everlasting perdition, this second death, (and not merely the deprivation of natural life) must be understood to be included in the death threatened by the law. It proves further, at this second death, this eternal perdition, will happen at last to every man, of every nation, and of all times, who is not saved by grace, and in the way marked out by it, that, besides deprivation of natural life, the second death is adjudged for sin by the law, which men of all nations and times have been under. So that it is not the law given to Adam, concerning the forbidden fruit only, or thereafter only the law given at Sinai, that denounced death and a curse for sin. How far these things are consistent with Dr T.'s other speculations concerning the law, which we have seen formerly, the reader may judge. That writer had very crude and undigested sentiments and reasonings on this, as on divers other subjects.

Upon the whole, it has been sufficiently proved, that the law of God, which is the rule of duty to all men in common, hath at all times, and with regard to men of all nations, been fenced with a penal sanction, which adjudged death to transgressors,—even death in all the extent of meaning, that hath been here shown from the Scripture. So that we may now be satisfied, how destitute of all foundation in scripture or reason, is the conceit of Mr Locke, expressed in his paraphrase, and note on Rom. vii. 8. where he says, that without the law (of Moses) sin could not hurt a man, or bring death upon him ; and his notion, that since the fall, mankind were not under a law threatening death for transgression, until the law given by Moses, which was given only to Israel ; which notion appears to have been adopted by Dr Whitby, in his paraphrase of ver. 9. which I come now to consider. Most of readers would not, I suppose, need to have so much said on this point. But, considering what weight the characters of these writers might give to their sentiments and arguments in the eyes of many, it seemed fit to consider the subject the more thoroughly and largely.

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

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

Grotius, Drs Hammond and Whitby, and also Mr Locke, agree in holding, that the apostle means not here himself personally, but the Jews in general; that being *without the law*, he means of the time before the law was given at Sinai; and by the *coming of the commandment*, the promulgation of the law on that occasion, with the curse, or penalty of death annexed. This the two last named did suppose was not threatened, except in the single case of eating the forbidden fruit, until that time.

But why suppose that Paul here personates others; or that he does not represent his own former personal case? Considering his style and expression, there can be no cause for understanding him otherwise, except there can be shown some absurdity in applying to himself personally what he says. I see not that Grotius brings any reason from the verse itself for this notion of his; but Dr Hammond does. ‘That he was *once without the law*, can, he says, with no appearance of truth be affirmed of Paul’s person, who was born and brought up a Jew, in the knowledge of the Mosaic law.’ But Paul might have had great knowledge of the Mosaic law, and, being brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, might have been very learned in the various cases and questions respecting the Mosaic rules of divine service, ceremonial pollutions, and ceremonial methods of purification, and yet have little knowledge of the moral law in its

extent, and very little knowledge of the power and energy of the law in his conscience and heart.

He mentions in the same context, what proves his knowledge of the law to have been very defective. He says, ver. 7. *I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not lust.* There was a time when he did not know the inward lustings of the heart to be sin; when he had no concern or anxiety about the disposition, aims, or affections of his heart; but thought all was well if he did what was externally good. As to this, it is to be considered, that the moral actions of rational creatures are not to be judged of merely by what they are in the outward work, but also by the inward principles and disposition of the heart; so that an action may, as to the outward part, be good materially, when, on the whole, as it comes to be judged of by an all-seeing, heart-searching God, according to the holiness and spirituality of his law, it is sin, and that, perhaps, of the most atrocious and aggravated kind and degree. By this it appears, that when Paul was a Pharisee, if his works were outwardly good, or in their outward nature indifferent, yet, not knowing that the law reaches the heart, he had not that light and knowledge of the law which would enable him to judge justly in what class, of good or evil, to state even those outward works, as connected with his inward views and disposition: besides, that much sin inwardly, not immediately connected with any outward action, was not known or observed by him. This was to be without the law in a great degree. However learned Paul had been in the divinity of the Pharisaical school, yet his knowledge being so essentially defective, with respect to duty and sin, certainly there was no impropriety or exaggeration in saying, when he came to know better, *I was without the law once.*

But besides, an important thing to be considered here is, that the law did not enter into his conscience with its proper authority, energy, and impression. Many a man there is of very clear and extensive knowledge, into whom the law doth not thus enter, to give the view and conviction of sin, with the proper impression. Upon the whole, Dr Hammond was far from having reason to say, that it could not be affirmed of Paul personally, that he was *without the law once.*

However, the sentiment, particularly of Dr W. and Mr L. is, that the apostle, personating others, says, *I was without the law once;* that is, for between two and three thousand years from the fall of Adam. For though they some-

times speak only of the Jews, the seed of Abraham, and seem to restrict the matter to the time between Abraham and the giving of the law, yet their scheme and opinion allows no room for this restriction. All mankind were, according to them, without a law denouncing death for transgression, from the fall until the law was given at Sinai. So that, in interpreting this verse, by the notion of Paul's personating others, they view mankind as contracted into one long-lived man, who was indeed very old, (more than four thousand years old,) when he says in the text, *I was alive without the law once*. It seems to have required considerable vivacity and force of genius to have thought of interpreting the text by a figure so very bold,—rather, wild and extravagant. But what is it that gives the hint of such a meaning, or that makes it necessary to have recourse to so strange an interpretation? That which hath been more commonly given, is simple, natural, obvious, and agreeable to the proper import and use of the expressions of the text, embarrassed with nothing that deserves to be called difficulty or inconvenience. Mr L.'s opinion has indeed led him to express himself in a strange manner, particularly in his paraphrase of this verse. 'There was a time, (saith he) when I, being without the law, was in a state of life.' And this he means not of men's own conceit, or sense of things respecting their state, but of a real state of life, not obnoxious to death. So that for one instance, for many instances, for a million of instances of transgression, sinners had not death to fear. Dr W.'s notion to the same purpose, we have seen in his paraphrase of this verse. I should think, with due deference to Mr L.'s and Dr W.'s characters, that representing fairly such extravagance of sentiment and expression, were enough for confutation to any thinking or judicious reader. I have, however, bestowed an essay on the subject, to which I refer.

After all, the expression of the text is not, When the threatening of death for transgression came; nor yet, When the law came; which they would suppose included or implied that threatening; but, *when the commandment came*, which is something very different from the threatening. I can easily admit, that *law* and *commandment* may be interchanged in expressing the same meaning; and I see they are so interchanged here, as I believe, at the same-time, that the divine commandment is to be understood to have had, at all times, the penal sanction of death for transgression

annexed to it, whether expressed or not. Yet if it were otherwise, and that the commandment had been for many ages without such penal sanction, we may be confident, when mention was to be made of introducing a law fenced with such a new and unusual sanction, that the expression would not be simply, *When the commandment came*, which, according to the notion of these writers, implies no such thing as the threatening of death.

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

2. Sin revived in these sinful affections that are by the law (as ver. 5.); and the more the law, with its authority, light, and terror, reached the heart and sin in it, sin exerted itself the more vehemently, in all manner of concupiscence (as ver. 8.) in opposition to the law. The consideration of the context seems to lead us to think, that it is the reviving of sin in this second respect, not excluding the former, that the apostle hath chiefly in his eye. The sinner, convinced of his guiltiness and danger by transgressing the law, doth yet incline to hope well of himself, if he shall do well in all future behaviour. So, being sensible by the coming of the commandment, that it is necessary that the heart be right, he labours upon it. But the more he doth so, the more he perceives the wickedness of his heart. Hence awakened sinners so commonly complain, that they find their hearts become daily worse, instead of becoming better. They find in it a perverse aversion to God and to his holiness, that the carnal mind is enmity against God, and is not subject to his law; and if, through manifold guiltiness by past practice, they find themselves under the fearful sentence of the righteous law, sin also reviving in the unholy workings of an evil heart, and in those motions of sin which are by the law, this especially destroys every false confidence.

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

Though the word here used concerning sin is, *sin revived*, that doth not oblige us to think, as if it had been altogether, as to the conviction of sin, or as to its rebellious motions by the law, (as the apostle speaks, ver. 5.) even before the commandment came, in the manner here meant. The preposition *ανα*, that is in the composition of the Greek verb here, hath not always that effect in the signification of a word; for sometimes a verb so compounded, hath no other than the simple meaning of the uncompounded verb; as instances of which are mentioned, *αναβλασκειν*, *ανατελλειν*, *ανιστασθαι*, for which the dictionaries may be looked into.

I represented before (in the Essay on the Penal Sanction of the Law) Dr W.'s paraphrase of this verse, by which he would have it mean, that before the law of Moses was given, a man of the seed of Abraham was not obnoxious to death for sin, as there was then no law that threatened death for it. His note on this verse is in these words: *‘προ τε Μωυσεως*, ‘before the law of Moses came. So Chrysostom, Oecumenius, Theophylact.’ It is a way not uncommon with this writer, to give such a list of names when he hath not a better argument to support his interpretation.

Before I leave this verse, there is one thing yet which it is needful to consider. It may, perhaps, be objected, that, in the history of Paul, we cannot find any period or time when he could observe in himself that revival of sin, on the coming of the commandment, or could have that experience of the workings of sin, on occasion of the law, in persons in the flesh, that are represented in this context: and if so, then he must necessarily be supposed to be personating others, not setting forth his own experience. The argument may be conceived thus. He was, on his journey to Damascus, a Pharisee, possessed with the delusions of that sect, and in full confidence of his own good state; when the Lord having manifested himself to him, he did, at the same time, manifest to him the consolations of grace; yea, said, Acts xxvi. 16. *I have appeared to thee for this purpose to make thee a minister*, &c. adding words of the utmost encouragement and comfort. Here there was no interval or time, to observe the motions of sin that are by the

law. This was prevented by the speedy manifestation of grace; by which being brought under grace, he could not have in himself the experience of a man in the flesh, and under the law, that is represented in this context. This deserves to be considered.

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

If any shall happen not to be satisfied with this, yet the matter may still be accounted for by what we find in his history. Let it then be allowed, that on his first appearing to him, the Lord said very comfortable things, as it is not uncommon for him to suggest some comfortable matters for the present support of distressed souls, when they are not yet capable of receiving full consolation through faith. So, whatever matter of comfort was suggested, Paul was not yet susceptible of the comfort. The sense of his guiltiness by the wicked course he had been in, and the apprehension of judgment for it, even the terror of the Lord, (2 Cor. v. 10.) was uppermost, and possessed his whole soul. As he trembled and was all astonished when he heard the Lord's reproof and expostulation, so, being blind, he did not eat or

drink for three days and nights. This represents a condition of great distress; nor do we find with him any symptoms of comfort till Ananias came to him, acquainted him of the ministry to be committed to him, and called on him to receive baptism, the seal of divine grace; and, using it with faith to wash away his sins, calling on the name of the Lord, Acts xxii. 14—16.

In these primitive times, the law and the gospel had very powerful and speedy effect on the souls of men, as we may observe in divers instances. If we suppose a man blind, and diverted by no external objects, having his heart filled with the sense of his sinfulness, and of the great aggravations and fearful consequences thereof, with his mind turned to the most serious thought about his most important interests, with the most intense application; if with this we consider the velocity with which things pass in the human mind, especially in such a condition, we may be assured, that in these three days and three nights, Paul acquired great experience of his own heart, of the flesh, that corrupt principle in him, and the law now come clear and strong into his conscience,—these, the flesh and the law, striking powerfully the one against the other. Paul, deeply sensible of his own wretchedness, did doubtless labour much on this occasion to reform his heart unto a conformity with the holiness and spirituality of the law, which he now understood better than ever before. He might at that time have all the experience he represents in this context, of sins reviving, and exerting itself vehemently, and of the prevailing power of the flesh, with all its sinful affections and lustings, in opposition to the authority and holiness of the law. Thus we find a period in his history wherein he was likely to have personally all the experience here set forth; which makes a sufficient answer to the difficulty or objection suggested.

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

PARAPHRASE.—9. Sin being thus dead, as in the absence of the law, a self-flattering deluded heart entertains great confidence of a man's good state, until the coming of the com-

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

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## AN ESSAY

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

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

The former account, that of Dr Hammond, (considered in explaining ver. 8.) and this, are so far connected, that if under the law there was no ground for men's hope of the remission of sins, there could be no hope of eternal life. Yet, on the other hand, if there was then no ground for the hope of forgiveness, as there certainly was, there behoved to be good warrant for the hope of future life and happiness. For men might justly conclude, that God would not pardon sin, and so bring men into favour and amity with himself, with-

out providing for them, as the fruit of that amity, something better than an earthly portion, which is more commonly enjoyed in its highest degree by those who are strangers to God, and under the guilt of unpardoned sin.

What the words last cited say, 'that most men in these 'times were carnal,' is, I apprehend, the case now, even under the light and encouragement of gospel revelation. If it was so with the ancient Israel, the cause of it was not, that God did not encourage them, or that piety was nor encouraged with the hope of eternal life. Grotius says, in the words immediately preceding those last cited, that the few who in that state were spiritual, were not so *ex sola vi legis*, merely by virtue of the law. In this I agree with him; and I believe the law, strictly so called, will not in any time make men spiritual, as of old the promise that he should be heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed through the law. But that is nothing to the present purpose. For, if the ancient Israel, together with the law, had the promise of future life and happiness, to encourage their pursuit of holiness, and of spiritual and heavenly things, then their being under the legal pedagogy could not be a cause of men's being under the dominion of sin, or in the flesh. When this eminent writer doth, on Rom. vi. 14. contradistinguish the gospel as having the promise of heavenly things, to the law as having no such promise, he must by the *law* be understood to mean the whole system of the ancient Jewish faith and religion. So that when he says, on Rom. vii. 5. that men had then generally small hope, or none at all, of future life, it was evidently his mind, that God gave them not sufficient ground for such hope, by his dealing with them, or by the revelation he gave them, however some of them might console themselves with some weak hope of that sort. This is a matter of such importance as deserves to be seriously considered, and carefully explained.

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

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

In the times of the Judges, yea, in all the times preceding the reign of king David, they had great vicissitudes, and recurring times of great and long continued distress. Many thousands, who were pious, are likely to have died in these calamitous times of their nation, in circumstances of much external misery, without seeing what the renewed mercy of God did for their people. Had all these no hope for themselves in their death? or might they, after all the privilege God had dignified them with,—after all their faith in him, and their upright walking with him, amidst the backslidings of their nation, that brought judgments on them,—might they say, that they had nothing by it, but to be of all men the most miserable? If the Ephesians, in their state of heathenism, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, were without hope, it certainly were very unreasonable to say, that those of the commonwealth of Israel were so too. Upon the general view of these things, it is certainly just to say, that from God's dealing with that people, in such instances and cases as are before mentioned, an Israelite, thoughtful about futurity, might infer the hope of future happiness to pious persons, with as great certainty, and acquiescence of judgment and understanding, as he could infer any conclusions from any principles.

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

The Lord called himself *their God*, and denominated himself *the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, Exod. iii. 6. 15. This expressed the covenant ; the sum of which was in these few words, *I will be their God, and they shall be my people*. Let us consider what this imported. It is not merely, that as he was the God they acknowledged and worshipped, so they were the people he would acknowledge as his, and whose services he would accept. The expressions import a great deal more ; even a most special mutual interest which God and his people should have in one another, by virtue of the covenant. When the true Israel agreed sincerely to be his people, it imported a resignation of themselves to him, to be wholly his ; to be disposed of for his glory, and separated to his service. Hence, as God hath an original right to them of property and dominion, as his creatures, so he had a special acquired right to them by the covenant, and by their own choice and self-dedication.

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

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

We have the best confirmation possible of the justness of this reasoning from our Lord's using it to the same purpose against the Sadducees, in Matt. xxii. 23. and Luke xx. 37, 38. *Now that the dead are raised, Moses showed at the bush, when he calls the Lord the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.* As it was fit to argue out of the writings of Moses against the Sadducees, who are said to have acknowledged no other Scripture, it is certain that nothing is to be found in all the Scripture more to the purpose of proving the resurrection, than God's covenant expressed in these words. The Lord's argument from them, as expressed, Luke xx. 38. comes to this;—he is not the God of the dead—of those who at death shall perish; for it were highly dishonourable to him to be reckoned to be, by special relation of grace and covenant, their God. He is not the God of any but of such who, by virtue of his being so, are the heirs of eternal life, and who shall be introduced to it by a happy resurrection. Shall now any, who shall consider the matter itself, or who regards the authority and judgment of the greatest Master of reason that ever appeared in our nature, say, that an ancient Israelite, who had at heart to lay hold of and improve the grace of the covenant,

had not in these words, *I am the Lord thy God*, a most sure ground to rest on for the hope of a happy futurity, and the most sure warrant for the hope of eternal life? The inspired writer to the Hebrews thought so, when he said, Heb. xi. 16. *Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city.*

I shall now show by another Scripture, that God's covenant, as it was proposed to his people anciently, did found the hope of eternal life, and that the promise thereof was so meant. In Isa. lv. 3. mention is made of *the sure mercies of David*. Indeed the mention of *sure mercies* might, at first sight, convince any, that other sort of mercies are intended than such as are earthly, temporary, and transient. We need be at no loss to understand who this David is. David, king of Israel, had been dead some centuries before. This David was to come when Isaiah wrote, as appears by the following words: *Behold I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people. Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall come unto thee.* It is plain it is the Lord Jesus Christ, mentioned on other occasions by the prophets under the name of David, who is here intended; and the expression of 'mercies being sure to him,' imports that God would raise him from the dead to eternal life. We may be the more confident of this interpretation, when we observe the blessed apostle going before us in it, Acts xiii. 34. where, proving to his hearers from the Scriptures of the Old Testament, that God was to raise Christ from the dead, his Scripture quotation and argument he gives thus: *As concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give unto you the sure mercies of David.* We see what the *sure mercies* promised to Jesus Christ do mean. To bring this to the purpose of our present argument, I next observe, that these *sure mercies*, importing resurrection to eternal life, are by Isaiah extended to all the faithful, as the mercies of the covenant. It is implied, agreeable to the common doctrine of the Scriptures, that the covenant is, in the first place, made with Jesus Christ the second Adam; and hence God is called *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*. Therefore the promises and blessings of the covenant descend through Christ, and, in his right, to them who believe in him. Accordingly, these are the prophet's words, Isa. lv. 3. *Hear, and your souls shall live; and I will make an*

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

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

In the time of Moses, Baalam says, Numb. xxiii. 10. *Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.* Grotius gives, from the Jewish Gemara, an interpretation of this, as if it was only a wish that he might not die an immature or violent death, as the Lord promised to those who obeyed him. Himself did well to add, that these expressions do, however, hide a more deep mystical sense; yet this that he calls a mystical sense appears more open and obvious than that other given by the Gemara. It is plain, that the words mean the hope that is in death possessed by righteous persons, even if their death should be immature or

violent, (as that afterwards of Eli and Josiah, and, long before Balaam's time, that of righteous Abel) or with whatever external circumstances it should be attended.

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

The view that Solomon gives of the course of things in the world makes clearly and strongly to the present purpose, when he says, Eccl. ix. 1, 2. *No man knoweth love or hatred by all that is before them: all things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked*. What the words intimate is, that there happens not, in the course of providence respecting men in this life, any thing that proves God's special favour and love to one sort beyond others. So the wise man observed, even in these times of the Old Testament. Yet it could not be thought that God's special favour and love to his people does not produce suitable effects and fruits to their advantage. Therefore the Holy Ghost declaring, that none such are to be looked for in this life, it amounts to an assurance, and could not but be so understood in these times, that the special fruits of Divine favour are certainly awaiting them in a future happy state.

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

God gives warrant and commission here, in the words of Isaiah, to say to the righteous, without excepting any condition or time of life, that *it shall be well with him*. It is at death especially, when a man is finishing his course of righteousness, that he may be determined to be righteous; and

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

This text indeed doth not say eternal life; and the demand of some is, to find in the scriptures of the Old Testament a promise or declaration mentioning explicitly and expressly eternal life; not merely inferring it by reasoning from dark texts. This, however, is very unreasonable, and not better than if the Sadducees had replied to our blessed Lord,—You do but argue from a dark text, in which there is no express mention of resurrection, or of eternal life. The force of the argument did so strike them as to disable them to make such answer to it. It doth not become us to contend captiously with God about words and vocables. Certainly, no words of any promise could more clearly and strongly ensure future life and happiness to a righteous man when dying, than the promise of Isaiah doth. As to the expression, *eternal* or *everlasting life*, we shall even find it in the promise presently.

We see Daniel writing expressly of the resurrection of the dead, chap. xii. 2, 3. *And many of them who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.* If Daniel had,

in the preceding context, been prophesying of the distresses of the Jews by the oppressions of Antiochus, he doth here promise, not merely outward deliverance from these, but sets forth what makes the chief consolation of the church against all temporal distresses and afflictions. It is common with the prophets, Isaiah in particular, to comfort the church of Israel, against the tribulations they foretel, by lofty representations of the glories of Christ's kingdom to the end of the world, and after it for ever. Thus doth Daniel here comfort the church against the extreme distresses he had foretold, by representing the resurrection of the dead, and the glory that shall follow. If the word is *many*, it hath been observed, that sometimes the word signifies the same as *all*. So Rom. v. 19. *By one man's disobedience many were made sinners.* It is plain that nothing less than the resurrection of the dead comes up to the propriety and obvious meaning of Daniel's words; and the promise to himself can mean no less than his having his part comfortably in that resurrection; ver. 13. *But go thou thy way till the end be; for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.*

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

The apostle Paul put the cause between him and his persecutors on this, Acts xxiii. 6. that it was concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead that he was called in question. And he says before Agrippa, Acts xxvi. 6, 7, 8. *I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come; for which hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?*—In like manner, ver. 22, 23, he asserts, that he said *none other things than Moses and the prophets did say should come, that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead.* Indeed, this promise of rising from the dead, to Christ and his people, is clearly enough expressed, Isa. lv. 3. as hath been shown formerly. It may have the appearance and pretence of advancing the honour and value of the gospel, and of the

Christian revelation, to assert that it was by it first, and never before, that the promise was given, and a foundation laid for the hope of the resurrection, and of eternal life. But I do not understand that it can consist with the credit of the Christian revelation to suppose, that Christ and his apostles pretended to find in Moses and the prophets what was not truly in them.

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

Thus too the same inspired writer gives an account of the faith and hope of these fathers, ver. 13—16. He says, *These all died in the faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth.* He then says, they hereby *declared plainly, that they did seek a country*; not that from whence they came out: they showed that they desired a better, that is, a heavenly country. Whatever besides was in these promises, it is evidently the apostle's view, that there was that in them that determined these fathers to account themselves, yea, to choose to be, strangers and pilgrims on earth, and to desire a heavenly country.

Downwards, ver. 24—26. he represents how Moses did forego the prospect of high worldly advancement, took a share in the afflictions of the people of God, and in the reproach of Christ: *for, saith the inspired writer, he had respect unto the recompence of reward.* This was not a reward on earth, or to share in the rest and happiness of Israel in Canaan, which he did not attain; but a recompence and reward, the hope of which did not disappoint him. Thereafter, ver. 35. he mentions some, who were *tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.* After all this, I cannot but wonder that some learned men should not be able to find in the religion of the Old Testament, or in the covenants of promise, which were the grounds and principles of that religion, a clear and suffi-

cient warrant for the hope of future happiness, and of eternal life. Our blessed Lord himself, John v. 39. bids the Jews to *search the Scriptures*; for in them, saith he, *ye think ye have eternal life*. He gave them no hint on this occasion, that their opinion of finding eternal life in these Old Testament Scriptures was ill founded. Yea, if it were, it had been deducing them to direct them to look for it there.

It were easy to add here divers instances of holy persons in these times, whose profession of their faith and hope of future life appears in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and who profess this hope in such a manner as did sufficiently warrant the same hope to others, in their own and after times. There is less need to enlarge in that way, that even Socinus and his followers acknowledge that several of them did actually entertain that hope; at the same time that they assert, that God gave them no such promise, nor the warrant of such hope; and allow that the heathens also had that hope: so that God's Israel were without hope, as to any sure ground of hope, as well as the heathens who were *aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise*, Eph. ii. 12. But the great difference between Israel and the heathens, as to the grounds of their hope, doth very clearly appear by what we have said on the subject. However, as to the hope actually entertained by them, these few instances (besides what hath come in our way before) may be observed, Gen. xlix. 18. 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. Psal. xvii. 15. Psal. xlix. 14, 15. Psal. lxxiii. 24—26.

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

the prosperity of their nation, and restore them to the possession of their earthly inheritance, if they had been dispossessed of it.

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

What is expressed in the Old Testament Scripture, on such views as I have been observing, is by no means to the purpose of the doctrine of justification, nor doth it derogate from the hope of eternal life in the times of the Old Testament. If Moses or the prophets are signifying to Israel, by what means their nation may attain or recover the Divine favour and their national prosperity, we are not to conceive it, as if the Holy Ghost were showing how a sinner is justified before God, with spiritual and eternal consequences. I believe a nation may, according to the common rule and method of Divine conduct, attain the favour of Providence by their own works and good behaviour; and the favour of Providence may sometimes, by Divine sovereignty, be be-

stowed, as the reward of the integrity and well-doing of single persons, as more commonly happened in the times of the Old Testament. But it doth not by any means follow, that a sinner is justified before God by his own works or righteousness, or that it is by these that a sinner is introduced into a state of grace and favour with God. At the same time, if the Lord encouraged Israel to obedience, repentance, and reformation, by the promises of peace, earthly prosperity, and national happiness, they shall greatly mistake, who shall think that he invited men to piety by no higher views, and by no better promises.

The case, in short, hath stood thus: *Godliness hath* still had *the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.* Under the gospel, the promise of the life that it to come is more clearly exhibited, and more inculcated. During the Old Testament, the promise of the life that now is, did, in a greater degree, include temporal prosperity, and was more inculcated than since. They who were carnal followed after righteousness with that view; and generally they did not miss of their reward. But they whose hearts were formed to spiritual things, as their views entered farther into true holiness, they pursued that course with a higher aim of spiritual good things, and of eternal blessings, and found sufficient ground for such aim and hope in the promises of the covenant.

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

That the expression used in writing to Timothy doth not import so, will appear by considering expressions fully as strong, used concerning other subjects. For instance, Eph. iii. the Apostle says, *That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ, by the gospel,* ver. 6. was a *mystery made known,* ver. 3. to himself by revelation. *A mystery* ver. 5, which in former

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

In like manner, the apostle Peter says of Christ to those he writes to, that *he was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world; but* (so he adds) *was manifested in these latter times for you.* The word *manifest*, here, and in 2 Tim. i. 10. *brought to light*, do very precisely render the words of the Greek; and to *bring to light*, and to *make manifest*, are expressions evidently of the same meaning. But if Christ is said to be made manifest in the latter times, those of the gospel, would any infer that there was no revelation, no promise of him under the Old Testament? To make the like inference concerning life and immortality, from 2 Tim. i. 10. were no less absurd.

It cannot be understood how religion could be at all maintained in ancient times, or at any time sincerely, in the church, without the promise and hope of spiritual blessings, and of eternal life; or how without the pursuit and hope of these, there could be true purity of heart, or true holiness. When the apostle Paul proceeds in the latter part of his epistle to the Colossians, as is usual with him in all his epistles, to exhort the Colossians to holiness, he begins,

chap. iii. 1. with exhorting them to *seek the things that are above*; to *set their affections on things above, not on things on the earth*, and to *mortify their members* (their corrupt lusts and affections) *that are upon the earth*. If we observe the view the Scripture gives us of the matter, we shall see there is nothing more contrary to holiness and purity of heart, than to have the heart set on the earth, and addicted to earthly satisfactions and enjoyments, and to the pursuit of them. Though Grotius is wrong, when he writes so unfavourably of the hope of eternal life during the Old Testament, yet his view is so far right in general, that, supposing the Lord not to give the hope of any good beyond what is earthly, there would not be the strength (nor, I say, the disposition) needful for purifying the heart. To say the truth, how could men be found fault with for pursuing and resting in the happiness of earthly wealth and pleasure, if nothing better was set before them? And however, on occasion of remarkable Divine pleasure, fasting and prayer might, at any rate, be proper, even for the recovery or continuance of earthly enjoyments; yet, in the common course of things, might it not be reckoned just and prudent to say, *Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die*? For why should not men set their hearts on that good, which is the greatest object of hope, that they find even revelation setting before them?

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

It will not be enough to say, that many, in these times, from the direction of their reason or understanding, from the inclination of their own hearts, or from some secret instinct of grace, did indeed desire and hope for spiritual bless-

ings and eternal life, though God did not by any revelation or promise give them any direction or ground to warrant such desire and hope. Even the Socinians allow so much. But that certainly must be deemed sufficient in religion, which is agreeable to the revelation God hath given. If the revelation did not warrant and found the hope of spiritual blessings and of eternal life, we must either say, that the desire and hope of these is not necessary in religion, or that divine revelation in the times of the Old Testament was essentially defective; which were so dishonourable to God and to revelation, that I scarce think it will be admitted by any persons of Christian profession.

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

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

EXPLICATION.—The unfavourable consequence of the coming of the commandment, here seems not to be merely condemning the transgressor, and adjudging death to him, which, according to the notion of some late writers, it never did but in one instance, until the Mosaic promulgation, which, they say, first added to the commandment the sanction of death for transgression. If we consider the context from ver. 5. we may see cause to think, that the apostle hath

especially in his view the effect produced by the unregenerate heart and the law, between them; viz. the revival of sin in its more vehement lustings and unholy affections.

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

But, alas! human nature hath undergone a sad change, a powerful depravation. Now, sin, or the flesh, that evil principle dominant in the unregenerate soul, being urged, reprov'd, and condemned by the law, it doth awaken with all its force, and exert itself in sinful affections, in all manner of concupiscence, terminating in death. As the evident scope of the preceding context tends to give this view of the present text; so we see the expression and sense of the next following, ver. 11. suits the same view.

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

Some writers, whom I have often had occasion to mention, have held that *law* in this context is to be understood in a restricted sense, of a law with the sanction of death for transgression, such as never was given forth to sinful men until the Mosaic promulgation; and this some of them call

*rigour of law.* But how could it be said that this law was ordained to life to sinful men; for it was to such it was given at Sinai? it could not possibly bring sinners to life. If they should say the law was ordained to life, as it was first given to Adam in innocence, yet even thus it will not answer, according to the strange notion of Dr T. who says, that Adam, in his first state, could not stand under what he calls rigour of law, (that is, law denouncing death for every transgression,) more than any of his posterity. If so, then, according to him, the law could not bring man in his best state to life; and none will say that the law could give life to sinners. How then, according to these men's notions, could Paul say, *the law was ordained to life?*

PARAPHRASE.—10. And thus the commandment, which was originally designed to give life to all who would perfectly obey it, and which to undepraved and innocent man gave the best direction, and the most powerful excitement to the holiness and obedience that is the way to life, did, as by accident, (as *causa per accidens*,) through the sad corruption of my nature, which did not yield to its authority, nor was subdued by its power, but exerted itself the more vehemently in all sinful affections and lustings, work a real death *in me*, as it denounced eternal death *to me*; and so (ver. 9.) destroyed that confidence by which I was sometime vainly alive in my own conceit.

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

EXPLICATION.—Dr W. in his annotations on ver. 8—11. and after his particular annotation on ver. 10. says, ‘The  
 ‘ old and common interpretation is this, that the prohibition  
 ‘ of what we desire makes us to think the enjoyment of it  
 ‘ more sweet and valuable; or at least provokes the carnal  
 ‘ mind, which is not subject to the law of God, to a more  
 ‘ fervent longing after it, *dum prohibita non tam refugit quam*  
 ‘ *ardentius expetit*, and this agrees very well with the ex-  
 ‘ pression.’ The matter may be illustrated by this similitude:—If a man who bears an inveterate hatred to another, whom he reckons his enemy, ever desiring and endeavouring to destroy him, should see this other man before him and near him, this would readily awaken his passion to an extreme degree against him, and put him upon showing his hatred and opposition to him in a vehement manner. So sin, finding the commandment come home upon the conscience

with much force, seeking its destruction ; this awakens the malignity of sin, and it exerts itself, and all its members, its various lusts and passions, in the most keen opposition to the law.

He had said before, that *sin taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in him all manner of concupiscence*. Here he says, *sin taking occasion by the commandment, deceived him*. So there is deception in the case. There is so great evil in sin, and the consequences, as set forth by the righteous law, are so terrible, that it were not likely the heart of man would fall in with it, without being in some way deceived. So the Greek here is *ἐξηπατήσεν*, it deceived, as the Seventy hath in Eve's answer, Gen. iii. 13. *the serpent ἠπάτησέν με*. We know that men's lusts and passions have great influence on their mind and imagination. Thus sin, and the various lusts thereof, awakened and irritated by the contrary commandment, set the imagination to work according to their own turn and disposition, to represent in the most alluring colours the pleasure to be attained by their gratification and enjoyment. This further inflames the sinful passion and lusting. These sinful passions and desires upon the one hand, and on the other the false colours in which the imagination represents the object, do mutually co-operate to give advantage to sin and its deceit.

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

At the sametime, there is another sort of deception no less common, arising from the suggestion of impunity : thus, Deut. xxix. 18, 19.—*Lest there should be among you a root bearing gall and wormwood, and it come to pass when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart.* A self-flattering heart, (*deceitful above all things*, Jer. xvii. 9.) can readily enough suggest,

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

Dr T. doth here alter the translation, and, instead of *sin taking occasion*, he renders, ‘sin having received force by the commandment.’ He says, (note on ver. 8.) that all the commentators (and some of them understood the Greek exceeding well) have mistaken the signification of the Greek word here rendered *occasion*, when it really signifies *force, advantage*. That force he understands of the force which sin hath got by the Mosaic law to give death to the transgressor. Grotius on ver. 8. renders the Greek word, *impunity*, which implies the law’s wanting force. Dr T. will have it mean, the law’s having force, and giving destructive force to sin. Enough has been said elsewhere concerning Grotius’ rendering. I see not that Dr T. gives any authority or reason for his sense of the word; if it is not that it best suits his notions and doctrine, and the misinterpretation he has given of divers other texts. I see in my dictionary, *occasion*, given for a sense of the word. But that of Grotius, or of Dr. T. are not among the senses given of it. If critics will, in interpreting Scripture, give senses to words upon no better authorities, they may assert and establish what doctrines they please.

The sense of this verse may, with little variation from the paraphrase of the worthy Dr Guyse, be given thus:

PARAPHRASE.—11. For sin in me, that evil principle so deeply rooted in my depraved nature, being impatient of restraint by the law, took a perverse occasion from the strictness of the commandments contained in it, to rise up in rebellion against it, as if it was too unreasonable and severe an imposition to be laid upon human nature; and by this and various other means of deception, beguiling me as the serpent did Eve, (Gen. iii. 13.) it ensnared me, and drew

me to the commission of many evils, which God had forbidden; and by this means, brought me more and more under the heaviest sentence of condemnation and death; and when afterwards it came home, in its spirituality and power, to my conscience, it slew the high towering thoughts and confidences which I before had entertained about my own sufficiency to keep it, and my own righteousness to recommend me to God.

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

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

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

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

EXPLICATION.—Let us begin with observing Dr T.'s interpretation of the first part of this verse. According to the notion that has been entertained by him, and some others, that this chapter is addressed to Jewish converts separately, he makes several passages in it to be the words, question, or objection of a Jew, with the apostle's answer annexed. So here his paraphrase gives, in way of dialogue, thus: '*Jew.* 'And yet you say, we were made subject to death by the 'commandment. Could that which is so good (ver. 12.) 'become deadly to us?' By this the Jew, as he is represented here, considers the law's denouncing death for transgression as a doctrine of the apostle's, which Jews had not known, nor ever received; and reasoning against it as hard, and inconsistent with the goodness of the law. But it is

very incongruous to put an objection against the law in the mouth of a Jew. The Jew gloried in the law, and would not object against it on the account here mentioned, or on any account. When the curses were solemnly proclaimed from mount Ebal, Deut. xxvii. all the people were directed to say at hearing each, *Amen*. They did so at hearing the last comprehensive one denounced against all and every transgression, ver. 26. Their assent and consent to this, on that solemn occasion, appears as a condition of the covenant of that nation with God. They greatly mistake, who think the design here is to vindicate the penal sanction of the law against the objection of a Jew. What the vindication hath respect to, we have seen in part, and will presently see more fully.

Let us now see the answer, as Dr T. gives it thus: ‘*Apos*. No. ; take me right. It was not the commandment itself which slew us, *but sin*. It was sin which subjected us to death, by the law justly threatening sin with death.’ The truth in this matter is easily conceived. Sin merits death: death is threatened and inflicted by the law and by the Lawgiver. There is faultiness in sin, so meriting; but no faultiness on the part of the law, or Lawgiver. But to say, it was not the law that slew sinners, or subjected them to death, is not agreeable to truth; nor is it consistent with what this Doctor says elsewhere. In his note on ver. 8. he writes thus: ‘That sting (*viz.* of death) is *sin*. But death would have no power to thrust that sting into the sinner’s heart, were it not for the law of God condemning him to death.’ And a little downwards: ‘The law is the force, by which the terrible sting is plunged into the sinner’s vitals. For, ver. 8. without the law, sin, the sting of death, is itself dead, and quite unable to slay the sinner.’ Thus this acute Doctor introduces the Jew, quite out of character, objecting against the law, and its penal sanction; and makes the inspired apostle give an answer inconsistent with the Doctor’s own account of things; an answer contrary to truth and common sense. How could the man say, it was not the commandment that slew us, but sin, when he held that sin prevailing for many ages did not slay men, until the law was given at Sinai?

As it is quite vain to think that the apostle means here to introduce a vindication of the law, for assigning death as the punishment of transgressions; so the just view of his design is easily learned from the preceding context. He had

mentioned, ver. 5. *the motions of sins which were by the law.* He had said, ver. 8. that *sin taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in him all manner of concupiscence:* and ver. 10. that *the commandment which was ordained to life, he found to be unto death:* and ver. 11. that *sin taking occasion by the commandment, deceived him.* By this it is evident, that what is here meant is a vindication of the law from the charge of being truly the cause of sin in a man's heart and practice, or of these motions of sins, and of that concupiscence and deception that is by occasion of the law. As we distinguish, with regard to offence, between offence given and offence taken, which last may be when indeed there is no offence, or cause of offence, given: so here, as to occasion, the law did not give occasion; but sin did perversely and wickedly take occasion, such as the context represents. The vindicating of the law with regard to this, and showing that it is not by any means the cause of sin, is the evident and special scope of this place.

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

2. The other thing to be here inquired into, is, what is meant by *sin* in this clause,—*sin that it might appear sin.* Divers commentators have observed, that *sin* is in this context, by a figure, represented as a person; and some seem to mean no more by this figurative person, than a general notion, comprehending or including all particular sorts of sin. But we see in this context *sin* distinguished from sinful acting, as we have, ver. 8. *sin* working in a man *all manner of concupiscence.* This last imports inward *acts* of sin, previous to which is *sin* working this concupiscence, and the

efficient cause of it. So that sin thus working is not to be considered as a thing merely ideal, an abstract idea, or notion, which cannot be truly the cause of any thing. Sin here is something real—a cause, which, by its powerful influence, works concupiscence, every particular lusting, or unholy affection. It is the cause or principle of sinning, deeply rooted in men's nature, in this state of depravation, what the learned have called *peccatum peccans*—the sinning sin—sin the cause of all actual sins in the inward and outward practice. The remainder of which evil principle in the regenerate he had called (chap. vi. 6.) *the old man*. It is otherwise called the *flesh*; which is itself, previous to these unholy actings, inward or outward, called (Gal. v. 19. &c.) *the works of the flesh*. How, on any other view, can be understood *sin working concupiscence*? This activity, in the way of concupiscence, or of deceiving, doth certainly presuppose a previous acting cause. The sum, then, of the apostle's argument is, as hath been several times said, that the law or commandment is but the innocent occasion, and by no means the cause of such sinful motions as are said (ver. 5.) to be *by the law*; but that sin, that evil principle in human nature, is the true proper cause of all sinful motions and actions.

Nor will it make a valid objection against this, that is somewhere suggested by Mr L., that sin cannot be the cause of itself. True; nothing can be the cause of itself. But sin, in one sense and respect, may be the cause of sin in another sense and respect. This is easily explained by James i. 15. It will be acknowledged that the lusting there mentioned is sin, especially when it hath inwardly conceived; and there it is said, *When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin*. Here, then, sin (lust inwardly conceiving) is the cause of sin in the outward work and deed. Besides this, it appears in our context that there is sin in nature, previous even to the inward lusting, and which is the cause of it,—sin working in a man all manner of concupiscence.

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

it is said, *Sin that it might appear sin* ; to the same purpose, with some variation of expression, it is in the last clause, *That sin by the commandment might become* (that is, might appear, or be proved to be) *exceeding sinful*.

PARAPHRASE.—13. But after all that hath been offered to vindicate the law from the charge of being the true and proper cause of sin, yet having (ver. 5.) mentioned the motions of sin which are by the law, and (ver. 8.) all manner of concupiscence arising by occasion of the law ; and (ver. 10.) that you found the commandment to be unto death to you ; and (ver. 11.) that sin, by occasion of the commandment, deceived and slew you ; may it not be justly concluded, that the law which you have commended for its goodness is, indeed, made death to you, not merely by adjudging death to you for transgressing and rebelling against the commands and authority of the Almighty, (which all the world must acknowledge to be agreeable as to the holiness and justice, so also to the goodness of the law) but that it is also made death to you by increasing the activity of sin in you, or in me, which is so contrary to, so inconsistent with, the activity of a better and true life in our souls ; and thus it is a true cause of death in us of sin, as well as of death to us of punishment ? That the law should in this way be made death to me, or to any, I cannot easily conceive to be consistent with that holiness or goodness which you ascribe to the law.

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

conception—an abounding and overflowing source of transgression, impurity, and iniquity,—the powerful cause of increased condemnation and death,—yea, in a word, to be (as Jer. xvii. 9.) desperately wicked.

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

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## A DISSERTATION

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

SECT. 1.—*Being an introduction to this subject and inquiry.* It has been said, that the ancient writers of the church did universally understand the apostle as here personating an unregenerate person, until Augustine introduced a different interpretation. Wolfius, on verse 9. of this chapter, mentions a learned writer (Calovius) who has proved, he says, that these ancient writers before Augustine did not universally so understand the apostle. Augustine himself, who had at first so understood, says, that in the opinion which, on more close consideration of the context, he fell in with, he followed the interpretation of several writers of note, whom he mentions. By the passages he quotes from Ambrose of Milan, it is very evident that that eminent person, who wrote before him, understood Paul as representing here his own case and experience in a state of grace. This is in Augustine's second book against Julian.

In later times, Socinus, that noted adversary, under Christian profession of the Christian faith, said, Beware as of the pestilence, that you understand not this context of persons regenerate and under grace. Arminius, the first who did, in the bosom of a reformed church, broach that scheme of doctrine that hath its name from him, made the first discovery of his sentiments in his lectures on this context, in which his interpretation differed from that which was generally given by the reformed divines. He afterwards published an elaborate dissertation upon it, written with con-

siderable learning and acuteness. On the former part of the chapter we saw different opinions and interpretations ; but on this part men have become more warm and keen in their reasoning, and whilst they differ otherwise, they seem on all hands to agree in this one thing, the importance of understanding this context aright.

Among those who think the apostle here personates an unregenerate man, there is, however, some difference in their manner of stating the matter. Arminius supposes we have here the case of a man under the powerful influence of the law in his conscience, the law doing in his conscience all that could be done by its light and authority, convincing of sin, condemning, and giving him great excitement to his duty ; the case of a man in the very next step to regeneration and conversion. But the writers on that side do appear sometimes to change their ground. Some understand the man personated to be the Jew under the law, and even of such an one as Ahab, one of the worst of Jews, one of the worst of men, far from regeneration. Several have recourse to heathen fable, and introduce the story of the witch Medea, and the words which the poet puts in her mouth, to exemplify and illustrate their interpretation of this context ; as if we had nothing here but what suits the character and disposition of an Ahab, or a Medea.

Dr Whitby states the question thus: ‘ Whether Paul speaketh here in his own person, or in the person of a regenerate man, or only in the person of a Jew conflicting with the motions of his lusts, only by the assistance of the letter of the law, without the aids and powerful assistance of the Holy Spirit—’

It is not easy to see with what propriety the name and character of *Jew* is here introduced at all. Holy men from Moses to Christ were generally Jews ; and it cannot be said that they were without the aids of the Holy Spirit, according to Dr W. himself on ver. 5. It seems to be especially hard that he should thus represent a Jew, as not having the aids of the Spirit, even when conflicting against the motions of his lusts, considering what himself allows in favour of the heathens, annot. on Rom. ii. 14. where he says, ‘ If any of them did arrive at such a state, as made them indeed to fear God, and work righteousness, they did this not merely by the strength of natural light ; for though some of them seem to say, that nature or philosophy was a sufficient guide to virtue, yet that they meant not this exclusively

‘ of the Divine assistance, which they saw necessary to preserve them against the infirmity of human nature, their own words do fully testify.’ I stay not to make observations on the doctrine or interpretation contained in this passage. Only as to what concerns the present purpose, it represents to us, heathens arriving, according to this writer, at the character of fearing God, and working righteousness, (which they could not do without conflicting successfully against their lusts), and that not without Divine assistance. Alas for the poor Jew under the law, and having the advantage of Divine revelation, that to his character it should be affixed, as a thing distinguishing him from both the Christian and the heathen, to be conflicting with his lusts without that assistance!

I would ask, was there any universal sufficient grace in these Jewish and Old Testament times? I should think, that the principles that would necessarily infer the doctrine of such grace at one time, would prove it with respect to every time. If there was, as Dr W. held, I see not how a Jew could be supposed to be sincerely, seriously, earnestly (I think the author must mean so—certainly our context represents so) in conflict with the motions of his lusts; and yet not have sufficient Divine aids to enable a person so disposed, and so exercised, to overcome them.

After all, how comes he to suppose a Jew of the Apostle’s times to be conflicting with his lusts at all, when these Jews were generally of opinion, that the motions of lusts in the hearts of men were not sins or transgressions of the law, if they did not take effect externally? as this learned writer proves in his annotation on Matth. v. 20, 21. to have been the opinion of the most prevailing sect, and of their teachers, as they were indeed comparatively but few of the Jews who were not followers of that sect of the Pharisees. Upon this view, it were certainly more congruous to have marked out and distinguished the Jew, as one who, whatever guard he kept on his outward behaviour, did not inwardly maintain a conflict with his lusts at all, rather than as one who, without the aid of the Spirit, was in earnest and sad conflict with them, crying out, as in this context, *Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me!* For my part, I cannot help considering it as very opposite to the clear doctrine of the Scripture, to suppose the Jew, or any man, to be in sincere conflict against the motions of his lusts and corrupt affections within him, with the view and desire of holiness, and purity

of heart, without being under the present influence of the Holy Spirit.

It seems some followers of Pelagius of old did likewise understand this context, as if it set forth the language of a Jew personated. But Augustine did well observe, (*contra Julianum, lib. 3. cap. 26.*) that these words, *Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?—The grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord*, (so he read, instead of, *I thank God*, as we have it,) could not be the language of a Jew, or be used by the apostle, as personating a carnal Jew, who would not speak thus of Jesus Christ. It is the same person, he observes, who says, *Grace will deliver me through Jesus Christ*, who said, *I see another law resisting the law of my mind*. How Dr T. endeavours to hide this glaring incongruity, we shall see when we come to explain that part of the context.

Though Dr W. in stating the question (when, if ever, he should have spoke with some exactness) will have the apostle to be speaking here as in the person of a Jew, yet in his paraphrase of ver. 14. he expresses a more extensive view, thus: '*The law is spiritual: but every NATURAL man hath cause to say of himself, I am carnal.*' As there is then no colour of reason for mentioning the Jew on this occasion, let us take the view of the writers of that side, on the general point that the apostle here personates an unregenerate man, that none may complain of unfairly representing their opinion by restricting the matter to the Jew.

They who hold this interpretation, do most commonly seem to understand by what good is here ascribed to the unregenerate, no more than the light of reason in the mind or understanding, with the urgent testimony for duty, and against sin, that is in the conscience of the unregenerate, with different degrees of light and force. But if they can by any arguments persuade men that it is the case of the unregenerate that is here represented, I see they have further use to make of that interpretation in the dispute concerning the moral powers of nature. But this will come in our way more fully hereafter, in explaining the particular parts of the context that they argue from.

There is another point of doctrine which writers of that side have at heart to support. As they labour much to advance the moral powers of nature, and of free-will in men's natural and unregenerate state, they are no less anxious to advance the power of free-will in a state of grace, beyond

proper bounds. This has led them, at least some of the most eminent of them, to hold, that a sinless state, and perfection in holiness, is within the reach of free-will in this life. But it tends utterly to confound that notion, if this very eminent saint and Apostle shall be understood to speak in this context as in his own person, and to be representing how matters stood with himself as to sin and holiness.

So these writers have their system to take care of and support, in interpreting this part of Scripture;—none, however, more ready to accuse their neighbours, the divines of the reformed churches, of interpreting Scripture by their system. Whatever may be of this upon one side or other, yet there is no good cause for scepticism. The true and certain meaning of scripture may be reached by humble, sincere, and impartial inquiries after truth. Let the reader be warned to be on his guard, that none impose the mere notions of his system upon him for Scripture. At the same time, I may be allowed to warn him, not to let a pre-conceived opinion shut out the truth from his mind, or harden him against its evidence and impression. Let us now go a step nearer to the main subject.

SECT. 2.—*Containing general considerations tending to explain the scope and purpose of this context.*

1. The first consideration arises from the great difference in the style and expression between the former and this latter context. He had been speaking of himself in the past tense, showing how matters had been with him formerly, when under the law; and, in his own case, representing how it is with persons under the law, who, as long as they are so, are in the flesh, and under the dominion of sin. He now, from ver. 14. speaks of himself in the present tense. It is what naturally occurs to one's mind from this change of the tense, that, as formerly he had been showing his own case whilst under the law, so now he shows how things go with him at present, in a state of grace, as he was when he wrote. They would need to bring very cogent reasons, who would have us understand him in a sense so very different from what his expression naturally leads us to. He could easily set forth in plain speech the case of persons unregenerate, as he had done before in this and the preceding chapters, without darkening matters, and making his discourse quite ambiguous, by altering his style. He had in a very plain manner represented, from his own past expe-

rience, the case of persons under the law ; what good reason can possibly be given for his becoming obscure now, by speaking in the present tense, as of himself, (a person regenerate and under grace,) what must be understood of persons unregenerate and under the law, without giving any hint that he so means ?

It hath been said, that the apostle doth on divers occasions speak in his own name, when he doth indeed personate others. Several instances are adduced, some of which cannot be justly so interpreted. But if it be allowed, that, on some occasions, he doth in very few words express the arguments, objections, and reproaches used by others against himself, his doctrine, or conduct, yet in every such case the thing evidently appears by the obvious import of the expressions, and by the answers immediately subjoined, so that there is not room left for mistaking. But it is quite unlikely that he would continue to speak, as of himself, through so long a passage, and yet mean it of others all the time, without intimating by any expression or hint, that to be his design. At any rate, his personating on some other occasions, does not give us cause to think he personates here, unless very good reasons were given for our understanding him so ; and what reasons are offered to that purpose, are to be here considered.

One account of the matter, somewhat plausible, is given by Dr W. (annot. on Rom. vii. 25.) thus : ‘ He saith not, as he might have done, you that are under the law are carnal ; but, representing what belonged to them in his own person, and so taking off the harshness, and mollifying the invidiousness of the sentence, by speaking of it in his own person, he saith, *I am carnal, sold under sin.*’ So Photius and Oecumenius.’ This is far from being satisfying ; and I wish the learned writer had told us what there is in the names Photius and Oecumenius, to make a bad reason a good one. ‘ He saith not, You that are under the law.’ Surely he could neither say nor mean this with respect to these he writes to. For, even supposing, as some would have it, that this chapter is addressed to the Jews separately, yet it must be supposed, that it is to the Jewish converts or believers. Now, to them he had said in this chapter, that they were dead to the law, and delivered from it ; nor could he, in the personating way, or otherwise, say that they were *sold under sin*, in the sense in which Dr W. and other Arminians explain that expression. If it shall be

supposed, that he means the infidel Jews, how was this grave lecture, contained in an epistle to the Roman Christians, to be conveyed to them? If it should be conveyed to them, certainly the strong things he says, as of himself, they would all agree to belong to himself in the worst sense; and if having sold themselves to sin and wickedness is said of these revolters from the true religion, in the times of the Maccabees, who are mentioned in the interpretation of this context, surely the infidel Jews would readily say that, in as strong sense as Dr W. uses the expression, ver. 14. it belonged to Paul himself, that noted revolter, as they judged of him. This is all the advantage the apostle would be likely to gain at the hands of the infidel Jews, by his mollifying art.

But why speak of mollifying? When the pravity of men's nature, and the wretchedness of their condition is to be shown, it doth not suit the fidelity of God's messengers, and was far from the apostle's way, to take off the harshness of truths, and to molify them, though too many do often manage in that way, when indeed the hearts of men do more need to be roused and awakened to a sense of their extreme wretchedness in a state of sin.

A prudent caution, a holy art, (as they represent in this case) to avoid giving offence by plain speech to those he writes to, is on some occasions ascribed to the apostle without cause. His words, ver. 5. imply, that they who are under the law are in the flesh. Is not this, compared with chap. viii. 8, 9. strong and harsh? Is it not so, when his words, chap. vi. 14. clearly imply, that they who are under the law are under the dominion of sin? He had in the preceding sixth chapter told the Romans they had been the servants (the slaves) of sin, in a shameful course, and in the way to perdition and death eternal. Is he now afraid to provoke the self-righteous legalist, or impenitent sinners, so as to put on caution here, from ver. 14. to avoid offence, and soften things, by telling very darkly their case, and saying as concerning himself, what it would be very dangerous (so Dr W. says) for them to understand as true of such a man as he then was, and that without cautioning them by the least hint against that dangerous notion? In fine, whatever be understood by *law*, it is plain that the apostle doth, without mincing or mollifying, set forth in a clear and strong light, in the preceding context of this chapter, and

chap. vi. 14. the very unhappy condition of persons under the law.

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

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

As to the man in our context, what is holy and good is what he willeth; sin is what he willeth not. But in the context preceding ver. 14. where the case of the unregenerate man under the law is certainly set forth, sin doth by occasion of the law work in him all manner concupiscence, deceives him, slays him, and reviving in him, destroys all his confidences; but it is not said of him that he hates it, that it is the thing he would not, nor doth he cry out of wretchedness by it, as in the latter context.

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

The several expressions in the latter context come again in our way, to be more particularly explained. I here only observe the variation of the apostle's style and expression. Upon a general view, the great difference and variation of the style and expression gives good cause to think, that from ver. 14. there is represented a person and state very different from

being *under the law, in the flesh*, as we have here a style and expression never used concerning such.

2. Here we see that the apostle speaks with a special view to the spirituality of the law of God, as it gives rule to a man's heart and spirit within, and to all inward thoughts and motions in the soul. It seems indeed to be clear, that it is with this view he speaks all along, even in the preceding context. The motions of sin's working in a man's members, ver. 5. are inward: the particular instance condescended on, ver. 7. *Thou shalt not covet*, is inward. So it is, ver. 8. when sin works in a man all manner of concupiscence; and when, ver. 9. sin revives. If it were the practice of sin in outward works and behaviour that were meant in that context, certainly what he says would not universally suit the case of persons in the flesh, and under the law. Many such have been outwardly, as to the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. So the apostle himself was when in that state, and in appearance very religious, yea, having much at heart to be so. It had been a too partial, restricted, and incomplete view of the general character of persons in the flesh, and under the law, if he had considered and represented only the outward practice; nor would it give a just account of the character in general of persons in the flesh; whereas upon the view we are taking of the apostle's discourse, it answers to that character and state universally. Those in the flesh, as the apostle represents, do mean in their way to serve God, if not in the newness of spirit, yet according to the oldness of the letter. It is so that the distinction is stated, ver. 6. Not that the one sort serve God, and the other sort do not intend to serve him at all. If those in the flesh have their unholiness, and unholy lustings and affections, (which in many of them break forth outwardly in much impurity and iniquity,) yet they have also their carnal religion, and their carnal confidence founded upon it. If the impurities and iniquity of the flesh have fearfully prevailed in the world, a carnal religion, in one form or other, hath no less overspread the world.

But when the apostle doth, ver. 14. where he begins to speak of himself in the present tense, mention expressly that *the law is spiritual*, it serves as a key to the following context, with which that expression and assertion is more precisely connected. Now, it is not only that his nature and heart had been, as to its inward workings, in the utmost rebellious and unholy opposition to the law, in his unregenerate

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

It hath been argued by some, that whatever may pass inwardly in the heart, even of a true Christian, yet the expressions of this context convey more than what is merely inward, even the doing of evil in the ordinary outward course and practice of life, which is certainly inconsistent with a state of grace. It has been said, that the three words here rendered—*to do*, or *to perform*, viz. ποιω, πρασσω, κατεργάζομαι, can be understood of no less than external work, action, and course.

But this is not so clear or evident. Not to enlarge more than is needful on this point, it is enough to observe, in ge-

neral, that in all languages commonly the actions and operations of the mind are very often expressed by words which do primarily signify bodily action or operation in general, or bodily sensation. So, although the words mentioned should be allowed to be used most commonly concerning outward doing or work, it doth not follow that the operations of the mind may not be, yea, are not often, meant by them in the use of speech. The only word of the three that would be most likely to import more is *κατεργάζομαι*. But I observe, in ver. 20. *If I do (ποιῶ) that I would not, it is no more I that do it, (κατεργάζομαι αὐτο,)* that this latter verb is interchanged with the other; and as it is certain that the former hath not always that force and meaning to signify full doing or performing in the outward work, there is reason to think that neither hath the latter, as used here. It is likewise to be observed, that, in this same chapter (ver. 8.) the apostle says—*Sin wrought in me (κατεργασατο) all manner of concupiscence*; where, it is plain, that the word respects the motions and lustings of sin inwardly; or, as Dr W.'s paraphrase hath it, all manner of concupiscence, or vehement desires after that which is forbidden by the law. So there is nothing here to disprove the account given of the apostle's view with regard to the spirituality of the law. Men's overlooking the apostle's view and respect to the law as spiritual, and to the disconformity of his heart, to what the law requires in this respect, and considering all the accounts here given by him as respecting the outward ordinary practice, has, I apprehend, been a main cause of their falling in with the notion, that though he speaks of himself in the present tense, yet he must be understood as personating unregenerate persons.

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

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

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

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

All professed Christians will acknowledge, that it is very consistent with a state of grace, to have much imperfection in holiness, and much remaining sinfulness. Upon this view, it is most reasonable to suppose, according to what hath been said above, that the farther one is advanced in holiness, and the more his heart is truly sanctified, he will have the greater sensibility with regard to sin, and it must give him the more pain and bitterness. If we shall suppose that an angel should find an unholy thought, or imagination, to spring up in his mind, surely the first view and feeling of it would give him great apprehension and distress, and could not miss to put such a holy being into agonies. Let us, but for once, make the supposition, that the blessed apostle Paul found some sin and unholy affections remaining and stirring in his heart ; as he was a person advanced to a very uncommon degree in holiness, it would be the

natural consequence, that he would express himself, concerning the matter, in language uncommonly strong and bitter. Followers of Arminius, at least some of them, have held, that Christians may, in this life, attain the perfection of holiness, yet they would acknowledge that this is not the attainment of many. If then they should suppose a man to be so holy as to be in the very next degree to perfection, should they not acknowledge, even consistently with their own notions, that such a person will have a much more quick feeling and bitter complaint of sin than another good man, who is yet less holy?

There is something here of important consideration and usefulness in dealing with souls serious and sincere. A Christian says, I have tasted that the Lord is gracious, and methinks I have found my heart undergo a happy change, with a powerful determination towards God and holiness. I have thought that I had good evidence of true conversion, and of a heart truly regenerated by grace. But then I know that the effect should be to grow in grace, to advance in holiness, and that sin remaining in my heart should become weaker and weaker. But I find otherwise; I find grace rather become more weak; and, however my outward deportment is regulated by a good conscience in ways of purity and integrity, yet in my heart I feel sin very strong, and rather growing more and more so. Evil lusts, carnal affections, and disorderly passions are daily stirring, often with great vehemence, and defiling my heart and spirit. Alas! after all I have experienced of divine goodness, I have cause to apprehend, that I may be found to have been in a delusion, and that matters may have a fatal issue with me at last. The unholiness of my heart, in which grace feels so weak, and sin so strong, gives me constant regret and sorrow; and the dread of the final consequence sometimes strikes terror through my whole soul.

To consider the case with judgment; as it is, in the first place, to be acknowledged that a Christian hath great cause of serious regret, and to be greatly humbled for his remaining sinfulness, yet it is one thing for sin to be growing more and more strong indeed; it is another and very different thing, for his sense of sin to be growing more and more so. If sin was indeed growing more strong in a Christian's heart, he would feel it less, as the increasing strength of sin is always attended with a proportional hardness of heart and insensibility. When Hezekiah was humbled for

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

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

SECT. 3.—*That nothing represented in this context, ver. 14--25. is inconsistent with a state of grace.*

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

1. The first thing of this sort that is adduced is in ver. 14.—*I am carnal.* To be *carnal*, or to be *in the flesh*, (so it is argued) is the character of a person unregenerate, and

under the law, and not applicable to a person in a state of grace, as the apostle was.

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

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

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

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

state of grace : Gal. vi. 1. *If a brother be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one.* Where it is plain, he considers the person overtaken in a fault as carnal, though a brother. All this is enough to show, that his saying *I am carnal*, though it imports something in its own nature, contrary to holiness, yet doth not import the man's being *in the flesh*, unregenerate.

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

To this I answer, that the instance of Ahab (to begin with that) is very improperly adduced to explain or illustrate the expression in our text. In the words quoted, Ahab is represented as singular among, yea, above the most wicked. The inspired historian says, *There was none like unto Ahab*; and it is to explain this that he adds, *which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord*; that is, he wholly abandoned himself to all manner of wickedness, in open defiance of the Almighty. Now, if the apostle shall be supposed to be representing in our context the general and common case of persons unregenerate, in the flesh, and under the law, can the case of Ahab answer that purpose? can such things be said of all who are unregenerate? Arminius supposes that our context exhibits the case of a man who is not regenerate, but is in a very promising way, as in the next step to conversion; but by the description given of Ahab, he was at the utmost distance from it. Yea, Dr W. in explaining this place by the character given of Ahab, seems not to be quite consistent with himself. In a passage of his, to be hereafter quoted, he labours to prove from this context, what good an unregenerate man can, in

that state, attain and do. He can will that which is good, hate sin, and delight in the law of God after the inner man. Could such things be said of one, who, as Ahab, had sold himself to work wickedness? It is plain that the expression used concerning Ahab, and that of our text, *I am—sold under sin*, are not of the same import or meaning. If the latter should mean as the former, it would not express the common case and character of persons regenerate or unregenerate, under the law or under grace.

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

It must accordingly be allowed, that there is a great difference between a person, who with full determination of heart and will, peacefully yieldeth himself a slave to sin, to the outward and inward practice of it, and a person who, to pure and upright inward behaviour, adds the utmost solicitude about inward conformity to the strict holiness and spirituality of the law, with an ordinary conflict against every thing within him contrary thereto. The former proves himself to be in an unregenerate state; the latter, with all his bitter and tragical complaint, is not so; yea, this can suit none other than a person in a regenerate state.

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

In interpreting the language of sorrow and complaint, great allowance is to be made, so as not to take strong

words rigidly, in their most full ordinary meaning. They would make absurd and foolish work of it, who would so interpret it in many instances that occur in holy writ. In this way, for instance, one might argue and say, Job was certainly an ill, yea, a vile man, for so he testifies of himself, Job. xl. 4. *Behold, I am vile.* Job uttered this humble expression on his having got a very affecting view of the Divine majesty and holiness. In like manner, with an eye to the authority and holiness of God revealed in his law, and of the inward purity it required, as being spiritual, the apostle cries out, *I am carnal, sold under sin.* If one overheard a serious upright Christian saying, on some occasion, with much deep regret, (as many such have done) Ah, what a slave am I to carnal affections, to unruly passions! how do they carry me away, and captivate me! would he hastily say, that this complaint had no foundation at all in truth? or would he conclude, if it had, that this man was truly and absolutely a slave of sin, and a person unregenerate? I should think, that a person so judging, would deserve no other than to be unfavourably regarded. If the apostle's exclamation, *sold under sin,* shall be considered in this view, as it certainly ought to be, it is so far from proving the person who thus speaks to be truly a slave of sin, that it evidently tends to prove the contrary.

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

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

Dr W. in a descant he hath on these words of verse 23. speaks as if they expressed the case of one yielding himself captive to the law in his members. But certainly they do

not represent one so *yielding* himself captive, but one in earnest struggle against that law, which he found warring against his soul, and striving to bring him captive. Whatever may, on some occasions, have happened, these expressions do not truly import the law in its members to have got the better, or to have actually overcome him. To this purpose serves what hath been observed by the critics, That words properly signifying the action and the effect together, are sometimes so used as to mean no more than the action, and its tendency. Here is an instance, Ezek. xxiv. 13. *I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged.* If the first clause, *I have purged thee,* (which imports, in the common use of speech, both the action and the effect) should be understood in the proper and full sense, it would be a contradiction to say, as in the next words, *thou wast not purged.* But it is plain, that the words, *I have purged thee,* mean no more than the Lord's having used means tending greatly to that effect. This use of such words cannot be denied by any who shall agree to Dr W.'s interpretation of John vi. 44. according to which, the Father draweth many to Christ, who yet are not effectually drawn, or actually brought to him. So here, *I find a law in my members bringing me into captivity,* means no more than working hard, and of strongly tending to captivate me, and to make me a slave of sin in this and the other instance. So that they who infer from this expression, that the person here represented was, in fact and in good earnest, according to the full sense of the words, habitually a captive and slave of sin, and that he yielded himself to be so, do infer what the expression doth by no means import or give any ground for.

4. A fourth thing that is said to be inconsistent with a state of grace, is, a will to do good that hath not effect in practice. Thus, ver. 15. *What I would that I do not;* ver. 18. *To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not;* and, ver. 19. *The good that I would, I do not.* This, say they, cannot be the case of a person in a state of grace; for of such the apostle says, that *God worketh in them to will and to do, or perform.*

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

every instance, thus even with persons unregenerate. I put the question, Is it so, indeed, that an unregenerate man is still, and in every instance, unable to perform that which is good? Is it so, that he cannot by the grace of God, that is ever ready to assist men of every condition and state, who sincerely will that which is good, perform it in any, yea, in many instances? I would be glad to know how they would answer this upon their own principles. If they shall say, that an unregenerate man, willing that which is good, can perform it in some, yea, in many instances, they must at the same time, acknowledge, that these words, *How to perform that which is good, I find not*, do not mean that this is always the case with him who here speaks. What good reason then can they give for thinking that the apostle could not say so of himself, consistently with his performing his duty in many, yea, in most instances, though in some instances, to his great regret, he found himself unable to perform it, as he here says? If they say, that an unregenerate man doth indeed sometimes perform that which is good, but not so constantly, or in so good a manner as he ought, is it not still more reasonable, understanding the words here of Paul himself, to say they only mean that even he doth not perform that which is good, so constantly, and in so good a manner as he ordinarily willeth and wisheth?

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

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

Further, we are to remember that the apostle hath in his eye, all along, what, at first setting out in speaking of himself in the present tense, he had mentioned, ver. 14. even the spirituality of the law, as a rule not only to his outward behaviour, but also to his heart and spirit within him. If with this in view he should say, To will even the absolute perfection and purity which the law of God requireth, is present with me; but how to perform that which is good, according to the strict holiness and spirituality of the law, I find not; alas, I find not in any instance whatsoever! will any say that this is inconsistent with a state of grace? Let us consider what is likely to have been the aim, the will and wish of so holy a person. He willed that the love of God should fill his heart, and prevail in it in the most intense degree; that his heart should be wholly spiritual and heavenly, in all its thoughts and affections; that when he came before God in exercises of worship, his whole soul should be animated and elevated with a heavenly flame of devotion; that vain thoughts, sin and sinful imperfections should never hold him short of such perfect attainment in his duty. Will any say it is unreasonable to suppose this to be what he willed? or can any good reason be given for supposing that Paul, whilst he was in the body, found nothing that made him fall short of so high an aim in holiness?

Let it be added here, when the apostle says, ver. 18. *How to perform that which is good, I find not*, that the word rendered *perform*, is, *κατεργάζεσθαι*; which, though it may sometimes mean no more than simply, *facere, to do*, as hath been shown formerly, yet it more properly signifies, *perficere, peragere, to do thoroughly, or completely*. The apostle, having the strict holiness and spirituality of the law in his eye, willed to do what is good thoroughly and completely; as in the outward work, so in his heart and spirit within him. But, after all that the Christian attains, there is some-

thing as to doing thoroughly and completely that he doth not reach in this life. *There is not a just man that doth good, and sinneth not.* There is still imperfection; something of sin that cleaves to men's best doings. So that, in view to the proper standard and rule, the best may say, (according to Isa. lxiv. 6. that even *all their righteousnesses are as filthy rags.* The common case of Christians is according to Gal. v. 17. *The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.* These considerations account for the apostle's saying, *How to perform that which is good, I find not;* and show that therein there is nothing inconsistent with being regenerate and under grace, and nothing to give cause to think that the apostle personates the unregenerate man.

5. Some have argued from that expression, ver. 20. *Sin that dwelleth in me.* Arminius labours to prove, and boasts of having proved, that sin dwelling in a man signifies its ruling, or having dominion in him. Indeed, if he had proved this, it might have saved him all the labour he bestowed on other arguments. This one were absolutely decisive; and his long dissertation on this context might have been a very short one. But if a man, who is head of a family, dwelleth in his own house, it is true that he ruleth there; but he doth so as being head of the family, not merely because he dwelleth there, for it is as properly said of the family, that they dwell there, as of him. If the Spirit of God dwelleth in a Christian, it is true that he ruleth in him; and so, if Christ dwelleth in a man's heart through faith; but still it is not the word *dwelleth* that imports so. If Arminius found that any expression, where the word *dwell* occurs, did import ruling, as in several texts mentioned by him, yet that notion arises from something else than merely the word *dwelling*.

If a man dwells in this city, or in that country, and it is so said, doth indeed the expression import that he ruleth in that city or country? The prophet says, Amos iii. 12. *So shall the children of Israel be taken out that dwell in Samaria, in the corner of a bed, and in Damascus in a couch.* Is it that Israel had dominion in these places, where they are said to dwell; when it is plain they are represented as in distress, and hiding themselves in these places? So Zech. ii. 7. *Deliver thyself, O Zion, that dwelleth with the daughter of Babylon.* Surely it would be very ill to infer from this, that the Jews in captivity at Babylon had the dominion there.

Now, if the word in its proper use doth not import *rule*, or *dominion*, there can be no reason for making that the meaning of it, when it is transferred to the figurative use. Christ says, John vi. 56. *He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.* So 1 John iv. 13. *Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.* It is just to say, that God or Christ dwelling, or abiding in a man, do rule in him. But it were nonsense and blasphemy to put that in the meaning of the word, when the Christian is said to abide or dwell in God or in Christ. So it is plain, that the word *dwell* doth not of itself import rule or dominion; and that there is good reason for the distinction between sin reigning in men, as it doth in the unregenerate; and sin merely dwelling in them, as it doth in them who are regenerate. This argument rather gives the hint of an argument against the exposition of Arminius. If the apostle meant to represent here persons unregenerate, he had a fair occasion to make the matter clear by that one word, by saying, instead of *dwelling*, *Sin that ruleth, or hath dominion in me.* When he doth not so, but uses a word that hath no such meaning, this rather gives the hint at least, or makes a likelihood in favour of the interpretation against which Arminius argues.

6. It is likewise argued, that there is something inconsistent with a regenerate state in the expression, ver. 23. *O wretched man that I am!*—Arminius gives it in the form of syllogism, to this purpose: All that are regenerated and under grace, are happy; by no means wretched: but this man is wretched; therefore he is not regenerate.

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

Arminius concludes what he hath on this argument, by saying, men cannot be called wretched, who have conflict by sin, and are buffeted by a messenger of Satan; but it is truly wretched to be overcome. Yet a man cannot be called

wretched, who being sometimes overcome, is more commonly victorious against the world, sin, and Satan. This appears to be so much the case in our context, that Arminius hath, by these concessions, quite undone his own argument.

7. Some have argued from that expression in this same ver. 23. *Who shall deliver me?* as if it implied despair; which is inconsistent with a state of grace. As to this, it will be allowed, that final absolute despair is so. But we must not judge so of the suggestions of despair, even when these are uttered in strong enough terms, from the force of temptation. There are not wanting instances of this sort in scripture, in the case of some of the saints. But the apostle's expression here doth not amount even to so much. It expresses the painful feeling he had of sin; the great difficulty he found in overcoming it; and that it required the hand of one more powerful than himself, together with his solicitude, his most vehement desire, and longing to be delivered. That there is no despair, appears in the words he utters, as with the same breath,—*I thank my God through Jesus Christ.*

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

SECT. IV.—*Showing that this context contains a great deal that is inconsistent with an unregenerate state.*

I come now to show, that in the case here represented, there is much that is inconsistent with an unregenerate state, and such as none else than a true believer under grace and regenerated, is capable of. To this purpose, the general appearance hath something at first sight very striking, I mean the bitter complaint that is all along of sin dwelling in the man, or in his flesh. *I am carnal, sold under sin.* Taking this as the language of bitter and heavy complaint, as it evidently is, what unregenerate man hath such a sense of sin prevailing in him as would produce in sincerity such a complaint? or if the unregenerate man hath right sentiments in his head, what man in this state hath so sad an impression of the case in his heart? How sad the impression, and the exclamation, ver. 24. *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death!*

As to this last expression, *this body of death*, some have understood it of the body properly so called. But however

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

I know that an unregenerate man may, in great terror of the penal consequence of sin, loudly complain of it. But it is not sin itself, but the penal consequence that is bitter to such. I know also, that a person who labours to establish his own righteousness, (which is in great opposition to God, and to the sincerity of holiness) may have much vexation, and much discouragement to that sort of hope, by sin. But that sin itself, for the evil it hath in its own nature, and its contrariety to God, to duty, to holiness, in view to the spirituality of the law, should be so bitter to a man, is quite remote from the disposition of such a self-righteous unregenerated soul.

Dr W. will have the case of a man who had sold himself to work wickedness, as Ahab, to come under the representation in this context: and there are few of his way of thinking, who do not use that instance in interpreting it. Can any imagine, that such an abandoned person would be thus affected with regard to sin? or would he be thus truly sick of sin? We read, indeed, of Ahab's once retiring to his bed, turning away his face, and refusing to eat. Something, doubtless, lay heavy on his mind. But it was his lust's being crossed by Naboth's refusal of his vineyard; not his sin. We also read of his humbling himself, and wearing sackcloth; but it was for the terrible denunciation against him and his family, by a person of very established character as a prophet; not merely or chiefly for his sin. Can any one conceive, that a man is truly, and willingly, a slave of sin, yielding himself to its service, and selling himself to work wickedness, and yet finding sin so bitter, so painful to his heart? The notion is quite absurd. The sincere expression of pain and bitter-

ness by sin, and the sorrowful exclamation against it that is here used, is altogether incompatible with an unregenerate state.

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

What nature, or the flesh produceth in the manner that hath been said, being what, by the prevailing disposition of his heart, he would not, he infers, ver. 16. *I consent unto the law, that it is good.* Assent and consent do differ, as the former is of the understanding, respecting truth, which is its proper object: the latter is of the heart and will, respecting good, which is the special object of the will. Now, though the Greek *συμφημι*, may sometimes be used, and but very rarely, for the assent of the mind and judgment, as that use of the word is observed by Grotius and by Hedericus's lexicon, to occur in Sophocles and Euripides, yet that cannot be the meaning in this place, as it is here used expressly with relation to *good*, that *the law is good*, which is the object of the will; and it is from the inclination of his will, *If I do that which I would not*, that he makes the inference, *I consent unto the law, that it is good.* This, however, doth not suit the disposition and prevailing principles

of the unregenerate. Let such argue in rational theory ever so much, for the goodness of the law, and assent to all that can be said to that purpose, yet the heart and will do not consent unto the law that it is *good*; and, as Dr W. hath it, commands what is *good* for *me* to do. When it comes from mere theory to doing, the heart and will give it against the holy and spiritual law; and every unholy lust, inordinate affection, and irregular passion, hath the consent of the will to the goodness of itself, and it hath its course inwardly, in opposition to the holiness of the law; even when there may be great restraint, from various causes and means, as to outward practice.

I am aware of what may be excepted against this reasoning. The case described in the lines here immediately preceding, that, viz. of the unregenerate, is the very case, may one say, described in our context. Whatever favourable views the man's mind may give of the law; yet when it comes to doing, his unholy lust and passions decide against the holiness of the law, and he doth what he would not. For answer to this, it is certainly without reason that the will of the unregenerate can be supposed to be, as to its prevailing bent and inclination, on the side of the law and its holiness. As to doing, the Apostle doubtless found it with himself in too many instances, as he reports. Nature, so far as unrenewed, or the flesh in him, was producing or *doing* what he would not; at least by its activity or inward working; which he appears to have in his view here especially. Yet as to habitual, ordinary, deliberate practice, and the common disposition and course of life, we must suppose that this was according to what he willed, according to the inclination of his heart *consenting* to the *goodness* of the law. To suppose otherwise, were to suppose what is inconsistent with the nature of things; inconsistent with the natural connexion of the faculties in rational and moral agents. It is reasonable then to consider it as a fixed point, that to consent to the goodness of the law, as it is spiritual, giving rule to men's hearts and spirits, which is the Apostle's special view in this place, is far from the disposition of any unregenerated soul.

To proceed; the Apostle says, ver. 17. *Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.* What here would strike every mind free of bias is, that this [I] on the side of holiness against sin, is the most prevailing, and what represents the true character of the man; and that

sin, which he distinguishes from this [I] is not the prevailing reigning power in the man here represented; as it is, however, in every unregenerate man.

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

Let us now observe how these expressions I have been taking notice of are accounted for and interpreted by those who apply them to the unregenerate.

Grotius says, that these things are spoken figuratively, and by metonymy; giving to the cause, that is, to reason or conscience, a name from the effect it ought to produce. That is, for instance, the man is said to hate sin, and to will what is good, because conscience and its dictates ought to have that effect. As to this, we know that metonymy gives to the cause a name from the effect which it naturally and commonly produces; but to give to a thing, under the notion of a moral cause, a name from the effect it ought to produce, but most commonly it doth not produce, hath no warrant in the use of speech; yea, is quite absurd. In this

way a very wicked man might brag, and say, My heart is pure, sincere, and holy ; my outward conversation and behaviour is according to the rule of purity and righteousness. A person acquainted with his character, overhearing him, would readily say, Strange ! a person notoriously lewd, profane, and wicked to a high degree, to talk so impudently of his purity and virtue. But one might vindicate him by Grotius' notion of metonymy, and say, The man speaks rightly enough by a metonymy, which gives him, by virtue of his conscience (for ill as he is, he hath a conscience within him) a character from the effect it ought to produce ; for it requires all that he has been ascribing to himself. What adds to the unreasonableness of this interpretation is, that conscience, whatever good a man ought to do by its dictates, is by no means a cause adequate, in sinful men, to such effect as is here mentioned. There is not such an effect in any soul without the influence of a superior cause and power. To give to a thing, as a cause, the name of an effect, which it doth not naturally or commonly produce, yea, is insufficient of itself to produce, is a sort of metonymy, which the use of speech cannot, never did, admit. This is a criticism which Grotius, as he was in that way, could not support.

Let us now see how Dr Whitby accounts for these things. He has not recourse to metonymy ; but takes the expressions in their true and proper sense, without any figure ; and hath an important purpose to serve in doing so,—even to give a favourable idea of the moral powers of a natural and unregenerated man, such as he thinks is here personated. Some men have not been contented with so interpreting this context, that the general interest of their system shall not lose by it : they expect to gain considerably by it for the establishing of their own sentiments. This view and interest has, doubtless, made them the more warm and keen. Dr W. in his book on the five points, (ed. 1710. p. 331, 332.) in answering an argument taken from this context, among other things, writes thus : ‘ Whereas they make their lapsed man ‘ to have lost the power even of willing to do good, and to ‘ be totally enslaved both as to his will, mind, and action, ‘ (perhaps affection) the man here mentioned hath a will ‘ to do the good he doth not, and to avoid the evil that he ‘ doth ; yea, the evil that he doth is hateful to him ; and he ‘ delighteth in the law of God in the inner man, and with ‘ his mind serves the law of God.’ He then quotes a passage from Origen, (one of his masters in orthodoxy—not

the very best) which imports, that he (the unregenerate man) is not wholly alienated from good things, but is in his purpose and will inclined to them, though not yet sufficient to perform. The doctor then argues, and puts the question thus, p. 332: ‘ Now I inquire, (saith he) whether in this ‘ will to do good, this delight in the law of God, this hatred ‘ of sin, this man doth well or ill? If well, (so the Doctor ‘ thought, and so do I,) he can, even in the state here men- ‘ tioned, do something that is good;’ in an unregenerate state, as he understood.

Well, it is no small acquisition the Arminian makes here in favour of nature and free will. But that the expressions, *delighting in the law of God*, and *with the mind serving it*, suited not this purpose, will appear when I come hereafter to consider them, and ver. 22, 25. separately. But to say a little in this place, it is certainly reasonable to think, that he who willeth, hateth, delighteth, in the manner here said, can not only do something that is good, but can do a great deal in the way of holy practice and duty. But as Dr W. and others of his sentiments, do interpret our context as representing the case of persons who, like Ahab, sold themselves to work wickedness, 1 Kings xxi. 20. or like these revolvers from the true religion, 1 Mac. i. 15. surely they put very opposite and inconsistent things in their character,—to have abandoned themselves to wickedness, and at the same time, to hate sin, to will that which is good, and to delight in the law of God, even when they are under the thralldom and dominion of sin. I cannot but wonder, that reasonable and thinking men would not find their reason quite shocked, at expressing sentiments and reasoning that proceed on joining in the state, character, disposition, and practice of any description of persons, things so evidently and grossly inconsistent.

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

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

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

Another query yet: If a man in nature, and in the flesh, doth will, love, delight, and hate, as is here said, what remains to distinguish between him and a person truly regenerated and in a state of grace?

The answer to this that is given by some, is taken from

ver. 18. *To will is present with me, but how to PERFORM that which is good, I find not.* So the defect of the natural man is not in his will, which is inclined to what is good and holy; but he cannot perform. Whereas (so Dr W. argues) in the true Christian, God worketh not only *to will*, but *to do*, Phil. ii. 13.; so he not only willeth, but can perform that which is good.

To this I answer: There is certainly great inadvertency in the Arminians so arguing from this text of Philippians, which ascribes to divine grace, not only to work in the true Christian *to do*, but also *to will*. God not only in creating him works in him, *το θελημα*, *the will*, or the faculty, but (so the Greek hath it) *το θελειν*, *to will*, or the exercise and act of the faculty. So this text effectually confutes their interpretation, who understood the willing of that which is good and holy, in our context, Rom. vii. to be of a man unregenerated. To suppose that God worketh in men to will that which is good, without enabling them at all to perform that which is good, is not agreeable to this text, Phil. ii. 13. which joins both together, and both as the work and effect of divine grace; not, the one as the production of nature, the other as the working or effect of grace.

It is true, indeed, that a sincere Christian may occasionally be so much under the influence of the flesh, as to be thereby unable to perform what he *habitually* willeth and wisheth; yea, so as to be much ensnared in evil: and God, who worketh in Christians to will and to do of his *good pleasure*, may leave him in some instances, thus to prove his weakness, for making him more humble, watchful, and dependent. But to say that a man can sincerely and habitually have his will well affected to God and holiness, with a true hatred of sin, and not habitually and commonly perform that which is good, is quite contrary to the nature of things. The sincere Christian willing that which is good, doth also in practice perform it in a manner that the unregenerate man is incapable of; and notwithstanding the imperfection of his doing, he is therein accepted through Jesus Christ.

Let us now see how Dr Taylor of Norwich accounts for these things I have been observing, as peculiar to a regenerate man, and which he supposes to be in the case and character of the Jew under the law, and the unregenerate, even the worst sort of them. Here are some instances from his paraphrase.

The words, ver. 15. *What I would, that I do not*, his paraphrase gives thus: 'What his (the sinner's) reason approves and dictates, that he doth not.' But if a sinner's reason approves and dictates what is right, is that the same as to say, what is holy and right is what he willeth, *ὁ θελω*, as the apostle's expression is?

The next words,—*What I hate, that I do*, he gives thus: 'What he (the sinner) hateth, (this he explains by what he adds) what is abhorrent from his reason, that he doth.' But if sin is contrary to, or, if you please to give force of sound to the expression, abhorrent from his reason, it is true that the unregenerate hateth it? or do these expressions mean the same thing? Drunkenness is contrary to, is abhorrent from the reason of the habitual drunkard. Were it for this just to say, that the habitual drunkard hateth drunkenness?

These words, ver. 17. *It is not I that do it*, his paraphrase gives thus: 'It is not I in the best sense, it is not a man's reason separately considered, that produces the wicked action.' But what sense or philosophy is here? a man's reason considered separately from his other faculties, produces no action, good or bad.

The words, ver. 18. *To will is present with me*, he gives thus: 'To will is present, is adjoined to a man—God hath endowed him with faculties, to approve and choose what is good.' But if a sinner's understanding and conscience approve what is good, doth it mean no more to say that to will what is good is present with him? This is gross dealing with words. The apostle's words do not say merely, that the faculty to distinguish between good and evil, and to approve and choose what is good, is given him. The natural faculty in general every man hath. But the apostle's expression, as hath been formerly observed, is, *το θελειν*, actual willing and choosing what is good.

These words, ver. 19. *The good that I would*, he gives thus: 'What good actions his (the sinner's) reason chooses.' And as the apostle had said, ver. 16. *If then I do that which I would not*, he gives it thus: 'If a carnal man doth these things which are not the choice of his own reason—' But choosing is not an act merely of a man's understanding or reason. A man doth not choose but by the determination of his will to that which his understanding or reason recommends to it. To say, the choice of reason, or, what reason chooses, is but an artful impropriety, if not rather nonsense.

The words, ver. 22. *I delight in the law of God*, he paraphrases thus: 'It is granted, that the Jew in the flesh may esteem the law of God—' Do delight and esteem truly signify the same thing? If it were said that a lewd man delighted in the practice of uncleanness, would that import that with his mind and reason he esteemed it? I doubt if this author himself would admit that paraphrase.

In these instances, we see that Dr T. doth 'all along ascribe to reason, willing, delighting, hating, choosing. This is throwing aside the distinction of human faculties; it involves our thoughts in confusion, and tends to make language useless. The understanding is the seat of reason, and is the reasoning faculty. There is besides in the human soul, the will and affections. But according to Dr T. if the understanding perceives, judges, reasons, it also wills, loves, hates, delights, chooses. But the author may have had his own reason for this strange and unnatural way of representing things. They who interpret this context of a person regenerate, have observed, that in an unregenerate man, his conscience, or (as some choose to speak) his reason, that one faculty is on the side of duty and holiness, testifies for it, and requires it, God having maintained in this one faculty a testimony for his authority and holiness within man. But in one unregenerate, sin possesses his will and affections, hath these wholly on its side, and so hath the man under its dominion. That in persons regenerate, and under grace, as by Divine grace their conscience is more enlightened and strengthened, so their will and affections are, by habitual and prevailing inclination, on the side of duty and holiness, and grace hath its powerful influence and effect on all their faculties. That this is evidently the case proposed in this context, the mind, conscience, or reason, representing holy practice and duty as good, lovely, and delightful, the man doth actually will that which is good, loves it, and delights in the law of God and its holiness. So they conclude with good reason, as it cannot be thus in the unregenerate, that it is certainly the case of a person truly regenerate, even of the apostle himself, (so his expression and style import) that is here exhibited.

Dr T. doth by a bold stretch of genius evade this argument. He forms reason into a person, and the willing of good, hating evil, and delighting in the law of God in our context, which are the exercise of human personal faculties, he ascribes to that one faculty, that fictitious person, reason.

We have seen how, according to him, that person, of his own creating, wills, chooses, hates, and delights. The question remains, as to the person, the man speaking, or personated in our text, how is it that he willeth? Dr T. gives his mind thus, in a marginal note, (*Orig. Sin*, p. 216.) on these words here, ver. 14. *Sold under sin*: 'He means, saith he, 'a willing slavery, as Ahab had sold himself to 'work evil.' Truly the apostle crying out, as of his wretchedness, in these words, is far from representing a willing slavery. However, the slavery of sin must be a willing slavery. A man's body may be bound, and carried hither and thither, and he may be a slave as to his bodily or outward condition, much against his will. But he cannot be a slave in a moral sense, as to his fixed ordinary character; or a slave to ill principles, habits, or lusts, a slave of sin, without his will being on the side of these. So that Dr W.'s supposing, as we have seen with him, a man to will what is good, to hate evil, and to delight in the law of God, whilst he is a slave of sin, and under its dominion, is quite absurd.

A sentiment of Dr T. (note on Rom. vii. 15.) is this: 'A man may assent to the best rule of action, and yet 'still be under the dominion of lust and sin.' I do not see cause to differ from him concerning this. But it is plain, that by his notions, and way of interpreting, he lays a good ground for one to argue and object against the person speaking in our context, thus: You say, that you will that which is good, holy, and right, &c. but that certainly is not true of you. You in words artfully give a favourable, but false colour to every ill matter and case. You deceitfully ascribe to yourself personally what belongs to reason, that excellent person that lodges in every man's breast. But reason and you are very different persons, whose will, inclination, and affections go very different ways. How can you ascribe to yourself a will to do what is good and holy, when you are a willing slave of sin? You say of the propensity that is in you to evil, it is not I. But if you have any faint ineffectual inclination to what is good in any instance, you might say much more justly, It is not I, but reason that dwelleth in me: even reason, whose suggestions within me are too weak against the prevailing force and dominion of sin. You might add, according to the truth of your case: I do indeed by the evidence and force of reason, assent in my mind to the best rule of action; I rather wish I could avoid that assent, for I am, myself personally, in opposition to that best

rule of action, still under the dominion of sin, and of my lusts. Thus, while Dr T. sets forth reason as an imaginary person, ascribing thereto the various faculties, and qualities of a person, he denies what the apostle asserts of *himself personally*, or of the man personated by him, as to the prevailing habitual inclination of his faculties, consenting, loving, hating, willing, and delighting on the side of duty and holiness; so that, upon the whole, his account of things is flatly contradicting the apostle, instead of interpreting.

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

SECT. V.—*The subject continued, and ver. 22. explained.*

Ver. 22. *I delight in the law of God, after the inward man.* There hath been great labour and difference in interpreting this verse. The inquiry is, 1. What is meant by the *inward man*? 2. What is meant by *delighting in the law of God*?

1. What is meant by the *inward man*? We say, it means the same as the *new man*, or the soul so far as renewed by divine grace. Dr W. says, it cannot mean the new man—which is not put on—till we have put off the old man with his deeds. Did the learned writer truly think, that the new man could not be in a Christian whilst any thing of the old man (even in a crucified state, as chap. vi. 6.) remained to be put off, or of his deeds? There is something in this matter that he seems not to have adverted to, and that is, when the Christian hath put off the old man, it is not so perfectly done but that there remains occasion for the exhortation, to *put off the old man*, and to *put on the new man*, as Eph. iv. 22. 24. And though the Colossians had put off the old man, as in the verses of Col. iii. cited by the Doctor, still there remained in them members of the old man to be mortified, as he exhorts them, ver. 5. ; and he found in them what occasioned his saying to them, ver. 8. *Now also put off all these, anger, wrath, malice, &c.* which pertained to the old man. The Doctor goes on: ‘For sure this (viz. ‘that he had put off the old man) cannot be said of him ‘who is still carnal, sold under sin, and captivated to the ‘law of sin.’ This argument hath a full answer in what hath been said already on those expressions of our context on which it is founded. These expressions convey the sorrowful complaint of one who appears to have indeed put off the old man; who grieves much for what he still feels

of the members of the old man remaining and stirring in him; and who hath at heart, according to the exhortation directed to the Ephesians and Collosians, to put off the old man, and to mortify his members, more and more, and longs to be delivered from the body of death.

The learned writer proceeds, and having asserted that it only means the mind of man, the *νςς*, as he says the apostle explains himself, verse 25. he adduces the authority of Origen, (none of the best divines, or interpreters of Scripture) and of three others of the ancients, who say, that the soul, using the body as its instrument, is called, *ὁ εἶσω ἀνδραποῦς*, the *inward man*. But there needed no authority to prove, that in the composition of the human person, the body is the outward, the soul the inward part of man, and the principle of life and action, which useth the other as its instrument; nor is there any absurdity, if men, in expressing their own mind in common speech, shall call the one the inward, the other the outward man. But we are now inquiring concerning the Scripture-use of the word, *inward man*, and that certainly is not, to signify the soul, in contradistinction to the body.

This is certain from the apostle's evident scope and argument in the place we are considering. From that it is clear, that he means by the *inward man*, that in him to which nothing contrary to delighting in the law of God could be ascribed. He had said, verse 21. *I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For (so he adds, ver. 22.) I delight in the law of God, after the inward man.* It were making the apostle talk in an inconsistent manner, to give *delighting in the law of God*, as the peculiar and distinguishing character of his inward man, in opposition to that law, by which evil was present with him, if that law was likewise to be ascribed to his inward man, which were certainly the case, if the inward man signified the soul, in contradistinction to the body. The body considered separately, is not the subject of moral good or evil. In the human person the soul is especially and most properly the seat of moral good and evil. If, as Origen speaks, it uses the body as its instrument in doing good, it also uses it as its instrument in accomplishing and gratifying the corrupt lusts and passions that are inherent in the soul. It is plain, that the apostle means to ascribe delighting in the law of God to a good principle in him, which he contradistinguishes to another principle in his soul, by which, as in

the preceding words, evil was present with him ; and that good principle can be no other than that called in Scripture the *new man*, and here, the *inward man*.

If we look into the writings of our adversaries on this point, we shall see, that though their general arguing sometimes tends to prove that the inward man signifies the soul, in contradistinction to the body, yet themselves do not indeed mean so in explaining this context. By their explanations they appear to mean the mind, understanding, or conscience. So Dr W. understood the mind of man, the *νῦς*, to be meant ; and though in giving Origen's sense, he makes it to be the *soul*, yet in the citation he gives from Origen against Celsus, the word is *νῦς*, the *mind* or *understanding*, which is not the same as *soul*, but signifies a particular faculty of the soul. Now, though there might be some reason from the nature of things, why we might, in our own use of speech, call the soul, which is the inner part in the composition of the human person, the *inward man*, there is not the same reason to distinguish the mind or understanding from the other human faculties by that name. The will of man and his affections are as inward and as essential to the soul as the mind.

I see it observed, that Plato uses the phrase, ὁ ἐντός ἀνθρώπου, for the rational part of our nature. I would have no quarrel with Plato for so conceiving and expressing ; though, at the same time, I would not expect to find with the heathen philosopher, the apostle Paul's particular notion and view of the inward man.

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

Dr W. says, that the outward man which perisheth, signifies only the body ; the inward is only the soul and spirit that is in man. One thing that occurs on a general view of that interpretation, is this, that it makes the apostle's words represent something that is not common or natural, and which Christians ordinarily have not cause to expect. For when the body becomes weak and fades, most commonly and naturally weakness comes on the mind and spirit of a man too, instead of the perishing of the outward man occasioning the soul to be renewed in vigour and alacrity, which are the words of his paraphrase. But understanding

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

That in 2 Cor. iv. 16. *the inward man*, and the *renewing* thereof, means the new man, or principle of grace and holiness, and its improvement, is very evident by the account the apostle himself gives of that improvement, or renewing, in the very next words: *For our light affliction, saith he, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.*— Thus then it is that the inward man is daily renewed and improved by tribulations, while these do more and more fit the Christian for glory, dispose and determine him the more to look, not to the things that are seen, but to the things that are not seen. This cannot be said of the soul simply, but of the principle of grace and holiness, or the new man, which alone is capable of such improvement, or of the soul, so far as it is renewed by Divine grace. Otherwise, how many souls are there which, being unrenewed, receive no such improvement by tribulations and afflictions!

Another place, in which this expression, the *inward man*, occurs, is where the apostle prays for the Ephesians, chap. iii. 16, 17. thus: *That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might, by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, &c.* It may be easy to understand the meaning of the *inner man*, for any who shall observe the scope and connexion of this

passage, which are easy and obvious. He wishes Christ to dwell in their hearts by faith, which is not merely wishing them to have faith, for that he supposes these Ephesians to have already; but that they might be more steady and established in faith, that they might be more habituated to living practically by faith, that so Christ might be in them, not as by transient visits, but might dwell in them, for their most established consolation and abounding fruitfulness. His wish is not merely that they may have love, but that they may be rooted and grounded in love. Now, it is in order to this, that he prays that they may be *strengthened with might in the inner man*. Their being so he considers as having for its natural consequence, that *Christ shall dwell in their hearts by faith*, &c. He considers these things as naturally connected.

But there is no such connexion, if the inner man's being strengthened shall be understood merely of the soul, with its natural faculties, that inward part in the composition of the human person, and its being strengthened with might, even by the Spirit of God; for we read of the Spirit of God coming, on divers occasions, upon men, to give them vigour of spirit, and to inspire them with zeal and fortitude for public service,—not to strengthen their faith or love, as these are the principles of spiritual life and of true holiness. Yea, in our times, if there are men who give signal proof of prowess and of heroic fortitude, we have cause to consider it as a particular gift of God and of his Spirit, strengthening them with might in their souls and spirits, while, without this, others do show themselves weak and dastardly. Yet as to these gallant persons, so strengthened with might and fortitude of soul and spirit, how commonly doth this appear, without any symptom of having Christ dwelling in their hearts by faith, or of any other thing that doth accompany salvation? Upon the whole, if the *inner man* shall be understood here of men's soul and spirit in general, there appears no connexion of these things, which yet it is evident the apostle means to connect. But understanding the inner man of the new man, or principle of spiritual life, the connexion is quite clear, and easily understood. As the new man owes his being to the Holy Spirit, so it is by the influence and power of the same Spirit that he on all occasions receives might and vigour. Then if the new man, the principle of spiritual life (or the inner man) is strengthened, the natural consequence will be what the apostle mentions, that the Christian will

have great establishment in faith, unmoved by the shocks of tribulation, or by the temptations of the enemy; so that Christ shall dwell in him, and he shall be rooted and grounded in love.

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

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

The Greek word properly and strongly signifies *delighting*: and none need to be told what delighting is. But the preposition, *συν*, *with*, being joined in composition with it, (*συνηδομαι*;) it has been endeavoured to make something of that. If indeed it was said by one man, with respect to another, it might signify joining in delight, or pleasure, with him. But when it is spoken with respect to the law of God, what can be made of it but as we render, *to delight*? If we consider the law by way of prosopopoeia, as a person, then *συνηδομαι*, *condelector*, may mean as if he had said, I delight in the same that the law delights in, and that is, true and perfect, outward and inward, obedience and holiness. This is what the law requires, and recommends to me, as delightful; and what, agreeably to the law, I delight in; what would be most delightful for me to attain; what I aim at, and pursue with delight, whatever bitterness and pain I have from the law in my members, in my way to that attainment. At any rate, delighting in the law of God, and in the holiness thereof, doth very much distinguish a person regenerate from the unregenerate, who are incapable of such delight in the law, or in holiness.

However, Dr Whitby's paraphrase gives it thus: "*I de-*

‘light in the law of God, my mind approving, for some time, and being pleased with its good and holy precepts.’ But doth the mind or judgment approving, or being pleased with a proposition or law, as true or right, come up to the meaning of delighting? Words will be useless for the expression of meanings, if they may be paraphrased or perverted at this rate. Besides, as to approving, or being pleased with the law for some time, what these last words import is taken from the Doctor’s own notion, that it is the hypocrite, or unregenerate person that is here represented, as such may have a good disposition for sometime. But it is plain, that the apostle means delighting in the holiness of the law, as the quality and disposition, not for a time, but always habitually of his inward man: there is nothing in the expression to restrict it to some time. Finally, this addition, ‘for some time,’ doth not well suit Dr W.’s own notions. For though some sort of disposition, favourable to holiness and good practice in an unregenerate man may last but for a time, and soon go off, yet the Doctor would allow, that his *υς*, his mind or judgment, which he supposes to be meant by the inward man, (to which he ascribes all the good things expressed in this context) would nevertheless continue to approve the law, and what it prescribes, even though the man had sold himself to work wickedness, like Ahab: so that by his own principles he should not have added, ‘for some time.’

The Doctor says in his annotation: ‘That this delight is no evidence of a regenerate man, is evident from the example of the stony ground, which heard the word with joy, Matt. xiii. 20.; of Herod, who heard John the Baptist, *ἠδεναι*, with delight, Mark vi. 20.; of the Jews, who rejoiced in his light, John v. 35. and heard our Saviour gladly, Mark xii. 37.’

I shall begin my answer to this by observing, that the instance of the hearers compared to the stony ground, must be very improperly adduced on this occasion by an Arminian divine. Those of that denomination do generally hold, that temporary faith is the same for nature and kind with saving faith, and falls short of being saving only by the want of fruitfulness and perseverance; and therefore, they argue from instances of this sort of faith, and persons, against the doctrine of the certain perseverance of the saints. If it is so, then certainly they who have this sort of faith (which the stony ground hearers are said to have) are regenerate for

the time, as I do not expect it will be said, that persons may have true faith, who are not, for the time, regenerate. So that this is an instance, according to their notions, of persons regenerate brought to prove what persons unregenerate are capable of, which is very far from just reasoning.

This is a sufficient answer upon their principles. I shall now give an answer more suitable to my own sentiments, and to the truth of the case. It is said, Matth. xiii. 20. that the hearers there mentioned *heard the word, and anon with joy received it*; and it is true, that nothing gives joy that would not give delight. But then it is to be observed, that our Lord is not there speaking of the law; but of the gospel, called in the preceding verse, *the word of the kingdom*. Now there can be no question but the good things thereby represented, such as remission of sins, deliverance from the wrath to come, with eternal happiness and glory, may, in the hearing, affect with some sort of delight and joy, souls that do by no means delight in the law of God, or in the holiness which it manifests and requires. Yea, will not all Christian divines acknowledge, that generally this is one thing that especially demonstrates that the delight and joy which some have had by the gospel, real as it hath been in its kind, is no sufficient evidence of regeneration or true conversion, nor is it profitable or saving in its nature or effect.

Whatever freedom, or severity of reproof, was in the preaching of John Baptist, yet, as Matth. iii. 2. he preached that *the kingdom of heaven was at hand*; which, as they understood it, might give delight and joy to the most carnal of the Jews, his hearers; and to those of them who were farthest from delighting in the law of God.

It is certainly not uncommon for men to hear the gospel, (especially when it is preached with some advantage in the manner) with present satisfaction and affection, whose hearts were never reconciled to the holiness of the law of God. Though Ezekiel often brought heavy messages, yet there were unregenerate unholy men, who had some sort of pleasure in hearing him; concerning whom the Lord saith to him, Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 32. *They come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. And lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument; for they hear thy words, but they do them not.* Though carnal men

have some pleasure in hearing the word of God, yet they are so far from delighting in the law of God, that the prevailing of the contrary disposition is a chief cause why the word of God is not truly, or with saving effect, received into their hearts. Men in our times can be greatly pleased with a sermon preached or read to them; may admire the skilful composition, the propriety and elegance of the expression, with the strong reasoning in favour of goodness and virtue; may in the hearing be as much affected almost as with the best composed and best acted tragedy, and bestow encomiums on the preacher, that might shock the most vain glorious; when yet their disposition, conversation, and behaviour, prove that they never truly delighted in the holiness of the law, or in the grace of the gospel.

As to Herod, if he heard John Baptist gladly, or with delight, shall we say, that the tyrant, who was in the common practice of iniquity and oppression, living openly in incestuous lewdness, did indeed delight in the law of God? This is too absurd to be deliberately maintained. What hath been said on these several instances, accounts likewise for Dr W.'s last instance of the common people's hearing our Saviour gladly, though many of them unprofitably.

Dr Taylor (*Orig. Sin*, p. 218.) brings Is. lviii. 2. where it is said of a nation that did not righteousness, *They seek me daily, and DELIGHT to know my ways.* It is easy answering this.

There is in mankind a lust of knowledge, of knowing good and evil. Many Jews became learned in the law; and it is very likely that Paul, in his unregenerate state, brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, became very learned in this way, and could resolve many a question respecting the Mosaic law. Their scribes and lawyers delighted in increasing their knowledge of it. The apostle says to the Jew, Rom. ii. 18, 19. *Thou knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, and art confident that thou thyself art a guide to the blind;* when he doth ver. 21—24. charge them with much wicked practice. The Jews in Isaiah's time did seek God daily, and did delight in approaching to God, as he says in the text cited, which can be understood of no other than external worship, in which they were zealous and laborious. Yet as it is not said or meant, that they sincerely sought God, or approached him with their heart; so if they delighted to *know* God's ways, yet it is not said or meant, that they delighted in these ways, or in the law of God, which marks

them out to men. That is a very different thing. The apostle's words in our context represent one delighting in these ways, not merely in the knowledge of them; and who delighted in the law itself, with a view to its holiness and spirituality, which he had asserted, ver. 14.

We see then that the instances of joy and delight, in the case of hypocrites and persons unregenerate, that have been adduced, do not come up to the meaning of *delighting in the law of God*, in the text under consideration.

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

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

SECT. VI.—*The same subject continued, and ver. 25. explained.*

We might be well satisfied with the evidence that has been already brought from this context, to determine the general scope and purpose of it; but there remains a great deal more evidence in the concluding verse of this seventh chapter. The first clause is, *I thank God through Jesus Christ*

our Lord. Here we have the expression of the Apostle's thankfulness for the advantage he had already obtained against the flesh; and the freedom he had by divine grace attained from the law in his members. By no means, say others. It is but his thankfulness for the prospect and comfortable expectation he had, through the grace of God in Jesus Christ, of being delivered from the body of death; for which he had expressed such an earnest wish and longing in the preceding verse. Be it so; as indeed both his past experience, and his good prospect for futurity, may be well together, as the matter of his thankfulness. But if we should restrict it to the matter last mentioned, his thankfulness in that same view implies his faith and confidence of being delivered from what he calls the body of death. It is easy using words, and many have used the preceding words, *O wretched man that I am!* who never had any true sense of wretchedness by the strength of sin in them. So it is easy for men to express thankfulness, and to profess the faith of total deliverance from sin, in such words as are here used, who have not the faith they express in their hearts. But for a man, who hath great bitterness of heart by the experience of sin in him; who finds the working out of deliverance from it exceed all his own powers, and utmost efforts, and all created power besides; who cries out, with a complaint sincere and earnest, of his wretchedness by it; for such a man, I say, to express, as with the same breath, his joyful thankfulness for the prospect and hope of deliverance from the body of death, could not be without that faith supporting and solacing his heart, that is a certain fruit and evidence of regeneration. For it will be often found, that the children of God have no greater trial of faith, or greater difficulty in exercising it, than in what concerneth their comfort in reference to sin that dwelleth in them, and their hope of deliverance from it. But to suppose that an unregenerate man, having such a painful feeling of sin, of which he is the absolute and *willing* slave, to have at the same time such thankful confidence of deliverance from it, is to suppose what is quite inconsistent with that character and state.

It was observed before, that it is charging the apostle with a very gross incongruity and inconsistency, to suppose him to be personating an infidel Jew, and yet to represent that Jew speaking of Jesus Christ, as in the first clause of this verse. Dr T. endeavours to hide the absurdity by the sort of a paraphrase he gives of ver. 24, 25. thus: 'Now what

‘ shall a sinner do in this miserable condition ?—How shall  
 ‘ such a wretched, enslaved, condemned Jew be delivered ?  
 ‘ He is delivered and obtains salvation, not by any strength  
 ‘ or favour the law supplieth, but by the grace of God in  
 ‘ our Lord Jesus Christ, for which we are bound to be for  
 ‘ ever thankful.’ So indeed the Apostle himself might say  
 of the Jew, or any other man in the supposed condition, in a  
*doctrinal* way ; but though the nature and rule of paraphrase  
 allowed him to vary somewhat and amplify the expression,  
 yet if the design was to personate the Jew, as this Doctor  
 thought, that did not give him a right to represent any  
 other as speaking than a Jew ; and if there was any thing  
 said inconsistent with that character, he should have been  
 convinced that the design was not to personate the Jew.  
 Was the man indeed sensible of this difficulty, that he avoids  
 it in the manner we have seen in his paraphrase ? However,  
 this is no other than a too artful and unfair way of hiding,  
 not removing the difficulty that occurred with regard to his  
 interpretation. Surely the Apostle was not capable of such  
 incongruity, rather gross absurdity, as to make an infidel  
 Jew to speak of Jesus Christ, in the manner here expressed.

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

1. *αυτος εγω, I myself ;* so rendered precisely according to  
 the Greek. But some, without giving any good reason for  
 it, will have it rendered, *I the same man,* (of whom he had  
 before spoken, not I Paul writing this epistle.) So Dr  
 Whitby. But if that were the sense designed, we should  
 have had in this place, not *αυτος εγω,* but *ο αυτος εγω,* as Beza  
 observes, who says, he never saw it so in the text, in any  
 copy, and he had seen a great many. The reason with these  
 interpreters for attempting to make this alteration in the text,  
 may, I think, be learned from these words of Dr W.’s an-  
 notation, ‘ Not I Paul writing this epistle.’ If the expres-  
 sion *I myself,* be retained, however, precisely according to  
 the Greek, they seem to be sensible, that it will strongly in-

timate that the apostle is indeed representing his own present case, and how it was then with himself. So indeed the words import; and must we agree to alter the text, to be free of this inconvenience? In order to have this agreed to, they should have shown us their translation to be warranted by the use of speech in the Greek, or else have shown us a different reading, to be warranted by ancient manuscripts of good authority. It seems neither of these could be done. My lexicon for the Latin, *idem*, the same man, gives, *ὁ αὐτος*, and the words in our text, *αὐτος ἐγώ*, is still rendered as here, *I myself*. So Luke xxiv. 39. *That, αὐτος ἐγώ εἰμι, it is I myself*; Rom. ix. 3. *For I could wish that, αὐτος ἐγώ, myself were accursed*; Rom. xv. 14. *And αὐτος ἐγώ, I myself also am persuaded*; 2 Cor. x. 1. *αὐτος δὲ ἐγώ Παῦλος, Now I Paul myself beseech you*; chap. xii. 13. *Except that, αὐτος ἐγώ, I myself was not burdensome to you*. This is enough for vindicating our translation, and to show that the different rendering is not warranted by the use and common meaning of the words.

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

However, his distinguishing thus pathetically and anxiously between himself, ver. 17. 20. and sin dwelling in him, is not to be understood as if he designed to alleviate his sin, or to excuse himself. That were not like the disposition of a man, who was making such sorrowful confession and complaint of sin. For if he had whereby to excuse himself, or meant so, why should he cry out, *Wretched man that I am?*

But though he was far from designing to excuse himself, or sin in him, yet having such sorrowful sense of his condition by sin, he much needed, as the true state of the case gave him ground, to encourage himself by observing, that the better principle prevailed in him, and that with his mind he *himself* served the law of God.

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

It would seem that Dr Whitby inclined to think so. For on the words of ver. 17. just now quoted, he says: 'Here the apostle seems to speak according to the philosophy of the heathens, with which the Jews began to be acquainted, that a man was not to be denominated from his body, or his sensual and carnal part, but from his mind, his *νεψ*, or λογικη διανοια, which, in Philo's phrase, is the man within us—the true man, the man properly so called.' So the unregenerate man may say, in the apostle's words, that with his *νεψ*, his mind, which is himself, (the true man, the man properly so called) he serves the law of God. This is what the Doctor aims at.

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

But all this is nothing to the present purpose. The apostle's view doth not respect the general frame, or constitution of man, or of human nature. His discourse respects moral character, and the different case of a person regenerate, and under grace, and of a person unregenerate, under the law, with regard to moral character. Though I denominate man in general from the reason and conscience he is endowed with, shall I therefore give the moral character of an ill man, of one who has abandoned himself to work wickedness like Ahab, from reason and conscience, and say the man is

a person of reason and conscience? What Dr W. suggests on this occasion from philosophy, is but an attempt to give his interpretation a colouring, which, if duly considered, must appear fallacious, yea extremely absurd.

The writers on that side express themselves as if they thought that in every man all was right on the part of the *νους*, the mind or reasoning faculty, whatever pravity may have affected the will, affections, and body, through acquired ill habits, or otherwise. In interpreting this context, they do not advert, that in this fallen state the human mind hath come under great weakness, yea blindness, in spiritual matters, and in the things of God. Besides what there is of this common to all men in their natural condition, the Scripture distinguishes some men as of corrupt minds in a special degree. The persons spoken of, Tit. i. 15. had *their mind* (ὁ *νους*) *and conscience defiled*. These in Rom. i. 28. were given up (εις *αδοκιμον νουν*) *to a reprobate mind*. Paul says, Eph. ii. 3. that, in an unconverted state, *we all—were fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and* (των *διανοιων*) *of the mind*. Chap. iv. 17. he exhorts the Christians *not to walk, as other Gentiles do, in the vanity* (της *νοου αυτων*) *of their mind*. He speaks of a man, Col. ii. 18. *vainly puffed up by* (της *νοου της σαρκου αυτου*) *his fleshly mind*. He mentions, 1 Tim. vi. 5. *perverse disputings of men* (διεφθαρμενων τον *νουν*) *of corrupt minds*, and so likewise, 2 Tim. iii. 8. It appears then, that in unregenerate men, even the *νους*, the mind itself is not so good a thing as some imagine, but is sadly tainted with sin; and is so in some to a high degree. Such men as Ahab, who have sold themselves to work wickedness, have their *νους*, their mind as corrupt as any men; and such are supposed, by the interpreters we have to do with, to be here personated by the apostle. Can such men justly say, With these our minds, fleshly minds, corrupt minds, reprobate minds as they are, we, even we ourselves, serve the law of God? or, when such a one sins, can he say, It is not I, for I am to be denominated, and my character taken from my *νους*, mind, my λογικη διανοια, my rational understanding, vain, corrupt, and fleshly as that is?

Let us now consider the natural course of things in the human soul and practice. It is certain that a man doth not follow any sinful course farther than even his mind and understanding is on the side of sin. The mind or understanding is on the side of duty in many cases in theory; but when it comes to the actual practice of sin, it is certain that

the mind doth first represent it as good, before it can proceed to practice. The mind may in this be biassed by affections, senses, lusts, and appetites. But from whatever source the bias comes, so it is, that the mind doth represent evil under the notion of good, before the will can possibly be determined to it. This is the fixed and unalterable order of things in rational agents. To suppose the will to determine itself to any sort of action or course without this, were to make it a brutal faculty, not the faculty of a rational agent. To say that the human will may, by a sort of sovereign liberty, determine itself to any action or pursuit deliberately, without the mind representing it as good, is, in order to ascribe to man the liberty of his will, to degrade him from the rank of a rational agent. It is certainly impossible in nature, that such an agent can will or choose any thing, good or evil as it may be in itself, but what the mind represents as good. Be it so, then, that the mind, understanding, or conscience, hath a certain light and urgency on the side of holiness, or of duty, so far as they are enlightened in an unregenerate man; yet this light and urgency is faint and weak. On the other hand, the mind, influenced by a corrupt heart, represents the pleasures of sin as good, and this it performs in a strong light, and urges powerfully; which, being agreeable to the corrupt disposition of the heart, prevails against the weak and ineffectual suggestion of mind and conscience, in favour of holiness and duty, and so takes effect in the practice. Thus, even the *vs*, the mind itself, comes to be on the side of sin, in men corrupt, unsanctified, and unregenerate.

This being the case, from which part is the unregenerate man to be denominated? Is it from the faint light in his mind, and the weak ineffectual urgency of his conscience in favour of duty? or is it from the more prevailing bias of his mind itself, of his will and affections on the side of sin; and from the free course it hath in his practice? How much soever he is, in the several faculties of his soul determined on the side of sin, in opposition to true holiness, yet as any degree of light that remains in his mind and conscience is the better part in him; is he, from this, even when he goes on in sin, yea is under the dominion of it, entitled to denominate himself, as to moral or spiritual character, from this better part; and to say, of all the evil that he practises, It is not I?—This is absurd.

But to come still closer to the subject, let us endeavour

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

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

It will tend to our better understanding this subject, and at the same time show a reason of the expression, *the law of my mind*, to observe that Scripture, Heb. viii. 10. *This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts.* This is not merely what the apostle mentions, when he speaks of the natural conscience that is in the Gentiles, Rom. ii. 15. The work of the law, as there mentioned, is not the work that the law prescribes, but the work which the law itself in the conscience performs; representing duty and sin, excusing or accusing. But it is something very different from what was naturally in the Gentiles, and something more excellent and

effectual, that is meant by the promise of the new covenant, when it is said, Heb. viii. *I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts.* This is something more than natural conscience can arrive to in any man: it is a writing by the Spirit of the living God in the fleshy tables of the hearts. It is, that God by his Spirit puts the holiness of the law, or puts the love of God, (which is the great commandment, and the sum of holiness) in the minds and hearts of his people; implants in them a new and efficacious principle of spiritual life, effectually producing in them conformity to his law, and securing against the breaking of the covenant, as had happened with respect to the first covenant, before mentioned. So that this promise is so far parallel to that Jer. xxxii. 40. *I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.*

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

3. The third expression in this second clause is, *servings the law of God.* This can import no less than a true conformity to the holiness of the law of God, with submission and obedience to its authority, in the sincere and constant purpose of the heart, and in habitual endeavour; and this is incompatible with the character and state of an unregenerate person, under the dominion of sin. It is, however, endeavoured to reconcile this serving the law of God, with the condition of such a person. Dr Hammond hath it thus in his paraphrase: ‘The carnal man—with his understanding he serves the law of God; is delighted and pleased with those things wherewith that is delighted.’ Dr T. thus: ‘That same I, the same person, in his inward man, his mind and rational powers, may assent to, and approve the law of God.’ Dr W.’s mind we have seen to the same purpose. Let us consider these things a little.

These writers suppose, that this context represents the case of a person enslaved by his lusts, habitually led captive by them, and quite destitute of the spirit. Yea, they explain and exemplify the case in instances of the grossest sinners. On the other hand, they observe, that the unregenerate man hath naturally a rational mind and conscience, but of small force or effect in practice. The light in his rational mind so far as it is enlightened, shows him what is duty, and what is sin.

Yea, in some cases, his conscience incites him with great urgency to do his duty; and when he acts in the contrary way, accuses and condemns him. But with regard to the light in his conscience, the person under the dominion of sin is altogether passive, reluctant, and rebellious. As to serving the law of God, the conscience doth indeed serve it, as a witness for its authority and holiness; and God serves himself of the conscience, for the interest of his justice, and for that likewise of his grace and holiness. But shall we say, and give it for the interpretation of this place, that an unregenerate person, because he has reason and conscience marking out to him duty and sin, may be said to serve the law of God; when, in the prevailing disposition of his heart, and his whole course of life and practice, he is in the utmost contrariety to it? may such justly say, I myself, or (if you please) I the same carnal man and slave of sin, do serve the law of God with my reason and conscience, which, with my will and affections, I do resolutely disobey and counteract, in the allowed lustings of my heart, and in all my conversation and practice? Surely such an interpretation is intolerable, and an insult upon common sense.

The great hurt which these writers pretend to fear from the interpretation they oppose is, that wicked and unholy persons are thereby encouraged, as they think, to consider their practice as not inconsistent with being truly in Christ, and in a state of grace. But by this time it may be pretty clear to any impartial person, that the interpretation of the context here given, affords no encouragement to men in unholy practice; and the proper consequence and improvement of it is to be hereafter shown. In the meantime these interpreters, and they who receive their notions, would do well to consider, if their own interpretation tendeth not greatly to encourage men in an ill condition and course, when they make Paul teach persons unregenerate, wicked, and unholy, that when they do ill, they may justly and warrantably say, according to the style of this scripture, *It is not I, but sin that dwelleth in me; for with the mind I do serve the law of God.* Is it possible that unholy persons can apply such language to themselves, without conveying thereby alleviating notions of their wickedness, and favourable notions of their condition, into their own hearts, already wofully deluded by their lusts, and that with the worst consequences to them?

Dr Taylor (note on ver. 25.) says, ‘*Serving the law of God, is not a stronger expression than hating sin, ver. 15.*

‘ and delighting in the law of God, ver. 22. But these expressions are applied to the Jew in the flesh, or enslaved with sin ; consequently, so may *serving the law of God.*’

Good reason hath been here given, why we should reckon it very absurd to apply any of these expressions to a person enslaved to sin. But it is not only the Jew in the flesh, and under the Mosaic law, to whom what this context represents is applied by these interpreters : recourse is had to heathen fable ; and Medea, whom the poets represent as a monster of wickedness, is brought on the stage, to have her part in this farce of interpretation. So the perfidious cruel witch Medea (if she had been the apostle’s contemporary) might say of all her wickedness, ‘ *It is not I, but sin that dwelleth in me.* Do not denominate me, or take my character, from this wickedness, but from that best thing that is in me, my reason and conscience, which accuse and condemn me for it ; for I myself, or, I the same person, who so grossly counteract my reason and conscience, in all my practice ; even the same person whom the apostle Paul has so notably represented, (though, good man, he writes as in his own name and person, to mollify the harshness, and to avoid giving offence to my delicate ladyship, and to such as I) even I, the same person do, notwithstanding all my ill practice, yet with my mind and reason serve the law of God.’ It were indeed mollifying with a witness for the apostle to write as he has done, with such meaning and intention. Was he indeed so shy of giving offence even to the Jews, whom he had it so much at heart to do good to ? See Acts xxviii. 25—27. Rom. xi. 8—10. 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16.

Medea is introduced in this interpretation particularly for the words which Ovid (a man not very noted for sanctity himself) has put in her mouth ; by which several interpreters have exemplified the expressions of our context. Dr T. brings them in thus, (note on ver. 15.) ‘ A heathen poet (saith he) gives us a like description of the combat between reason and passion.’

*Sed trahit invitam nova vis, aliudque cupido  
Mens aliud suadet, video meliora proboque  
Deteriora sequor*——

He gives it in English thus :

My reason this, my passion that persuades,  
I see the right, and I approve it too,  
Condemn the wrong ;—and yet the wrong pursue.

By the interpretation here given, our context represents a conflict between a prevailing principle of holiness, under the influence of the Spirit of grace, in a sanctified heart, with so much of the flesh, and its lustings and passions, as remains in it. It is true, at the same time, that, in the unregenerate, reason and conscience oppose sin; and especially in its grosser actings, according to the words of Ovid, they have some sort of conflict with it. The distinction between these different sorts of conflict I leave to the practical writers. But it is fit to say something here, to account for the words ascribed by the poet to Medea.

Notwithstanding the fearful effect of the fall upon human nature, mankind have ever retained some notion and impression of the Supreme Being, and that he ought to be worshipped. There have been at all times notions of social virtues, with considerable impression and effect in the minds of men. Every man in particular is sensible of his own interest in these, and of their importance in society. God, the great patron of human society, hath, in great mercy to the world, carefully maintained the impression of these in the minds of men, even in those whose disposition and practice are very remote from holiness. Gross acts of iniquity, that are contrary to all social virtue, excite horror, even in those who are guilty of them. Medea's character is that of a noted sorceress. She betrayed her father, and her country; she murdered her brother, and mangled his body in a most inhuman manner; having formed an extravagant and passionate love to Thesus, she bore him several children; and when she followed him to his own country, being there disappointed of her expectation from him, she murdered the children she had by him. In the end, being a witch, she raised wind and tempest, went aloft, and made her way through the air to a remote region. So the poets have told the story of Medea. Such acts of perfidy, cruelty, impetuous lust, and sorcery, are shocking to *humanity* itself. She is made to speak as sensible of this herself, and as if her own heart recoiled at the thought of them. But our context represents one who viewed the spirituality of the law of God, as it prescribes a rule to the motions and temper of the heart inwardly; one who bitterly laments the motions and activity of sin within him, without mentioning any gross acts of sin outwardly. All that is here said, can be accounted for without supposing any thing of that sort. To interpret this context by such instances as Medea, and by

the account given of her in the lines inserted above, is utterly unwarrantable.

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

There remains the last clause of this text, *But with the flesh the law of sin*. The words, *I serve*, which are in the preceding, are to be understood to be in the sense of this clause, though not repeated in it, thus : *With the flesh I serve the law of sin*. For the Apostle doth not mean to say, that what of sin came from the flesh was not his sin, or done by him, having said, ver. 15. *What I hate, that I do*, and ver. 19. *The evil which I would not, that I do*. Yet it is evident, by the way this last clause is introduced and connected, that the flesh was not the dominant or reigning principle in him. Dr T. will have it understood that it was. For in the last paragraph of his note on this verse, he says ; ‘ Serving with the flesh the law of sin cannot well be applied to a true Christian, or such an one as Paul was.’ To confirm this, he uses the words of chap. viii. 1, 2. When we come to consider these verses, it will appear very evidently, that they do not by any means suit the purpose for which he refers to them. He adds there : ‘ Serving and delighting in the law are properly enough used in the case of a wicked Jew. For how little soever his life was conformed to the law of God, he would notwithstanding glory in it, and profess a high esteem for it, chap. ii. 17—24. See also Is. lviii. 1, 2.’ Of this last text enough hath been said before. The wicked Jew might *profess* an esteem for the law, without loving it ; and he might glory in it, as

the peculiar privilege of his nation, and in his own knowledge of it, without delighting in it, or in the holiness it represents and requires. Serving and delighting in the law cannot be ascribed to a wicked Jew, or to any other wicked man, but with the utmost impropriety, yea glaring absurdity.

That writer paraphrases the two latter clauses thus: 'To conclude; the sum of what I have advanced concerning the power of sin in the sensual man, is this; namely, that the same I, the same person, in his inward man, his mind, and rational powers, may assent to, and approve the law of God, and yet notwithstanding, by his fleshly appetites, may be brought under servitude to sin.' But how came he to express serving sin by being brought under *servitude* to sin? That with the flesh he served sin may be accounted for by single instances and acts in the full sense of the expression, but to be brought under *servitude* to sin denotes a man's state,—to be under the dominion of sin, its servant or slave. For example: if a sincere Christian shall, from the influence of the flesh, be angry with his brother without a cause, and through the impetuosity of his passion shall call him *Raca*, or, *Thou fool*, he, in that instance, doth serve the law of sin; yet it would be unjust and absurd to say, he is under servitude to sin. This author, however, seems to have understood by the flesh here only sensuality and fleshly appetites, as in his paraphrase. To what then shall we ascribe causeless anger, and one's calling his brother *Raca*, if it come not under the general denomination of *the flesh*?

But how came he for, *serving the law of sin*, in the last clause, where *serving* is not expressed, to give, brought under servitude to sin; and, at the same time, in the former clause, where it is expressed, to render it by no more than assenting to, and approving in his rational powers, the law of God, which might be without serving it at all? When the Apostle says, *With my mind I serve the law of God*, surely there is good reason to conclude, that the man, being made free from sin, (from its dominion) was the servant of righteousness, the servant of God, (as chap. vi. 18. 22.) rather than to say, he was under servitude to sin; even though the flesh in him prevailed, in too many instances, to serve the law of sin.

Mr John Alexander, who understands this context of an unregenerate man, yet differs from all that I know of, in the interpretation of this verse. As to serving the law of God, he says, it is more than to assent to the law that it is good,

—yea, it can be said of none but the true Christian and servant of God ; of whom, according to him, it cannot be said, that with the flesh he serves the law of sin ; which could not, he thought, agree with what our Saviour says,—*no man can serve two masters.* ‘It must,’ he says, ‘be predicated of the same person at different times of his life.’ Yet it is plain, the man here speaking represents his own case in both clauses, as it was at the present time ; nor can he be otherwise understood, without taking a liberty in interpretation that were quite intolerable. However, the writer speaks very strongly thus : ‘Surely he (the Apostle) could not intend to speak of a monster which never existed in nature, equally governed by two opposite principles, which are directly subversive of each other.’ I shall not say that true believers are monsters, but certainly they possess a very peculiar character in their present state. Angels are all holiness, without any sin ; devils are all sin, without any holiness. Unregenerate men are wholly under the dominion of sin, its servants or slaves,—quite free from righteousness ; whereas the true believer is holy by his general character, and prevailing disposition ; yet, having the flesh in him, he thereby serves the law of sin. But the monstrosity will vanish, and the difficulty disappear, if you throw out of Mr Alexander’s sentence the word *equally*, which the apostle’s language gave him no warrant to put in it. It is very clear in the expression of this ver. 25. that he did not say or mean that he was equally governed by two opposite principles.

A little afterward, Mr Alexander says : ‘Teaching us that the mind or understanding must lead and predominate in the servant of God, as the flesh does in the servant of sin, he shows us how the mind being restored to its dominion over the man by the gospel, and the flesh at the same time subdued or crucified, the law of God comes to be kept.’ But did this writer think, that in the servant of God the flesh is so subdued or crucified, that it hath no motion or activity at all ? If so, where shall we find a servant of God in this world ? If not, then the flesh, though crucified, yet having life and motion, exerts itself, for instance, in a fit of sinful anger, and thereby serves the law of sin. Doth the man, for this, cease all at once to be the servant of God ? But there is enough of this conceit of Mr Alexander’s.

We must not, however, leave this verse and chapter, without observing how Dr Taylor connects this last verse of it

in his paraphrase, with the preceding and following ones. He paraphrases ver. 24. with the following one, thus: 'And now, what shall a sinner do in this miserable situation? He is under the power of such passions and habits as the law declares to be sinful, and which even his own reason disapproves, but is too weak to conquer; and being a Jew under the law, he stands condemned to death for his wicked compliances with them. How shall such a wretched, enslaved, condemned Jew be delivered from the dominion of sinful lusts, and the curse of the law, which subjects him to death?' Then, after giving ver. 25. as we have seen, he adds, 'Thus under the weak and lifeless dispensation of the law, the sinner remains in a deplorable state, without help or hope, and sentenced to death. But now, (chap. viii. 1.) under the gospel the most encouraging hopes smile upon us, and we have the highest assurance, that those are quite discharged from the penalty of the law, and disengaged from the servitude of sin, who embrace the faith of the gospel; if so be—' &c.

By the first of these passages, the sinner is miserable by the power of sinful passions and habits. There is some further unhappiness in the case of the Jew; being a Jew, under the law, he stands condemned to death. According to this writer, a heathen, however wicked, was not obnoxious to death, as not being under a law that allotted death for sin, but the Jew, and he only, was under such a law; so he stood condemned to death for transgression. But we have had enough of this absurd notion before.

It appears that, according to this author, the Jews were in a most wretched condition during the Mosaic dispensation, being enslaved, and condemned, without help or hope from the weak and lifeless dispensation of the law they were under. Yet there were many thousands of pious persons in these times, who were not under condemnation, nor enslaved to sin. As to the dispensation they were under, it was not a weak and lifeless dispensation of mere law. God never brought his people under such a dispensation, since grace was first manifested, Gen. iii. 15. nor were such a dispensation consistent with God's having a people at all. Sinners of the Jews, who were the slaves of sin, might come out of that state by a proper improvement of the grace that was set before them under that dispensation, as others had done. Dr T. could not deny this.

The Jews, who were in the worst condition, were such as

delusively turned the dispensation they were under to a dispensation of mere law to themselves, by neglecting and rejecting grace, and founding all their confidence on the law, and works thereof. Of these the apostle says, Gal. iii. 10. *As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse.* They at the same time persecuted outrageously the teachers and professors of the gospel, rejecting and opposing it with great zeal and fury. Let us observe how Dr T. gives his thoughts concerning these in other places of his book. When we state these thoughts of his in contrast with what he says of them in his paraphrase and notes on the texts we have been last considering, we shall see some things that are not quite consistent. But before we observe his opinion of the infidel Jews, let us make our way to it, by taking some notice of his opinion concerning the heathens.

In the title and contents of chap. xiii. of his Key, are these words concerning the heathens: 'Virtuous heathens shall be eternally saved.' He labours this point much. In that chapter, sect. 289. he says: 'This noble scheme (that of the gospel) was not intended to exclude any part of the world, to whom it should not be revealed, from the present favour of God or future salvation.' And a little below: 'There might be some virtuous persons among them.' And downwards: 'In that solemn day (the day of judgment) the virtuous heathen will not be rejected because he did not belong to the visible kingdom of God in this world, but will then be readily accepted and received into the kingdom of glory.'

For a further discovery of this author's opinion on this subject, let us observe how he expresses himself concerning the necessity of revelation. In his note on chap. ii. 15. he hath this proposition: 'There is a law of nature which is of true guide, and sufficient to bring a man who has no other light, to eternal happiness. *Objection*:—But if the law of nature be so sufficient, what occasion for the gospel? *Answer*. Reflect upon chap. i. 17. to the end. No law, or light, how sufficient soever of itself, to save mankind, when duly attended to, is sufficient to reform them, when they generally neglect and pervert it; because that very thing that should reform them, is neglected and perverted.' All this might be said concerning the gospel, and says no more for the necessity of the revelation that hath been given than it doth for the necessity of a new revelation besides the gospel. He adds another objection and answer. '*Object*.

‘ But if we live according to the light of nature, we shall be saved, though we pay no regard to revelation. *Ans.* To despise or disregard any discoveries of God’s will and goodness, to neglect any scheme he has formed to promote virtue and happiness, especially such a glorious and noble scheme, is foolish, wicked, and a capital transgression of the law of nature.’ So the gospel is a valuable discovery of God’s will and goodness, and is a glorious and noble scheme for promoting virtue and happiness: but, according to this writer, men might be virtuous, so as to reach happiness, and the kingdom of glory, though they had never heard of it; yea, if such revelation had never been made, I know that several, who have shown much ability in defending the general truth of the Christian revelation, have been of the same mind with this writer on this subject; and I cannot help thinking that, on this account, their writings against the infidels are essentially defective. They have entertained notions and principles that have disabled them from making a thorough confutation of Deism; and that they have too great tendency to make the infidel easy in his mind, in rejecting the gospel.

Let us now observe this author’s notions concerning the infidel Jews; and certainly we may expect he would not think their case, if they were virtuous, who had the divine law by a clear revelation, worse than that of virtuous heathens. Heathens might be, he says, virtuous and finally happy, which they could not be, without obtaining pardon, and being made free from the slavery and dominion of sin. Surely the Jew under the law was not in worse condition as to this. Concerning these Jews, who seem to have been in the worst case that ever Jews were in, Dr T.’s opinion was what I come now to show. In his fourth note on Rom. v. 20. he puts this question: ‘ But suppose the Jew through mere mistake should verily believe that he ought to continue under the law of Moses, doth it follow, that he was therefore to remain under condemnation for ever?’ I would not indeed have expected that any Christian, who would be at the pains but of a little thinking, would ever put such a question; as it is certain that many Jews, (thousands, Acts xxi. 20.) who were true believers, and holy persons, did, for some time after their conversion by the gospel, verily believe in the manner the question supposes. Though probably many of them died in that persuasion, yet I scarce think that ever Christian imagined they would for this continue under condemnation for

ever. But the author inclined not to disturb or shock his reader all at once, by putting the question in the full form that he meant. It is plain he meant Jews, who to believing the perpetuity of the Mosaic law, joined the rejection of Christ and the gospel; as we shall see presently.

He answers the question thus: 'No, surely; no more than it follows, that any other man shall remain under condemnation for any mere mistake of judgment in religious affairs. Such a Jew must be in the same state with any other honest man, who is in a simple error.' What he means by mere mistake of judgment, and being in a simple error, I shall not determine. But if he meant (and I see not what else he could mean) mistakes and errors that are not connected with any thing very ill in the disposition and practice of men; as it is not reasonable to think that errors can be such, that amount to a denial of the important and essential truth of faith, so it is evident that the error of the Jew was connected with what was very ill in his disposition and practice. He proceeds in the same place thus: 'Notwithstanding, it was the apostle's duty to set him right; because such a mistake was very prejudicial, not only as it led him to place his dependance and hope upon the law, a weak and ineffectual principle.'—(This indeed was extremely prejudicial, if we consider the matter as the apostle doth, Rom. ix. 31—33. and chap. x. 3, 4.) He goes on thus: 'Not only as it hindered him from seeing and improving the gracious provision God had made for purifying his heart, perfecting his joy and comfort, and preparing him for happiness'— (But might not a virtuous person, even a heathen, have his heart purified, and he be prepared for happiness, though he had never known or heard of the gracious provision God had made for these purposes? He might, according to this author; who thus proceeds,) 'But also as it engaged him to oppose the preaching and reception of the gospel, the only scheme of life, peace, and salvation, and to despise the very grace which must pardon his mistakes and errors, if ever he was pardoned and saved.' Concerning Paul, this writer says, (Key, sect. 302.) 'Being fully persuaded, that the Jewish dispensation was instituted by God, never to be altered, but to abide for ever, he really believed that Jesus and his followers were deceivers; and that it was his duty to oppose them, and to stand up courageously for God and his truth. Thus he honestly followed the dictates of his own conscience.'

We have now Dr T.'s notions concerning the subject, for which these passages were here transcribed pretty fully ; and we see that according to him, 1. The salvation and future happiness of the virtuous heathen is not to be doubted of ; and if so, why should there be any doubt of the salvation of an honest and virtuous Jew ? For what virtuous heathen was ever heard of, of whom there is a higher character for virtue, and better supported, than that which is given of the Jews, Rom. x. 2. that *they had a zeal of God* ; and, chap. ix. 31. that *they followed after the law of righteousness* ? 2. That the Jew's error concerning the perpetuity of the Mosaic law was a mere mistake of judgment, and a simple error, such as would not hinder the salvation of any honest man. Yea, 3. It is to be considered as such a simple error and mere mistake of judgment, even as connected with the consequences above mentioned, of trusting to the law, of rejecting and persecuting the gospel in a furious manner ; as for these conséquences, he says, that *such* a mistake was very prejudicial. Now, if the Jew's mistake respecting the law, and respecting Jesus Christ, really believing him and his followers to be deceivers, was consistent with honesty and sincerity, it were hard to say, that acting consequentially would not be consistent with honesty. Accordingly, the author says, that Paul in opposing the gospel acted honestly, according to his conscience ; though Paul himself says, that in doing so, he was the persecutor, blasphemer, injurious, and the chief of sinners. But though Dr T. considered the error of the Jew as a mere mistake of judgment and simple error, consistent with one's being an honest man, yet Christians, who will consider the matter in the light in which the Scripture presents it, cannot but be convinced, that there was great and wilful blindness, hardness of heart, perverseness, and insincerity, in the error of the Jews concerning Christ and the gospel ; considering the evidence, and powerful demonstration with which it was proposed and supported ; and that by this, and their conduct in consequence of their inexcusable error, they brought on themselves great guilt, and fearful wrath.

This author indeed says, as we have seen above, that the error of the Jew was very prejudicial, as it led him, among other things, to oppose the gospel, the only scheme of peace, life, and salvation, and to despise the very grace which must pardon his mistakes and errors, if ever he was pardoned. But though the error of the Jew was in these respects very

prejudicial, it does not follow, that, according to the notions of this writer, it, and the Jew's consequential honest conduct, did hinder the Jew's being at present accepted of God, or hinder his future salvation and happiness. For if the virtuous heathen was to be saved, without knowing Christ or the gospel, why should it not be thought, that the virtuous Jew, acting from a zeal of God, in opposing and despising the scheme of grace, might not be saved; as all this on his part proceeded from a mere mistake of judgment, that put him in no worse condition, as our author says, than any other honest man? This, however, is not a proper place for enlarging on these subjects. We have seen that, according to Dr T. the infidel Jew, even continuing such, was far from being in a hopeless condition.

Upon the other hand, if we look into the same author's paraphrase of Rom. vii. 25. there, according to him, the person represented is the enslaved Jew, under the dominion of sinful lusts, and the curse of the law; under the weak and lifeless dispensation of the law he remains in a *deplorable* condition, without help or hope, enslaved to sin, and sentenced to death.—This is his account of the Jews in general in this place. The author says there indeed, 'He is delivered, and obtains salvation by the grace or favour of God, in our Lord Jesus Christ.' How shall we understand this, but as he explains in the paraphrase of the next following verse, (chap. viii. 1.) 'Now under the gospel the most encouraging hopes smile upon us, and we have the highest assurance that those are quite discharged from the penalty of the law, and disengaged from the servitude of sin, who embrace the faith of the gospel.' But according to this, whatever effect the encouraging hope of the gospel may have in favour of them who embrace it, it can have no good effect for them who reject and oppose it; and however they who truly embrace the faith of the gospel may be thereby discharged from the penalty of the law, and the servitude of sin, yet these expressions imply, that the Jew who embraces it not, continues under the condemnation of the law, and servitude of sin, still in a *deplorable* condition.

Any who can reconcile Dr T.'s notions concerning the unbelieving Jew, in his notes on Rom. v. 20. and in his Key to the apostolic writings, with what we have seen in his paraphrase of Rom. vii. 25. may do it, I cannot. But in making the paraphrase, the writer minded carefully his general notion, that the context represents especially the case of the

Jew under the law, the slave of sin: he did not mind the sentiments he had elsewhere expressed concerning such a Jew.

The true meaning of this text, chap. vii. 25. has been made sufficiently clear, and I now proceed to

SECT. VII.—*Containing answers to the objections brought against the foregoing interpretation.*

Clear and full evidence hath been brought, proving that in this context the apostle represents his own case and experience, in the state wherein he was when he wrote it; which was a state of grace.

As to those who hold that the apostle personates a man unregenerate, the slave of sin, their strongest argument consists chiefly in two things: 1. In this, that they understand the apostle's language here of bitter complaint concerning sin, in the fullest and most extended meaning of the words; as if those were used concerning the man in the cool historical way. 2. In this, that in interpreting, they ascribe to the understanding, conscience, or reason, what can by no means be ascribed to that faculty. Their unreasonableness in both hath been shown. I go now to consider arguments of another sort, that are used by way of objection against the interpretation itself in general.

Dr Hammond, on Rom. vii. note (*d*), brings what is contained ver. 8, 9. to prove, that in this chapter the apostle doth not represent his own case in his regenerate state. But as the question only concerns the latter context, where he alters his style, and speaks of himself in the present tense, from ver. 14. to the end of the chapter, the learned writer's arguments, so far as he founds on any thing preceding that verse, are quite wide of the purpose.

The writers on that side would have it thought, that Augustine was the first who interpreted this context, as hath been done here, contrary to what he sometimes thought; but that he was led to change his opinion by the heat of dispute with the Pelagians. But this amounts to no more than some sort of prejudice, and is no real argument against our interpretation. He was not the first who did so interpret, as hath been observed before; and as to the heat of dispute with the Pelagians, it is certain that the false doctrines of heretics, and their subtlety in defending them, have often given occasion to good men to consider things more closely; to think, and speak, and interpret Scripture

more correctly. If Augustine saw cause to change his opinion concerning this context, he seems to have the better of Dr Whitby, who suggests these prejudices against him; and who did himself, without such good reason, change his mind on a subject of much greater importance. After he had, in his annotations on the New Testament, maintained the divinity of our Saviour by many good arguments, insisted on by the learned before him to good purpose, and to which neither himself, nor any one else, could give a good answer, he left, as his legacy to the church, his posthumous treatise against that fundamental article of Christian faith. As to the present subject, and these prejudices against Augustine, the reader's best method will be to divest himself of prejudice, to consider arguments carefully and coolly, and to judge as evidence shall determine his mind.

I go now to consider more particularly the objections of Dr Whitby and Arminius. The former brings about seven arguments, or considerations against our interpretation. The sum of all comes to this:—The person here represented 'is carnal, sold under sin,' (so indeed the Apostle bitterly complains); 'hath no power in him to do any good'—(the apostle doth not say so, though he bemoans himself that he could not do good in the degree and manner he willed. Yea, how could it be thus argued by Dr W. who, in a place formerly noticed, argues strenuously, from the language used in this context, that the person here represented, even the unregenerate, of whom he understands it, is not without a power to do good? 'Living' (unfairly; as this word imports the habitual outward and inward practice of life) 'in the commission of things that he hated'—(indeed the flesh in him served the law of sin; and in that part there was a too ordinary activity of sin, springing up spontaneously, and sometimes impetuously. But the character of his life was not be taken from this; as he says of it, *It is not I, but sin that dwelleth in me.*) 'Still,' (unfairly still; nothing in the apostle's expressions imports what that word means) 'doing that which he allowed not:' (the flesh indeed was commonly active in that way; but the man himself, and his manner of life were to be denominated from a better principle, by which he served the law of God:—'made captive to the law of sin;' (to that tended indeed the efforts of the law of sin; and the apostle's words import no more. Dr W. in his second argument represents unfairly, as if the man confessed that he *yielded* himself a cap-

tive to the law of sin, whereas he appears all along in resistance and conflict against it, however much in some particular instances it might prevail.)

With these and such like expressions, unfairly enough represented, the Doctor compares, under so many different heads, and in so many different paragraphs, a considerable number of texts, which prove that the apostle could not, and that a true believer cannot, be the slave of sin, &c. Some of his readers, of no very extensive acquaintance in the learned world, might, from his way of reasoning, conceive very strange notions of the men whose interpretation he pretends to confute. They might readily ask, What sort of persons can these be, who can join in one character the true believer, yea, an apostle, and at the same time a slave of sin, captivated to his lusts? Yet the interpretation here given, is that of the generality of the divines of the reformed churches; of many men eminent for piety, and of as great ability and learning as any Protestant church or nation hath produced; of the learned Bishop Davenant, and of divers other eminent writers of the church of England. From this consideration one might suspect, upon a little reflection, that Dr W. in this arguing of his had not hit the point. However, he has proved, that a regenerate man cannot be a slave to his lusts, and on this he has bestowed more than a folio page, in which, though so much writing amounted to some labour, yet the work otherwise was very easy. Now, let us observe more particularly his objections and reasonings, in his note on ver. 25.

1. Our interpretation, he says, makes the apostle contradict what he says of himself to the Thessalonians, 1 Epist. ii. 10. and to the Corinthians, 2 Epist. i. 12. ; 1 Epist. iv. 4. ; 1 Epist. ix. 27. Could he say such things as he says of himself in these texts, who is carnal, sold under sin, &c. ? *Answ.* He could say such things as in these texts, very consistently with the sorrowful and bitter complaints he hath of sin, and of the flesh, in our context. Yea, it is the man who shows such sensibility with regard to the motions of sin within him, and conflict against them, who is most likely to have all his conversation and behaviour which the cited texts represent.

2. How often doth the apostle propose himself as a pattern to the churches; requiring them to be followers of him, as he was also of Christ? 1 Cor. xi. 1. and again, Phil. iv. 8; that is, be ye carnal, sold under sin—and the God of

love and peace shall be with you—this sure (so he adds) is an absurd, if not blasphemous exhortation; and yet, according to this interpretation, it must be suitable to the mind of the apostle. *Answ.* Blasphemous indeed, as he interprets these expressions of our context; he needed not have spared his censure. But no such absurdity or blasphemy follows from our interpretation. If the apostle's outward conversation, which the churches had access to observe, set before them a good pattern, surely when he lays open his inmost heart to them, and shows himself in a sorrowful struggle and conflict against the flesh, and the first motions of sin within him, that is not the part of his example least worthy to be followed by those who have at heart to live holily and righteously.

3. With what indignation doth he reject the accusations of them who looked upon him as walking after the flesh? yet if he were carnal, sold under sin, if with the flesh he served the law of sin, &c., he doth here in effect confess what there be peremptorily denies. *Answ.* By no means. In the explication it hath been made very clear, that none of the expressions in our context imports what this writer interprets. It doth not represent him as one that *walked* after the flesh: but as one who had it greatly at heart not to walk so. That he did so walk is not said. But more of this on chap. viii. 1. In the mean time, as to serving with the flesh the law of sin, should it not be observed, that he says, ver. 25. that with his mind he himself served the law of God?

But why should I tire the reader with more of this sort? all this Doctor's arguments derive their force from his own interpretation of the particular expressions of the apostle's doleful complaint of sin remaining in him, which I have shown not to be just or well founded. There is no appearance of force in his objections, compared with our interpretation; but all his seven arguments come to nothing if it stands good, and the expressions are to be understood as we have showed; and for that I refer to what hath been said to establish our interpretation.

However, to make it the more easy for readers to satisfy themselves with regard to what remains of Dr W.'s objections, I shall suggest a few considerations.

1. It is given as a certain mark of persons who are in Christ, (2 Cor. v. 17.) that *old things are passed away, and all things are become new*. Yet I do not expect any will say, it is meant, that sin doth not remain in such as are in Christ.

If it doth remain, it may be justly said, that among all the new things that, by divine grace, are in such a man, there is nothing more new, and more different from a man's former disposition and exercise in his natural state, than to have his heart so affected with regard to sin, as is here expressed. Sin had formerly the dominion, and was served by sinners, in the day of its power, as by a willing people. Now it is dethroned, sorrowed for, sincerely and vigorously opposed, even in its first motions within. The man had been hardened, and sin was sweet and pleasant to him. But old things are passed away ; things are become new with him in this respect. All the great and multiplied distresses he underwent from without, never brought such a doleful cry from his heart, as he now uttered itself, *O wretched man that I am !*

2. There is nothing in this latter context of chap. vii. that shows the person therein represented to be in the same case as formerly, with regard to what is mentioned, ver. 5. where first mention is made of the motions of sin that were by the law ; and next, that these did bring forth fruit unto death. The disparity appears clearly. The man now feels the motions of sin in him : what true Christian doth not ? But it is not said, that these motions of sin are by the law. A renewed soul is, by its prevailing disposition, well affected to the law ; and hath a prevailing habitual delight in the holiness thereof. There is in such a heart what dutifully entertains the precept, though the flesh inclines a different way. Such a soul is relieved from the curse of the law. The chief effects of the law in the heart are not, as in the unregenerate, that the holy commandment rouses the powers of sin, or that the curse irritates the rebellious disposition of the heart. In the precept the regenerate person perceives the beauty of holiness ; and the curse of the law being altogether just and right in his eyes, his deliverance from it exalts the Lord in his eyes, endears his grace, and engages him more and more to the Lord's yoke, disposing him to set to his seal, that now, by divine grace and love, it is easy.

Again, it is not said, that the motions of sin have ordinarily their course, to bring forth fruit, as in the man, ver. 5. If he finds himself enticed by his lust, it is not said, that lust conceiving doth ordinarily bring forth fruit in the practice. It may so happen in particular instances to true Christians ; but there is nothing that imports that that is commonly the case with the man in our context.

3. The regenerate man truly mortifies sin, and the lusts thereof; and hath habitually at heart to do so. There is nothing contrary to that in the person who here speaks. Would to God that all Christians had the quick sense, and painful feeling, with the conflict against sin, that is here represented! We might justly say, in that case, that sin, corrupt lusts, and carnal affections, were more in the way to be thoroughly mortified, than they commonly appear to be in most Christians.

4. In persons regenerated, sin is crucified, and Gal. v. 24. *They that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts*—True, they have done so. Accordingly, as to the man in our context, it is very evident, though sin exerted great vigour, that indeed it was bound, did not act at liberty, but was in a crucified, suffering, and dying condition.

The great objection against our interpretation is, that, according to it, the context presents what is of dangerous tendency to the morals of Christians. After considering what Dr Whitby hath offered to that general purpose, let us now consider it as it is urged by Arminius, who has bestowed much labour upon it in the dissertation formerly mentioned, and has enlarged much on the ill use that may be made of our context, as we interpret it.

I do not, however, expect that any will sustain it as a good argument against a proposition, interpretation, or doctrine, that men make an ill use of it. God is merciful, and gracious; and I doubt if any doctrine or proposition hath ever been published to the world, of which men very commonly do make a worse use, hardening themselves therefore in their sins; yet it is not the less true, or the less needful to be held and proclaimed. Arminius relates, that Augustine had observed what ill use men might make of his interpretation; and he brings, very needlessly, some large quotations from him, to prove that he did so observe. But he might, at the same time, have observed, that this great asserter of the truth did not see in this a good argument against the interpretation he had given. The truth may still be vindicated against all abuse, by arguments consistent with itself, and that do not overthrow it. It is the proper work of all the preachers of the truth, as to show the right and proper practical use, so to guard, in a proper manner, against the abuse of it. For what important truth is there that may not be abused?

The abuse Arminius insists on is this, that a man, doing what is evil against some reluctance of his mind, and the witnessing of his conscience, may make himself easy, and encourage himself in doing it, by supposing himself to be thereby in the case of the Apostle Paul, and other true believers, according to our interpretation. But there is no encouragement to this abuse by it, as we shall see presently. Persons who are bent on sinning may imagine other encouraging matter to themselves in that course, by which they will be more likely to serve themselves, than by any thing in this context, as we interpret. For instance: as it will be acknowledged on all hands, that a person in a state of grace may commit sin against the witnessing of his conscience, and some reluctance of his mind, through the surprise and force of temptation; and that such a person may be recovered by repentance, and be finally saved; so from this some may encourage themselves to commit sin. Is therefore the doctrine not true, that even the chief of sinners, or a regenerate person, after falling into heinous sins, may upon repentance be saved? or is it to be rejected, as calculated to encourage men in sin?

Arminius relates an instance that came within his own observation, of a person's encouraging himself to sin from this context, according to our interpretation. I apprehend there is need of some caution in taking such stories on the report of an adversary. There is, however, one instance so plain, that it could not easily be mistaken; and as he swears to the truth of it very solemnly, (much in the words of Paul, Rom. ix. 1.) it were not reasonable to question his veracity. A man, he says, being warned against committing sin in a particular instance, answered, that indeed the inclination of his will was against it; but he had to say with the Apostle Paul, that he found himself not able to perform the good that he would; and so he went on in his way, against his conscience and the warning given him. Could not such an acute person have found in the context, as explained by his brethren, a proper and sufficient answer to this? surely he might have argued and said, The apostle having a heart that delighted in the holiness of the law, had it greatly at heart to perform his duty, though he did not attain to perform it in the perfect manner he willed. He struggled, and was as a man grievously oppressed by the motions and resistance of the flesh disabling him. The very first motions of sin within him gave him grief. If, by the lusting of the flesh against

the Spirit, he could not do or perform as the Spirit suggested, so, by the effectual opposition of the Spirit, he could not do what the flesh prompted him to. But you are in a case quite contrary to that of Paul. You grasp at a pretence to make yourself easy with regard to the inward motions of the flesh prompting you to evil—you encourage yourself to overcome the urgency of your conscience—and against its light you resolutely go on, even in the outward practice, to do evil ; and so you are, as with your eyes open, deliberately putting yourself in the road to perdition. A man less acute than Arminius could easily have suggested such an answer ; but the man was then forming his scheme, and seems to have been more disposed to have something whereof to make a handle in dispute, than to give the proper answer to the wicked excuse and pretence he represents.

As to another case he relates of a man, who, being reprov'd for something he had actually done, contrary to the commandment of God, answered, that he therein came into the case of the apostle, who said, *The evil that I would not, that I do* ; an answer could be given in like manner. The apostle represents in our context the greatest sense of wretchedness by the force of sin within him. This man makes himself easy—screens and hardens himself against reproof for sin outwardly committed by him. Upon the whole, if a man doth, on any pretence whatsoever, previously encourage and harden himself to commit sin ; or doth, after committing it, harden himself against reproof, and exclude from his heart the sorrow and contrition he ought to have for sin ; this is so opposite to the disposition and sense of things expressed by the apostle, as we interpret, that no such person can encourage himself by it, without the utmost absurdity. Certainly no sentiment or interpretation can be charged with falsehood or faultiness, by reason of such abuse, as hardened sinners cannot make of them, but by means of misconception, delusion, and absurdity.

The reader will, perhaps, see cause to think I have considered these things too largely, when he observes what I am next to set before him.

It is fit then to inform him, that the abuse concerning which Arminius argues, respects what he calls actual good or evil, (*malum et bonum actuale*) ; that is, as I understand it, the acting of sin in the external work and practice ; and so is directed against their interpretation, (if there are any such, who understand here of the apostle himself, or the re-

generate man,) who extend the meaning of these and such like words, *The evil that I would not, that I do*, to the outward practice and conduct of life, and to the common character and course thereof.

But concerning Augustine's interpretation, which is the same with ours, he hath these words, '*Fateor enim Augustini sententiam, quæ de concupiscentiæ tantum actu et motu, locum interpretatur, nihil neque gratiæ, neque bonis moribus injuriæ aut detrimenti inferre, ctiamsi de homine regenerato locum explicet.*' That is, 'I confess that the opinion of Augustine, who understands this place of Scripture only as respecting the actings and motions of concupiscence (inwardly) imports nothing detrimental to grace or good morals; even interpreting it in that way of persons regenerate.'

One might readily think, that this acknowledgment would put the argument, from the ill consequence to men's morals, quite off the field. Yet he insists upon it still, though I apprehend the reader will be greatly at a loss to imagine how he can do so, after the acknowledgment we have seen. Thus, however, he proceeds. If once the general notion be impressed on the minds of men, that it is the case of a regenerate person that is here treated of, it is not in our power to hinder them from understanding what remains of the context, and is therein ascribed to the person spoken of, in the sense in which (according to him) it ought to be understood; agreeably, as he asserts, to the text itself, and to the apostle's scope; that is, as these expressions are to be understood of a person under sin, and under the law. Of this abuse the story he had related, and is here lately mentioned, is, he says, an instance.

The occasion of the abuse here mentioned, is the tacking of his interpretation very improperly to ours. Did the author suppose, that a man would understand the particular expressions, as setting forth what denotes one a slave to sin, and to his lusts, as Arminius understood without good reason; and that, at the same time, he would think the context represented the case of a person regenerated and sanctified? This were supposing a man to be absurd and thoughtless to a great degree. All that the arguing of Arminius here doth prove, is, that his interpretation of the particular expressions, (which hath been shown to be very ill founded,) joined with our account of the general scope, as expressing the case of a regenerate person, makes a very ill composition, dangerous to the souls of men. Although there have been men inattentive, not given to much thinking; men blinded by their own lusts;

perversed by wrong sentiments, which their corrupt minds have entertained, and tenaciously held ; and those who have wrested the writings of Paul, (2 Pet. iii. 16.) as they have the other scriptures, to their own destruction, we are not, for the abuse of such, to charge faultiness on the Scripture, or any interpretation of it, that is otherwise just and well warranted.

Upon the whole, it appears that Arminius had no cause to retract or enervate the concession he had made ; and if he said, that Augustine's interpretation had nothing in it prejudicial to good morals, we have right to use the concession as superseding all occasion of dispute with him on that point.

Some do seem to have found difficulty respecting our interpretation, as they could not allow themselves to think, that this blessed apostle had any remainder of sin in him, or could be charged with any disconformity to the holy commandment, in these times wherein he wrote. There is cause to wonder that any should doubt or find difficulty concerning this, considering what the apostle John says, 1st epist. i. 8. and that Paul himself doth, Phil. iii. 12. deny his being perfect. This cannot mean, that he was not perfect in the sense in which the spirits of just men made perfect are mentioned, Heb. xii. 23. or that he had not attained that perfection of his human nature, in all respects, that belongs to the resurrection-state. It were idle for a man to disclaim perfection in these senses, while he was seen in an embodied state, sharing so much in the infirmities and miseries of this life. So we must understand it of his not being perfect in holiness, nor altogether without sin.

What if no instance of his falling into sin or particular transgression were recorded in sacred history ? That is but a negative argument, such as none would sustain in proof. His own account in our context is a sufficient proof that he was not without sin, or without the stirrings and activity of it within him. When he relates, 2 Cor. xii. 7. a thorn given him in the flesh, lest he should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, may we not think that he was likely to have felt some stirrings of that evil tendency that made him so readily understand, and be so much reconciled to the salutary, though painful remedy that Divine wisdom had administered to him ?

There are two places besides, in which the matter seems to be more clear. One is, Acts xxiii. 2—5. the high priest Ananias having commanded to smite him on the mouth, Paul said to him, *God shall smite thee, thou whited wall.* On

this Dr Guyse says, 'Perhaps the apostle might use this ' opprobrious title with rather too much warmth of temper, ' under a violent effort of the law of his members against ' the law of his mind, according to his complaint, Rom. vii. ' 23, 24. through inattention, sudden surprise, and high ' provocation.' So that judicious divine. In whatever way this speech be taken or accounted for, it is plain it was not according to his example, (1 Pet. ii. 23.) *who when he was reviled, reviled not again, and when he suffered, he threatened not.* It has been thought, that Paul spoke under the influence of the spirit of prophecy on this occasion, and uttered a prophecy against Ananias, which, according to history, was afterwards accomplished. But this, if it was so, doth not prove that there was no sinful infirmity in the case. We find, John xi. that wicked Caiaphas the high priest uttered something very remarkable, of which the sacred historian says, ver. 51. *This spake he not of himself; but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation.* Here it is clear, that Caiaphas spoke according to the wicked passion of his own heart. Yet, on the other hand, he was so under the over-ruling influence of the spirit of prophecy, (being high priest) that his words were clearly prophetic. Paul had a heart very much sanctified; yet there is no inconsistency in supposing, that, by the sudden provocation of an atrocious injury, he fell into a violent passion, and uttered words expressive of that passion, which, as to the threatening part of them, might be prophetic, by a superior influence and direction.

The apostle being found fault with for so reviling God's high priest, said, ver. 5. *I wist not that he was the high priest; for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.* But though he knew him not to be high priest, he knew himself to be standing before the sanhedrim, or supreme council of his nation, and that the person he spoke to was a member of it, and then sitting in the seat of judgment. So his words import, ver. 2. *Sittest thou to judge me after the law?* He knew then that he was one of the rulers of his people, and so came under the meaning of the text he mentions. The matter being thus, may we not take this to be a just paraphrase of the apostle's words, ver. 5. 'I wist not that he was high priest at this time; but being a member of this august court, I call to mind that law, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people. And therefore, however ill I have been treated, I insist not in justifying my emotion, or all the expressions I have uttered.'

Another place we may consider on this occasion, is Acts xv. 37—40. It may well be allowed, that Paul was in the right to urge that there should be some testimony of their disapprobation of John-Mark's conduct in the matter mentioned. But there is cause to suspect, that the dispute on this subject was not without human and sinful infirmity. The sacred historian says, ver. 39. that *the contention was so sharp between Paul and Barnabas, that they departed asunder one from the other.* Contention is rather too soft a word for the Greek παροξυσμος (paroxysm.) It signifies a mutual irritation, or, (as Beza renders, *exacerbatio*) that their temper and spirit became hot and imbittered. Nor is there any hint that this heat and discomposure of temper was greater upon the one side than the other; it was mutual.

The matter being so, it is not unreasonable to think, that on cool reflection, the blessed and holy apostle Paul might reflect and say with himself to this purpose: Though I am satisfied I was in the right in advising and urging as I did with regard to Mark, yet, alas! that my corrupt heart and violent passion should have got so much the better of me in dealing with my blessed brother Barnabas, who was in Christ before me, who was preaching Christ when I was persecuting him and his gospel, who condescended with so much tenderness and affection to me when other disciples avoided me, who introduced me in so kindly manner to the acquaintance and confidence of the apostles, who was assigned me by the Holy Ghost, as a special companion in the service of the kingdom of Christ, who laboured with me in that work with so much zeal and success; even Barnabas, that son of consolation, justly so surnamed by the apostles; whose conversation and preaching have often been so comfortable to myself and others. If I have peace of mind with regard to the matter of duty itself about which we differed, yet how much doth my manner of doing duty sometimes give me disquiet of mind! How much hath my irregular and unholy passion hurried me away; as it were bringing me captive with great violence—*Wretched man that I am!* There is nothing unreasonable in supposing, that on occasion of this paroxysm, or passionate debate, Paul might see occasion for such reflections. Another man confident of his being right as to the main of the difference, might thereby, perhaps, justify all the passion he showed in defending his own opinion. It would not be likely to be so with this holy apostle. What the judicious, elegant, and pious Calvin

has written on this story in his commentary, deserves to be often read.

Having answered all the objections that have any appearance of force against our interpretation, let us now proceed to

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

Having vindicated our interpretation against the charge of ill consequence in practice, it is fit, before we leave it, to mark out some of the good uses that are to be made of it, which are of great importance with regard to holiness and the comfort of Christians.

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

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

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

From what hath been said, the impartial reader may judge if our interpretation hath any thing in it unfavourable to holy and righteous practice. Arminius saith it hath not, and

afterwards endeavours to prove, without reason, that it hath. Dr Whitby reckons it a dangerous interpretation; and, as he would have the particular expressions mean, it would be extremely so. It is well if, when the sentiments, reasoning, and explications of men of their way of thinking are well examined, they be not found to fix the standard of purity and holiness much lower than this context doth, according to our interpretation. If they did not, I apprehend they would have lower thoughts of the moral powers of nature, and higher thoughts of the necessity and efficacy of divine grace. But it is some men's way to bring up the power of free-will to holiness, by bringing holiness down to the power of free-will. There will not, however, be wanting sublime speculations, and general language, strong and lofty enough, concerning holiness and virtue.

2. We have something here that may be exceedingly useful to support and encourage those who go heavily under the evil of their hearts. It were not right to suggest any thing that would tend to exclude the contrition for sin, that ought to be in the heart of every child of God. Yet from the light and sensibility that is in every sanctified heart with regard to sin, the consequence might be extremely hurtful to the comfort and stability of a Christian, if the word of God hath not provided something encouraging respecting the case, as there is in this context. So, if there are those who may abuse this passage, as they do also the other scriptures, to their own destruction, serious Christians find cause to bless God for having provided for their comfort and for their direction in faith and duty, by this very valuable portion of holy writ.

I only add concerning this point the following words of Augustine, (*Serm. 45. de tempore*): ‘Constituit tibi ante oculos pugnam suam, ne timeres tuam. Si enim hoc non dixisset beatus apostolus; quando videres moveri concupiscentiam in membris tuis, cui tu non consentiris, tamen cum eam moveri videres, forsitan desperares de te, et diceres, Si ad Deum pertinerem, sic non moveret. Vide apostolum pugnantem, et noli te facere desperantem.’ This is the sense: ‘He hath set before thee his own conflict, that thou mightest not fear thine. For if the blessed apostle had not thus spoke, When thou shouldst observe the moving of lust in thy members, to which, however, thou didst not yield thy consent, yet finding it to move, thou wouldst perhaps despair of thyself, and say, If I belonged to God,

‘ there would be no such motions in me. Observe the apostle in conflict, and do not thou despair.’

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

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

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

Shall we now say, that the greatest advantage and strength which sin hath in the heart of any man, is only by deep rooted habits, contracted merely by frequent acts, and the continued custom of sinning, proceeding only from the unhappy use that each man makes of his free-will ; who hath come into the world with his nature in the same original purity with which man was at first created ? or, (if we rise not so high) with no more depravation than a man can get the better of by his own efforts, and exertion of his moral

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

But which of the saints is it whose experience hath testified any such thing? There is none of them in whose experience we might more readily expect to find it than this eminent apostle, considering his attainment in grace, light, and holiness. Yet how far from this is the case here represented? In the persons most eminent for holiness, of whom we have the history at any length in the Scripture, this evil fountain hath discovered itself by the streams it hath sent forth. If this blessed apostle was preserved from remarkable lapses in outward practice, yet here, where he lays open his heart, he shows the source of sin yet remaining within him; by which he had matter of constant exercise, of struggle, and of godly sorrow, and what, from his own experience, afforded good reason for giving the salutary advice to every other Christian, *Thou standest by faith: be not high minded but fear.* The Scripture acquaints us, that *there is not a just man that doeth good, and sinneth not.* We have here what accounts for it, and shows it shall ever be so, whilst Christians are in this life.

This is that original sin, which every one hath derived from a corrupt original; and which is itself the original and source of all a man's moral deficiencies, and actual transgressions in outward and inward practice; and whose root is so deep in human nature, as never to be wholly eradicated in this life. The power of divine grace, and of the

Holy Spirit, could doubtless soon do it perfectly, if Divine wisdom had not thought otherwise fit, and that Christians should labour under imperfection, and having the remainder of sin dwelling in them to struggle with ; that with minds well enlightened, and hearts truly sanctified, they might, from what they constantly feel, perceive sensibly, and understand thoroughly, the wretched state from which divine grace saves them ; might be kept from trusting in themselves, and might ever hold all their consolation and hope of the rich and free grace of God in Jesus Christ, through faith.

It is matter of very serious consideration to observe, after what high attainments eminent saints have discovered much of sin remaining in them. Moses was at two different times forty days and forty nights in the mount with God, and God had often spoken to him face to face, as a man doth to his friend ; yet it was after this that an unholy passion in him made its eruption, in a manner very provoking to God. David was under great influence of grace in his ordinary course and behaviour, and was often under divine inspiration ; yet thereafter it appeared, in fearful instances, that the root of sin still remained in him, so as to give him occasion to look back to his original depravation, and to say, Psal. li. 5. *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.* The sinful failures of prophets might be here mentioned. For one instance, Jonah had received frequent revelations from God, yet after this, how great proof did he give of sinful mistrust and fear, of remaining rebelliousness against the government of the Almighty, (even after being delivered out of the whale's belly,) and of turbulent and violent passion, as is narrated in the short history that bears his name.

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

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

Enough seems to have been said to vindicate the true sense of this context; and some of the practical uses thereof have been marked out. Though the learned Dr Whitby shows no great superiority of genius, and his arguments on this subject are sometimes extremely blunt, yet he could give a keen enough edge to his expressions otherwise; as when he says of our interpretation: 'That it is as great an instance of the force of prejudice, and the heat of opposition, to pervert the plainest truths, as can be haply produced.' For my part, when I observe that the man who speaks here is one who delighted in the law of God, and in the holiness thereof in the inner man; who willed, loved, and endeavoured what was good and right; who hated sin, and was conflicting against it, crying out sorrowfully of his wretchedness by it; and who (himself) with his mind served the law of God: I cannot help considering it as one of the phenomena in the learned world the most difficult to account for, that any men of learning and judgment could interpret these things of persons unregenerate, under the law, destitute of the Holy Spirit; yea, of persons who have abandoned themselves to wickedness, as Ahab, and the revolters from the true religion before mentioned. Let the reader judge for himself.

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 TEXT.—14. *For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin.*

PARAPHRASE.—14. We know that the law of God is spiritual; that its authority and demand reaches to a man's spirit and heart, to prescribe rule thereto, and to every inward motion of the soul; and it is by its being thus spiritual, that I heretofore received the thorough conviction of my sinfulness. When, upon this extensive view of the law, I do now compare myself with it, and consider the

perfect inward, as well as outward purity it requires, how great a disconformity to its holiness doth still remain with me! I do not only refer to the time, when I was in my natural condition, in the flesh, (ver. 5.) when that evil principle was absolutely dominant in me, being under the law, and its curse, destitute of the Spirit, when sin had its full course in me, in one form or other; but even at this time, being under grace, thereby delivered from the law, and made free from the dominion of sin; even yet alas! though now in such a comfortable state, how far from that holiness of heart which this spiritual law requireth! I am carnal; the flesh, that corrupt source and principle of evil, though deprived of its dominion, yet still remaineth in me, with much force and activity; and though by the grace of God, I am not as Ahab, who, with full determination of his heart, sold (abandoned) himself to work evil, yet the flesh, with its violent corrupt affections, and unholy passions, having the advantage of concurring temptations, doth often, yea too commonly, carry me away as a captive and slave, contrary to the habitual, and habitually prevailing inclination of my heart and will.

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

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

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

16. If then what my heart worketh and doth within me by means of the evil that springeth up from the flesh and corrupt nature, contrary to the holy and spiritual law, is indeed what is contrary to the fixed and habitual inclination of my will, then I do not only by my understanding or mind assent to it as a truth, that the law is good, but this habitual inclination of my will shows that I heartily *consent* to the *goodness* of the law; that it is good in itself, as I said but just now, (ver. 12.) and that it prescribes that which is good for me, with respect to my duty and happiness.

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

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

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

18. It is grace that alloweth me thus to distinguish; yea, the real distinction that is in me is of grace, the honour of which is to be ascribed to its blessed Author; for as to me otherwise, as I am by nature, and so far as my nature is yet unrenewed in me, that is, in my flesh, (which is what naturally, and abstracting from grace, I call my own, and myself,) I know that no good thing dwelling. For though, through grace, there is a readiness in me to will that which is good, yet, through the obstruction which the flesh giveth, I find not myself able to perform, in the constant, thorough, and perfect manner which I will, and which the holy law requires.

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

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

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

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

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

21. I find then a law, not such as hath a true light, and just authority, but a principle strong and effective, that when my will is well determined to that which is good, evil, even

the unholy motions that are spontaneous in corrupt nature, takes the start of my better will, and prevents its effect ; so that I cannot do what I would in the inward and outward practice of holiness.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

25. I thank God, who hath provided comfort for me with respect to this my present wretchedness, through Jesus Christ our Lord ; by virtue of whose cross the old man in me is crucified : which gives me the sure and delightful prospect,

that this body of sin and death shall, in due time, be absolutely destroyed, and I completely and for ever delivered from it.

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

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## CHAP. VIII.

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

EXPLICATION.—This proposition is introduced in way of inference, expressed by the word *therefore*. Without mentioning the different views that interpreters have had of this, I take it to be an inference from the apostle's whole discourse and doctrine in the preceding part of this epistle. He had treated largely of the justification of sinners by grace through faith, in the first five chapters. A proper inference from that is this: *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.* In the sixth and seventh chapters he had treated of what concerns sanctification. He had represented persons under the law as being in the flesh, under the dominion of sin, and its servants; but persons brought under grace by free justification, as being made free from that servitude,—as being become the servants of God, and having their fruit unto holiness. From his doctrine in this part, which he insists on to the end of chap. vii. he had proper occasion to add, as the mark of persons in Christ, justified and free from condemnation, that they *walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*. It is not their so walking that frees them from condemnation, but being by gratuitous justification freed from condemnation, and brought under grace, and thereby made free from the dominion of sin, (chap. vi. 14.) they will, in their ordinary course, walk as is here said; and that so certainly, that if any do not so walk, but walk after the flesh, it may be justly concluded, that they are not truly in Christ as to their real spiritual state. This is the view that the apostle's discourse directs us to take of the matter. After making the complex inference (ver. 1.) from his doctrine of justification and sanctification, the apostle doth, through this whole eighth chapter, discourse in the mixed way, with an eye to both subjects, and concerning the consolation, and the obligation to duty

and holy living arising from both, according to the inseparable connexion that is established between them in the economy of salvation. So that, if we look through this whole eighth chapter, it is a discourse that hath this first verse, in both parts of it, for its text.

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

Let us now look more closely to the particular expressions of the text. *Them which are in Christ Jesus*, some have rendered or interpreted thus: *Them who are Christians*. So Castalio and Le Clerc, as is observed by Dr Whitby, who adds—‘But if either of them mean only Christians by profession, or being only members of the Christian church, this will by no means agree with this place, or any other of the like nature; since freedom from condemnation, and other benefits conferred upon us through Jesus Christ, will not follow our being Christians in this sense, but upon a lively faith in Christ, our union to him by the Spirit,’ &c. Le Clerc says, that being *in Christ* is often used by St Paul for being a Christian. I do not observe instances of his using the expression in that lax and large sense, but the quite contrary. For which see 1 Cor. i. 30. 2 Cor. v. 17. 1 Thess. iv. 16.; and to these places of Paul we may add, 1 John v. 20. Rev. xiv. 13. John xv. 5. and the words of Paul, Phil. iii. 9. In which places it is plain, that being *in Christ* means not only being Christians by profession and outward church privilege; but being sincere believers, in real union with Christ, and in consequence thereof, being holy in life, happy and blessed in death.

As to the second clause,—*who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*—the reading in the Greek, and in our translation, is vindicated by Dr W. in his *Examen millii*. This way of walking, as to the ordinary course of life, is a certain consequence of being in Christ. For (2 Cor. v. 17.) *If any man be IN Christ, he is a new creature*; and (1 Cor. i. 30.) to them who are *IN Christ Jesus*, he is *made wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification*.

Some interpret and object thus: Mention is here made of

walking after the flesh ; which is certainly expressive of the case represented in the context immediately preceding, in which the man speaks so strongly of the flesh in him, and the law in his members captivating him. So some.

But, if we consider the matter, we shall find that this is far from being the case in the apostle's view. There is indeed a man represented complaining bitterly of the flesh, and the law in his members, and of its force and too great prevalence. I cannot but wonder that any should take such a sense of things, and such a complaint, as proof of a man's walking after the flesh. A man may come under such consequences of an ill life with respect to his person outwardly, or his affairs, that may set him a complaining bitterly of his prevailing lusts and ill practice, when it is not sin that is truly bitter to him, but these outward ill consequences of it ; but in the preceding context, we find a man feeling painfully, and lamenting bitterly the motions, force, and prevalence of sin within him, in opposition to the spiritual and holy law of God, without mentioning any ill consequence externally. Sin, and sinful affections, and their motions within him, are what he would not, and what he hates, abstracting from all penal and ill consequences. If sin remains in him, we see him in conflict with it. This doth not suit the notion of *WALKING after the flesh*. Walking imports a man's habitual and deliberate course, in which he freely proceeds, without force, struggle, or constraint, neither violently drawn, carried, or captivated ; but going according to the motion and inclination of his own will. If the flesh hath its law or commandment, it may be said of the unregenerate man, with respect to the commandment of that law, as is said of Ephraim, with respect to a particular instance of fleshly walking, (idolatry, Gal. v. 20.) and the law requiring it, Hos. v. 11. that he *walked willingly after the commandment*. So the unregenerate man doth with regard to the commandment of the law of sin, as to the habitual and prevailing inclination of his will, whatever check conscience may give. If this is, as it certainly is, *walking after the flesh*, the preceding context represents a man whose character, disposition, purpose, and earnest endeavour, are very contrary to it.

I here add a passage of Dr Davenant (afterwards bishop of Sarum) on Col. i. 7. 'Renati possunt incidere in peccata, sed non solent ambulare, nec possunt vivere in peccato; ambulat enim in peccato, qui lubenter, assidue, et plena voluntate peccat.' That is, 'The regenerate may fall into sin ; but they are not wont to walk, nor can they live in sin. For

‘ he walketh in sin who sinneth by his hearty choice, in his constant course, and with the full consent of his will.’

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

I would not indeed expect, (if there were not a point of dispute in the case) that the mention of the Spirit would be the thing of which some men, though denominated Christians, would perceiveth the greatest want in the reading of any context; as I do not see, if their scheme and sentiments are well looked into, that they generally put any thing in religion, as to its ordinary causes, principles, and practice, but what might be accounted for, if there was no mention of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures, or in the world at all. As to the argument,

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

At the same time it is to be considered, that *the law of the mind*, and *the law in the members*, are expressions that are to be found nowhere else in the Scriptures. Yet we cannot justly infer, that what is meant by these expressions occurs nowhere else. That the opposition and conflict of the law of the mind against the flesh, or law in the members, is not that of natural conscience or mere reason, hath been shown, as it hath been, that the law of the mind of the principle is

holiness, implanted in the soul by the Holy Spirit ; or the law of God put in the mind and heart, according to the grace and promise of the new covenant.

There is indeed great complaint of the flesh ; yet nothing appears in the preceding context that amounts to walking after the flesh. But on the contrary, we have cause to conclude, that a heart habitually delighting in the holiness of the law of God, and in ordinary conflict with the inward motions of sin, as is there represented, is as great an evidence of a man's not walking after the flesh, as can possibly be imagined to be in the case of any man in whom sin remaineth at all.

Let us now observe how Dr Taylor interprets this text. Here is the first part of his paraphrase of it: ' But now under the gospel the most encouraging hopes smile upon us, and we have the highest assurance, that those are quite discharged from the penalty of the law, and disengaged from the servitude of sin, who embrace the faith of the gospel ; if so be they make that faith a principle of obedience, and do not choose to live in wickedness, according to the instigation of fleshly appetite.'

In this passage several things come to be observed. 1. For *—them which are in Christ Jesus,*—he gives, ' Who embrace the faith of the gospel.' This falls in with the notion of Castalio and Le Clerc, for confuting which enough hath been said already. 2. The paraphrase expresses what is *now* under the gospel ; and what the writer states in opposition thereto, is the Mosaic law, the weak and lifeless dispensation, as he calls it, of the law, (which is an erroneous and absurd way of representing that *dispensation,*) and the condition of a wretched, enslaved, condemned Jew under it. Yet nothing can be marked out in the paraphrase, as *now* under the gospel, but what did truly (though not with the same degree of light and comfort) take place under the Mosaic legal dispensation. In that time and state of things, the most encouraging hopes did smile on men, and they had the highest assurance of being quite discharged from the penalty of the law, and disengaged from the servitude of sin, who sincerely embraced the faith of the promise, by which, even in these times, the gospel was preached to them. In these times there were good men, who made their faith a principle of obedience, &c. 3. The expression of the paraphrase implies, that persons may be in Christ in the sense of the text, who do not make their faith a principle of obe-

dience; which is inconsistent with what hath been shown to be the apostle's meaning.

The paraphrase proceeds thus:—‘ But (do choose to live) in faith and holiness, according to the dictates of the inward man, or the rational faculty.’ That the inward man means something more than merely the rational faculty, hath been here proved, on chap. vii. 22.

His putting ‘ the rational faculty,’ for *the Spirit*, as in the text, he endeavours to justify in his note. There he says, ‘ πνευμα, *Spirit*, certainly is not used in the same sense throughout this chapter. Ver. 10. 16. it signifies the spirit of our mind—the supreme part of our constitution, or the principle of reason, by which we discern, approve, and choose the truth.’ These two are all the places in this chapter that he brings as meaning by the *Spirit* the human spirit, or principle of reason. But they do not answer his purpose in interpreting this first verse. For in ver. 16. *our spirit* being set in opposition to *the Spirit* itself, shows, that by the former is there meant the human spirit. The expression is not so, ver. 1. but absolutely, *the Spirit*. If the word *spirit* is in any place so connected with another word, expression, or argument, as shows it is there to be understood of the human spirit, this makes no reason for understanding it so, when the spirit is mentioned absolutely, without any such connexion, or particular reason for understanding it in that way.

As to ver. 10, he there alters our translation in the column opposite to his paraphrase, and for, *The body is dead, BECAUSE of sin*, he translates, *with RESPECT to sin*, and so he gives the next clause, *The Spirit is life*, (not BECAUSE, as in our translation, but) *with RESPECT to righteousness*. And to this translation of his own, he suits his paraphrase thus: ‘ The sinful appetites and affections of the body are slain in you, —your spiritual part is alive, is in a healthy vigorous condition with respect to righteousness.’

This method is far from being fair. If he would give our translation in one column, as he pretends to do, he should give it as it is, and if he should prove in a note that our translation was not just, he might thereby warrant his paraphrase. It occurs happily, however, that in his note, when he meant to support his paraphrase, himself brings forth what justifies our translation. Διὰ, with an accusative, says he, signifies *with reference to*, or *on account of*. But could the preposition, as himself relates, be rendered, *on account of sin*, and *on account of righteousness*, doth this make such

odds of sense from, *because* of sin and *because* of righteousness, that our translation should be altered for it, when it could well stand, according to what he mentions concerning the preposition?

But what reason can be offered for using, instead of *body*, ver. 10. sinful appetites and affections of the body, and for *the Spirit*, to put your spiritual part? Dr T. has certainly mistaken the meaning of this tenth verse. I venture to express myself concerning it as follows. As the apostle hath in his eye the comfortable subject of the resurrection of the dead, suggested more fully in the following verse, I think the word *body* ver. 30. may be taken for *person*, (see on chap. vi. 12.); and *the Spirit* is evidently meant of the Spirit of God, mentioned in the preceding 9th verse, and twice in the immediately following verse. So the sense of the whole verse may be thus expressed: 'If Christ be in you by your having his Spirit, even the Spirit of God dwelling in you, (as ver. 9.) you are, as to the present bodily state and frame of your persons, appointed indeed to die because of sin, even the sin of the first Adam, for which all mankind have been adjudged to death; but the Spirit of God, and of Christ in you, will bring you to life at the resurrection, because of righteousness, even the righteousness of One, the second Adam,' as is more fully expressed in the next verse. See Dr W. on the place.

We have Dr T.'s criticism concerning the Greek preposition  $\Delta\iota\alpha$ , with an accusative, in ver. 10.; we may next see how he manages with it as constructed with a genitive. This is in ver. 11. and as we have come so near it, it is not amiss that we observe it. There for  $\delta\iota\alpha$ — $\pi\acute{\nu}\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma$ , he gives, *Because of the Spirit*. What reason could he give for this? It is the case that  $\delta\iota\alpha$  in that construction very commonly signifies *per, by*; and my lexicon gives that as the first sense of the preposition in that construction, according to which we translate. Hedericus gives no sense of the preposition with a genitive that will answer this writer's purpose; nor doth Pasor, who mentions very many instances of it in that construction. But the author seems to have been more anxious to screen his particular hypothesis and opinion from hurt, than to give a just and well-warranted interpretation of this text. That heavenly Being or Agent, which is commonly called the Holy Ghost, (as he speaks, note on ver. 1.) he did not believe more than he believed the Son to be truly and by nature God. But he was sensible that it would be a striking proof of his being so, if quickening the dead, or

raising the dead, were ascribed to him. So, instead of our translation, which renders justly, according to the use of the Greek language, *He that raised up Christ shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit*,—he gives—because of his *Spirit*; and, according to this, he gives in his paraphrase thus: ‘He who raised Christ, will restore to a glorious immortal life,—even your bodies, because you are sanctified by his Spirit.’ But this cannot be supported by any just criticism.

We have seen that the two texts, which Dr T. brings out of this same chapter, (viz. ver. 10, 16.) do not answer his purpose in rendering, *after the Spirit*, by, ‘according to the dictates of—the rational faculty.’ Neither these two verses, nor any other that he could bring, give any countenance to that paraphrase. In that expression (ver. 1.) *which walk—after the Spirit*, the apostle certainly speaks in relation to the Spirit of God. We have sufficient cause to think so, from the manner in which the apostle states the opposition between the flesh and the Spirit, (mentioned here, ver. 1.) and follows it out through the following context; wherein, after opposing flesh and Spirit several times, he at length explains what he means by *Spirit* in this opposition, when he tells the Roman Christians, ver. 9. that *they were not in the flesh, but were in the Spirit*, by having the SPIRIT of GOD dwelling in them. It is that Spirit that is meant, ver. 10, 11. as hath been just now observed; and when, ver. 13, he mentions Christians through *the Spirit mortifying the flesh*, it is the Spirit of God, in opposition to the flesh, that is meant, even according to Dr T. Nor can it be doubted, that *walking after the Spirit*, in the first verse, means the same way of walking and the same influence that is meant, ver. 14. where it is said, *As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God*. They who walk after the Spirit, ver. 1. are the same who are led by the Spirit of God, ver. 14.

Upon the whole, I conceive the matter thus: In the 7th chapter he mentions the *inward man* as *delighting in the law of God*, and says, ver. 25. *With the mind I myself serve the law of God*. These expressions, *the inward man*, *the mind*, and *the law of his mind*, signify the soul itself as renewed,—the new man, and principle of holiness within him. Here in the next following verse, chap. viii. 1. he means the same way of walking and serving God, according to the inward man, and law of his mind, with the superadded idea of the Spirit of God dwelling in the Christian, and continuing to influence the inward man and law of the mind, in this way of walking.

Having here, ver. 1. once mentioned the Spirit, we see he keeps him much in view, with regard to his various influence and assistance granted to Christians, down to ver. 27.

The dictates of the rational faculty (if men understood them) and the Spirit of God, do direct and lead to the same way of walking. But there is a power and efficacy in the influence of the Spirit, that is not in the dictates of the rational faculty. The apostle's meaning by the Spirit, as stated in opposition to the flesh in this eighth chapter, is so very clear, that it was very wrong, and somewhat perverse, to use in paraphrase for the *Spirit*, the rational faculty.

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

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

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

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

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

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

We need not be at a loss for the meaning of this last clause of the text. He had (chap vii. 25, the next verse save one preceding this) mentioned *the law of sin*, which, by means of the flesh, had held sinners in subjection and slavery; and, in the verse preceding that, he had mentioned the *body of death.* The *law, of sin and death*, is no other than that evil principle dominant in a man, from which the true Christian is made free. How made free?

This the apostle ascribes to *the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.* Here is another *law*; and if the *law* in the last clause signifies a principle within a man, this may seem to signify also an inward principle--a better principle wrought and implanted by the Spirit of life, even the same which he had called (chap. vii. 23.) *the law of his mind.* By this principle is a man made free from the dominion of the other principle or law. This is not widely different from what I take to be the more precise meaning.

It seems most likely, that *the law of the Spirit of life*

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

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

Now this is a very important thing, in which the gospel is set in opposition to the law, and hath the advantage of it, that it is (2 Cor. iii. 8.) *the ministration of the Spirit* which (ver. 6.) *giveth life*; and so the gospel is *the law of the Spirit of life*.

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

We now come to consider the good effect, and that is, *to be made free from the law of sin and death*. This, the interpreters of opposite sentiments to ours, concerning the scope and meaning of the preceding context, consider as a key to open and determine the scope and sense of it. Here, say

they, the apostle, after giving a general doctrine, (ver. 1.) begins to speak of himself indeed. He had (chap. vii. 14—25.) been setting forth the case of one carnal, sold under sin, a captive and slave to the law of sin. The apostle, though speaking as of himself, yet could not truly mean himself, as then in a state of grace, but was certainly personating another, a man under the law; and of such an one it could not be said, as here, that he was *free from the law of sin and death*. Here, then, he is speaking of himself indeed, and stating his own present condition in opposition to that he had been representing: this is clear, express, strong, and decisive on the subject, according to some. Softly; let us consider the matter a little.

It hath been made to appear very clearly, that the strong expressions in the preceding context being the language of sad complaint, there is nothing in it inconsistent with a regenerate state. None will say, that true believers, made free in the sense of our text, have not sin remaining in them; yea, oftentimes too much prevailing, especially as to its inward motions. Surely the bitter complaint of persons on this account is no sign of their being under the dominion of sin; but the contrary. Persons under the dominion of sin may indeed have much outcry against it, on account of its consequences of misery and punishment, as hath been formerly observed. So a passionate man, for instance, may cry out of his own hasty and outrageous passion, merely because it brings him into much inconvenience, into many a fray, and perhaps to the commission of crimes of capital consequence. A lewd man may cry out against his own practice, for the loathsome rottenness of disease it hath brought on him, and the ruin it hath brought on his affairs. Yea, an awakened sinner may cry out still more seriously and earnestly against sin, under the sad impression, by the force of the law in his conscience, of Divine wrath, and eternal judgment. Yet in these cases the prevailing disposition of heart, will, and affections may be still truly on the side of sin itself, though under considerable restraint. But to say that a man, setting before him the holiness and spirituality of the law, doth delight in the holiness of the law after the inward man habitually willeth that which is good, hateth sin, crieth out sincerely against it, and is habitually in earnest struggle and conflict against its inward motions;—to say that such an one (however strongly he may express his feelings of sin) is indeed under its dominion, and its slave, is what I cannot

help considering as a most glaring absurdity. When a man is inclined and affected with regard to sin and duty, and maintains a struggle and conflict with sin, as is expressed in the preceding context, it makes a clear and full proof that he is not the slave of sin, but that he is indeed made *free* from its dominion and tyranny. It is not easy to imagine a stronger proof that he is so, whilst sin doth at all remain in him.

A similitude taken from human affairs may somewhat illustrate the matter. Our neighbours, the Hollanders, cast off the yoke of a cruel arbitrary tyrant, then the most powerful monarch in Christendom, and asserted their liberty. For this they had war a long time, between seventy and eighty years, with some interval of truce. In the course of it they were very successful on the whole, and became truly rich. Yet there was great distress and danger. They were sometimes foiled in battle; their country was plundered; towns sacked; ships and rich merchandize lost; their men taken, and brought into captivity. Private persons in these times might, yea, the republic might, often cry out, Ah, what wretchedness, what misery! Yet still in all this distress and wretchedness they were a free people; they suffered, they groaned, they struggled, they fought, and *were* free. They proved themselves to be so, whilst they held their arms in their hands, and stood out with noble resistance in the war which their old master carried on against them, to subject them again to his tyranny. They found themselves sometimes very weak; but when their affairs were lowest, yet weak and resisting, still they were free. At length the most illustrious republic attained a state of complete liberty, and their old tyrant ceased from having pretensions to their service in any instance.

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

Upon the whole, Christians are made free from the dominion of sin, whose willing slaves they had been; and that

by the power of the gospel in their hearts, as it is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, and by the grace of God, which, sin remaining in them, hath, according to the first promise, put enmity in them against it; against the serpent, and what of his poison remaineth in them. Continuing in this resistance to sin, they will at length attain a state of most perfect liberty, when sin shall do them no more hurt, nor ever more give them any molestation.

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

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

EXPLICATION.—This is a text of great importance to be rightly understood; as it contains a summary of the most essential doctrines of the gospel, and at the same time, com-

pletes the apostle's explications concerning the subject of the two preceding chapters. Yet few texts have been more teased with the criticisms of the learned, which do often tend rather to darken, than to give light to it, or to the subject of it. I shall lay open very freely what I think concerning the general scope of it, and concerning the sense of the particular expressions, in the order in which they lie.

*For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh*—The first inquiry is, What is it that the law could not do? Divers commentators, whom I much esteem, do understand this to be the justifying of sinful men. This is likewise Dr Whitby's view of it.

Yet I am not satisfied with this interpretation; yea, I am well satisfied that it doth not hit the apostle's view and meaning. For, 1. Though it is true that the law cannot justify a sinner, as the apostle had proved in the former part of this epistle, yet that is not the present subject. It is evident, that sanctification hath been the subject from the beginning of chap. vi. and the deliverance of persons from the dominion of sin. The subject of the immediately preceding verse is, the making a sinner free from the law of sin and death; that is, from the power of natural corruption, and the dominion of sin. This was the last thing the apostle had mentioned; and it seems very clear from the connexion, and the manner in which this third verse is introduced with the casual particle (*γὰρ, for*) that the great thing thus to make free, ver. 2. is *what the law*, ver. 3. *could not do*: it could not make free from the dominion and law of sin.

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

To turn the disability of the law to justify the sinner, upon the corruption of his nature, as this text would do, ac-

ording to the interpretation I am considering, would imply something by no means consistent with the apostle's clear doctrine ; viz. that after a person had transgressed, he might be justified, even by the law, for returning to his duty, and for his subsequent righteousness, if the weakness and pravity of his nature, called the *flesh*, did not disable him from doing his duty ; which, how contrary it is to Scripture doctrine, I need not stay to prove, the thing is so clear.

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

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

The apostle had shown, chap. vii. 5. and ver. 7—13. how matters stand in this respect between the law and persons under it, in their natural condition, in the flesh ; and represents them so as to prove what he had insinuated, chap. vi. 14. viz. that persons under the law are under the dominion of sin. It is evident then, that what the law could not do, was, to make a man free from this dominion of sin. The law's being weak through the flesh comes to the same thing as to say, that the flesh is too strong for the law, with all its light, authority, and terrors, and could not be subdued or cured, but by the Spirit of life mentioned in the preceding verse ; and this Spirit comes not by the law.

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

The Son of God did not assume human nature in its beauty, strength, and natural perfection, as sinless flesh, or as Adam's in his creation-state; he assumed it in its *present* natural weakness, obnoxious to the miseries of this life, as sinful men are; designing to bear our griefs, and carry our sorrows.

We have occasion here to observe Dr Taylor's sense of this clause, as he gives it in his paraphrase thus: 'God by sending his Son to live as we do, in the flesh, frail, and liable to sin'— That Christ's human nature had the frailty that is now natural to man, is certainly meant by the apostle's expression. But to extend it to moral frailty, is extremely shocking. That Christ's human nature having come into being by the operation of the Holy Ghost, and subsisting in personal union with the divine nature; that, I say, this blessed divine Person should be said to be liable to sin, must by Christians be accounted quite blasphemous.

But this writer differs from Christians in this essential article of their faith, the divinity of the Son of God. He considers him as a glorious being, (on whom he fails not to bestow high language,) who was by God truly created before the world; and in the question of his catechism respecting the incarnation of the Son of God, he says, 'He became man by assuming a *body* like unto ours,' without mentioning a human reasonable soul. A human body animated by this pre-existent created being, is according to him, the person of Christ; which, by his account, is a person neither truly God nor truly man. That this created spirit, and human body united, should be a person liable, in a state of probation, to sin, does well enough suit his notions.

This is not a proper place for considering or confuting the heretical doctrine of the Arians concerning the divinity of our Saviour. They who would study that subject, if they will not, or cannot read the writings of learned foreigners, in the Latin tongue, in defence of the truth, will find that great article of Christian faith sufficiently established by what hath been written in our language above forty years ago; whereby the Scripture evidence of the truth hath been set forth in a clear light, and the subtilty of the Arians hath been exposed and confuted with great ability and learning.

To be liable to sin (as in Dr T.'s paraphrase) doth not suit the expression of our text. The *likeness of sinful flesh* must certainly mean something that could not be said of *sinless* flesh; otherwise, why should the distinction and character

of *sinful* be here used at all? There is a great difference between being actually sinful, and being liable to sin. Adam, in his creation-state, was liable to sin, yet could not, in that state, be called *sinful flesh*. To be *in the likeness of sinful flesh* must certainly mean something else than to be liable to sin; for even sinless flesh was liable to sin.

Dr T. did indeed hold, that no man is chargeable with sin, in any respect, or is sinful, until he becomes so by his own actual transgression. But this clause we are considering doth not look favourably on that sentiment. Our Lord underwent the infirmities common to man, and the miseries of life meant in this clause, in his birth and early infancy, and therein was like unto sinful flesh. The common infirmities of human nature, in this lapsed state, and the miseries of life in every period of it, without distinction, are, by this clause, connected with men's sinfulness, or their being sinful flesh. If, then, mankind are subjected to the now natural infirmities and miseries of human life, in that early period of infancy and childhood,—and if Christ was in the likeness of sinful flesh in that early period, wherein men are incapable of moral agency, or of actual transgression, it is plain that they are sinful flesh, before they are capable of actually sinning in their own persons. The sense of this clause being clear, we proceed to the next:

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

This did not so well suit Dr T.'s notions, and therefore he gives for it in his paraphrase—'And by sending him about 'the affair of sin'— This writer had unhappily adopted the doctrine of the Socinians, in denying the substitution of Christ in bearing the punishment of our sins; and what important article of Christian faith hath he not laboured to subvert? In his note on this verse, he says the expression

means, as Dr W. mentions, when joined with a bullock, lamb, &c. (either expressed or understood) appointed by the law for a sin-offering; 'but,' saith he, 'offering here is not the thing to which *περι αμαρτίας* hath relation, but to God's sending his Son.'

Mr John Alexander, who follows the sentiments of the other writer pretty closely, observes that *πραγος περι αμαρτίας* may be rendered, the goat for the sin-offering. 'But (so he adds) this will not prove that the words have such a signification in themselves, or when joined with things not usually offered in sacrifice for sin, which is the thing that ought to be proved, in order to show that—(the Greek expression here) may properly be rendered, *sending his Son an offering for sin.*' In the beginning of the next following page (123) he says: 'Since, therefore, there is nothing in the context or phraseology in this place, which directs us to understand *περι αμαρτίας* in a sacrificial sense, we must necessarily take the words in their more common acceptation of *for* or *concerning sin*, and explain them of one of the great ends of Christ's mission, which was, to reform the world.

It is true, that one great end of Christ's mission was to reform the world—to purify to himself a peculiar people; but the doctrine of these writers tends much to counteract that design, by denying what the wisdom and righteousness of God found necessary for accomplishing it, even Christ's delivering men from the curse of the law, and from the punishment of their sins, by his own bearing it. They allow that the Greek expression here signifies a sacrifice for sin, when joined with things usually offered in sacrifice. Now, though Christ was not usually (being but once) offered in sacrifice, yet it is plain that the Scripture very usually represents him as a sacrifice, and as offering sacrifice, and the sacrificial style is very often used concerning him. For this see particularly, Eph. v. 2. Heb. ix. 26, 28. Yea, Dr T. adopts this style of scripture, and frequently uses sacrificial language concerning him.

Mr Alexander says, (p. 123.) there is nothing in the context or phraseology in this place, which directs us to understand *περι αμαρτίας* in a sacrificial sense. But he much mistook the matter; for the apostle's subject and argument in this place do direct us to understand the expression in the sacrificial sense; and the phraseology or expression being so very commonly used in that sense, there is very special rea-

son, arising from the subject and argument, for understanding it in that sense here.

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

Thus the general point is clear, that the Scripture connects making men free from the dominion of sin, with Christ's sufferings and sacrifice. More particularly, the verse preceding our present text, mentions the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, as making the Christian free from the law of sin. But how cometh the Spirit to sinful men, the wretched objects of the curse? Of this we are told, Gal. iii. 13, 14. *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us;—that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith,* (that is, through the gospel, the doctrine of faith; compare ver. 25.) And thus the gospel becomes the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Having then mentioned the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, the explaining of this in our present text evidently required the apostle's representing Christ as a sacrifice for sin, the condemning of sin as the consequence thereof, and his procuring the Spirit of life for freeing men from the slavery of sin, and sanctifying them. The true sense of the expression in question is now sufficiently cleared and vindicted, and it appears that Dr T. and Mr Alexander were very wrong in thinking that there is nothing in the context or phraseology in this place, which directs us to understand *περὶ ἀμαρτίας* in the sacrificial sense.

I had written an essay, to be inserted in this place, on redemption, against the pernicious notions, explanations,

and reasoning of Dr T. ; but have laid it aside, as too large for this place, though too contracted for the important subject. Enough has been here said to prove the true sense of the expression in our text ; and whether I shall overtake to finish what I have written and designed on the subject, the Lord knows. If I should not, there remain many abler friends and asserters of the truth.

One thing, however, it is fit not to neglect. The English translators have, in the margin, prefixed the particle *by*, (and *by* a sacrifice for sin.) It seems they considered the word *αμαρτια*, as signifying by itself a sin-offering, or sacrifice for sin. So it doth, 2 Cor. v. 2. and the Hebrew word answering to it, is very often in the Old Testament put for *sin-offering*. Upon this view, then, that the substantive noun doth of itself signify *sin-offering*, they for the preposition prefixed translate *by*. It may, however, be doubted that the use of the Greek warrants that rendering of the preposition. There is no need or reason for understanding it so here, as both the words together, the preposition and the noun joined in the expression, make so very commonly the name of the sin-offering. *God sent his Son a sacrifice for sin*. By his being subjected to the infirmities of human nature in this lapsed state, and to the miseries of this life, he, being in himself perfectly innocent and guiltless, was so far bearing our sins all along, and was marked out from the womb as the sacrifice for sin. He was accordingly, in due time, completely and solemnly offered up as such. We go on to the following expression :

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

I observe, that *κατακρινειν*, *to condemn*, (which is the word here) and *κρινειν*, *to judge*, are sometimes in Scripture used in the same sense ; that is, that the latter sometimes means the same as the former. For though the latter word strictly and properly signifies *to judge*, yet sometimes it hath a more restricted sense, and signifies *judging favourably*, as Psal. xxvii. 1. *κρινουμι*, (so the Septuagint,) *Judge me, O Lord* ; that is, judge in my behalf ; and so in many other instances. Sometimes it hath the restricted sense of *judging unfavourably*, of which there are likewise divers instances. So John xvi. 11. *Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged* ;

that is condemned. The word is to be understood in the general meaning of judging, or in one or other, the favourable, or unfavourable restricted meaning, according to the scope or circumstances of the particular passage.

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

We have seen what it means, that Satan is judged or condemned. We are, I think, to understand most reasonably the condemning of sin here, Rom. viii. 3. in the same way; as sin, with the lusts thereof, is that by which Satan had ruled in the hearts of men, and in the world. Sin hath had the dominion in men. It is the fruit and effect of the death of Christ, and his being therein a sacrifice for sin, (as in our text) that sin is condemned, and cast out from its dominion over men, in order to its final and complete destruction. Thus a judgment in favour of men being passed against sin, they are made free from the law of sin and death, and are no longer under its thralldom. This was the thing mentioned, ver. 2. which the apostle has explained in this ver. 3. It is by his being thus made free, that the Christian hath the liberty, disposition, and power to main-

tain such conflict against sin, as is represented in the latter context of the preceding chapter. That a person, who expresses so much sorrow with regard to sin dwelling in him, should, by the prevailing disposition of his soul, yet be adverse to sin, and in conflict with it, is well accounted for and explained by what we have here, chap. viii. 2, 3. The last expression of our text is this :

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

1. With respect to the flesh, or human nature of Christ himself. The apostle, as was formerly observed, saith Rom. v. 21. that *sin hath reigned unto death*. Men, by virtue of the law, became obnoxious to death by the power and reign of sin. Now the greatest instance, beyond all that ever have been, or ever shall be, of this power and reign of sin, appeared in the death of the Son of God, when he put himself in the place and stead of sinners. But then it is condemned, and by this great exertion of its reigning power and strength on the Son of God, it hath lost its power of thus reigning any more, with respect to him, and his human nature. So the apostle says, chap. vi. 9.—*He dieth no more ; death hath no more dominion over him*. If, as Heb. ix. 27, 28. *It is appointed for all men once to die ; so Christ was once offered*, by which the whole power of sin and death over him was exhausted.

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

2. Sin is condemned to lose its dominion with respect to its inherence in the souls of God's people, and the absolute prevalence it hath had in their hearts and practice. Though

the flesh or human nature, absolutely and generally expressed, includes the whole human race, yet here it must be understood with such limitation, as must reasonably be admitted in many places of scripture, in which divine grace, its design and effect, is mentioned in general terms. Here is an instance, Tit. iii. 4, 5. *But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared—according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.* In the first clause of these the expression is general and comprehensive—*The love of God toward MAN.* Yet the effect in view and expressed, *the renewing of the Holy Ghost,* is not to all men. So in our present text, though the expression,—*condemned sin in the flesh,* in human nature, is general, it is not meant that the happy effect takes place in all men universally and singly.

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

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

The matters contained in this verse are so very important, and it hath appeared so dark, that very learned and judicious interpreters have differed widely about the scope and meaning of it. By all this it became needful to consider it in the most careful and exact manner; and so the explication hath reached to a considerable length.

PARAPHRASE—3. I have represented to you in my own name, and from my own sad experience, the case of a true

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

God, the blessed Author, and original cause of all our salvation, hath sent his own only begotten Son in our nature ; not vested with the dignity, beauty, and vigour of its first and best state ; but in a humble condition, partaking in the infirmities that are natural to us in our lapsed state, and in the common miseries of human life, which on account of sin we have been subjected to : so that from his birth, being perfectly innocent himself, he bore the penal consequences of our sin, and at length, in due time, became a proper sacrifice for our sin, God having made him a sin-offering for us. On which account he hath given forth judgment, as against Satan, so against sin ; the gracious God, by the sacrifice of his Son, and through faith in his blood, bringing sinners into a state of reconciliation and peace with himself ; and under grace, hath condemned sin to be dethroned, and deprived of the dominion it hath unhappily had in them ; and so, making them free from its thralldom, he hath put enmity between them and it, which will end in its complete destruction, and in their complete salvation.

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

come the law of the Spirit of life, making us free from the law of sin and death.

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

Thus have I explained to you what I intimated, chap. vi. 14. and what might, at first sight, appear a strange paradox, viz. that persons under the law and its curse, are under the dominion of sin, its servants and slaves; and that sin shall not have dominion over them, who, by the sacrifice of the Son of God, by the blood of his cross, and by faith in his blood, are brought *under grace*.

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

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

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

1. That sin be punished or expiated according to the sanction of the law. This right of the law is fulfilled, or hath taken full effect, *in us*, by means of Jesus Christ made a sacrifice for sins, and by means of our union with him, he being in us, and we in him by faith,—*the righteousness of God in him*, 2 Cor. v. 21. This Dr W. takes to be the sub-

ject of the preceding ver. 3, and he does not allow it to be in the meaning of this fourth verse, which he gives thus in his paraphrase: ‘*That the righteousness of the law, (i.e. the inward purity and righteousness the law required) might be performed and fulfilled in and by us, who walk not after the lusts of the flesh, but after the motions of the Spirit.*’ Toward the end of his annotation on this verse, he writes thus: ‘*Now, these two, viz. freedom from condemnation, and the vouchsafement of the Spirit, being always connected, the apostle goes frequently from the one to the other, first mentioning our freedom from condemnation, then our walking in the Spirit, ver. 1, 2; our freedom from the guilt of sin by the death of Christ, ver. 3; and then our fulfilling the righteousness of the law by the Spirit of Christ, ver. 4.*’

I have given good reasons for not understanding ver. 3. as this writer does; and have shown that *what the law could not do* (ver. 3.) is not justifying the sinner, but the making him free from the law of sin and death. Though the Doctor is right in interpreting, *περι αμαρτιας*, as divers critics have done, of Christ’s being a sacrifice for sin, yet, as to the following clause,—*condemned sin*,—the learned writer has certainly come short of the meaning, when he interprets it, in his paraphrase, of taking away sin’s power to condemn us. It hath been here proved, that, according to the scope of the place, and the style of Scripture elsewhere, the expression is to be understood of taking away the dominion which sin had in us, so that we should be free from its power, and from being its slaves. The just way, then, of conceiving the connexion and sense of these two verses, is not that the apostle passes from one subject, our freedom from condemnation, (ver. 3.) to our fulfilling the righteousness of the law by the Spirit, ver. 4; but having mentioned (ver. 3.) Christ’s being a sacrifice for sin, (by which we are freed from condemnation) and also the condemning of sin to be deprived of its dominion, by which it made powerful and successful opposition to the law of God; he proceeds to give a comprehensive view of the end and design of the blessed scheme of divine grace, (ver. 4.) viz. *that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled*, or that the right of the law might take full effect; and it being certainly the right of the law, that the transgression of it should be punished, as it hath been by Christ’s bearing our sins; surely there is good reason for including this in the righteousness, or the right of the law, in this first clause of ver. 4.

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

We have seen that Dr W. would allow this ver. 4. only to mean that righteousness of the law which Christians perform by the Spirit, walking according thereto. Some other very learned persons will have this verse to respect only that right of the law I have first mentioned, which hath been fulfilled in Christ's bearing our sins, and in us by the application thereof to us; and will not, by any means, allow that sanctification and holy practice is included in the righteousness of the law here mentioned, as to be fulfilled in us. Thus Wolfius (a learned Lutheran divine) says on the text, that this phrase, *εν ημιν*, *in us*, hath by no means any respect to the obedience to the law to be performed by us, but, to the satisfaction given by Christ as an expiatory sacrifice, without us, and for us. He adds, if the apostle had meant the demand of the law to be performed by us, his expression would not have been *εν ημιν*, *in us*, but such as behoved to be rendered, *per nos*, or, *a nobis*, *by us*. This argument seems not to amount to much. As our obedience to the law in actual and active practice is the immediate and certain consequence of making us free from the dominion of sin, and the sanctifying of our nature and heart, which are effects produced by divine grace *in us*, it is but reasonable to include in the meaning of the right, or righteousness of the law to be fulfilled *in us*, our conformity to that law in holiness; as the general scope of the apostle's discourse requires that the words be so understood.

Dr Guyse, in his note on this verse, says: 'We cannot be properly said to fulfil the righteousness of the law by our own imperfect (though sincere) obedience to its precepts; much less to give satisfaction to its threatenings, both of which go into the righteousness that a broken law demands.'

These sentiments of the judicious and worthy writer are quite just. But the interpretation here offered doth not make the words to mean, that the right of the law takes full effect, or that the righteousness of the law is fulfilled by the imperfect, though sincere, obedience of any Christian in this life. This seems, indeed, to be Dr W.'s opinion. But, however, the true believer being, and continuing to be, in union with Christ, and in a justified state through faith, both himself and his sincere (though imperfect) services are graciously accepted, yet to say, that the righteousness of the law is fulfilled by this imperfect obedience, is evidently absurd, and amounts to no less than a contradiction in terms. For imperfect obedience is an obedience that comes short of what the law requires; if it did not, it would be perfect obedience. Now, to say that the righteousness of the law is *fulfilled* by an obedience that falls short of what the law requires, is evident contradiction.

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

guising mark and characteristic, even in this life, that they *walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*. Their so walking, though with much imperfection, is the sure mark of them in whom the righteousness of the law will sometime be fulfilled, in their perfect conformity thereto in holiness. The apostle's mentioning here again this very distinguishing mark, gives him occasion to pass to these doctrines and explications concerning the flesh and the Spirit, which are presented in the following context, which hath not fallen within my design to explain in this work.

With respect to the explication here given of ver. 4., I subjoin the following passage of Paræus.

‘In explicatione dubiorum in cap. 8. ad Romanos; et in responsione ad dubium quartum, ex versu quarto.

‘Est autem jus legis duplex, 1. Condemnandi et puniendi peccatores. 2. Post pœnam, si emergerint, rursus exigendi perfectam obedientiam.—Significatur ergo geminus mortis Christi effectus in nobis; justificatio et sanctificatio. Per illud impletur jus legis in nobis imputatione—per istam lex impletur in nobis inchoatione—hæc inchoata obedientia perfecta dici potest, perfectione partium—perfecte vero impletur in nobis quando id quod est ex parte cessabit.’ It is needless to translate this passage, as I have given the sense of it largely in the explication of this ver. 4. immediately preceding, which it appears is not new, as the same hath been given long ago by this eminent divine.

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

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

law, which marks out to men perfectly their duty, with a sanction of suitable promise and threatening.

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

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

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

If sinful man was to be saved, it did not fall to the part of the law to produce the great effect. It could not possibly be effected but by grace: and the sinner is justified by grace through faith, not by the law or by his works. He is, at the same time, made free from the dominion of sin in him, not by the law properly so called, but by the gospel, as it is the law of the Spirit of life; and by the sanctification of the Spirit is he made holy; and all this of the most free and abounding grace. But we proceed to the

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

rity, and hath taken effect in them by virtue of their union with Christ, and their being the righteousness of God in him.

God's people being thus brought under grace, sin cannot have dominion in them. Being made free from the curse of the righteous law, sin is at the same time deprived, by a just sentence of condemnation, of its dominion; they are blessed with the Spirit; by him they are made free from the law of sin; and being sanctified, they are advanced in holiness from one degree to another, until at length they are perfected therein. Nor doth grace bring its blessed objects to the perfection of bliss and happiness, but at the same time that it brings them to the perfection of obedience to the authority of the law, and to perfect conformity to its holiness; and thus the right of the law taketh full effect in them, as to all its demand of punishment, or of obedience and conformity. Thus, if from the law there arose a necessity, for the saving of sinners, of the most rich and abounding grace, grace doth save them in such way as not to make void the law, but to establish it. The holy divine law and divine grace reflect glory; the one upon the other reciprocally; and both will shine forth with joint glory eternally in heaven. The law setting forth, in the brightest light, the beauty of holiness, and the vileness and fearful demerit of sin, will show the abounding grace that hath brought the children of wrath thither, with infinite lustre and glory; and grace will do honour to the law, by showing in sinners, formerly very vile and polluted, the purity and holiness of the law fully exemplified in their perfect sanctification; and Christ, the Lamb that was slain, by whom the interests of the law and of grace have been happily reconciled and inseparably united, will be glorified in his saints, and admired in them who believe.

We, in whom the righteousness of the law doth already take place in a good degree, and in whom it shall be completely fulfilled hereafter, being such as are distinguished, in this life, by walking, not after the flesh, (which is not subject to the law of God,) in the grosser gratification of its lusts, or in the more refined way of a slavish, mercenary, self-exalting, carnal religion; but after the Spirit, who writes the law, with its authority and holiness, in our hearts, enabling us to mortify fleshly lusts, and to serve God in newness of life, under his influence; who is not a spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and of a sound mind; we having, according

to the necessity of our state of imperfection, the blood of Jesus to cleanse us from all sin ; even that blood, in the shedding of which the right of the law did so remarkably take effect, and by the daily and constant application whereof to us, the right of the law takes effect, and its righteousness is fulfilled in us.

## APPENDIX.

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

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SECT. I.—*Containing a Recapitulation of the Apostle's Doctrines and Principles in the context before explained.*

HAVING searched carefully into the scope of this context, and the meaning of the particular parts thereof, it now appears very clearly, that the apostle's design is, therein to set forth and explain the gospel doctrine of sanctification. This subject he keeps all along in view, until he doth, in the first four verses of chap. viii. give the summary of all the doctrines and explications contained in the two preceding chapters concerning it. In the course of his reasoning, he labours carefully to show the different condition of persons under the law, and of those under grace, with regard to sin and the practice of holiness.

Divers interpreters have, by being *under the law*, or *under grace*, understood being under the Mosaic law, or under the grace of the gospel-dispensation; and that the apostle's view and purpose is, to show to believers who were of the Gentiles, that they were free from the obligation of that law, had no need of it, nor had any disadvantage by not being subjected to it; and to convince those believers who were of the Jews, that they acted contrary to their real, and most valuable interest, by their attachment to the Mosaic law, now that God did set even them also free from its obligation.

Enough hath been said to disprove this interpretation; and it hath been shown, that we have no reason to think the apostle means by the *law* in this discourse, any other law than that which all men have been concerned with. To say, that by being under the Mosaic law, persons were under the dominion of sin, (mentioned chap. vi. 14.) were extremely unreasonable. True believers, the spiritual seed of Abraham, were, during the Old Testament, under grace; and the case of millions proves, that men may be under the New Testament dispensation of grace, and not be under grace as to the real state of their souls, nor made free from the do-

minion of sin. But referring for these things to what hath been said in the proper places, we find with the apostle in this context, these important matters :—

1. To be under the law, and to be married or united to Christ, are conditions of men that are incompatible. Persons become dead to (free from) the law, chap. vii. 4. that they may be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead.

2. Persons under the law, not married to Christ, are incapable (while in that state) of bringing forth fruit unto God. Persons not delivered from the law, are (ver. 6.) incapable of serving in newness of spirit. What accounts for this is,

3. That whilst persons are under the law, they are (chap. vii. 5.) in the flesh, under the power and prevalence of natural corruption ; being (chap. viii. 9.) destitute of the Spirit, which cometh not by the law, Gal. iii. 2. So that they who are under the law, in the flesh, cannot please God, cannot do what is acceptable to God, Rom. viii. 8.

4. In this state, the law, with its whole force directed against sin, yet doth not subdue sin. Instead of that, there are in men in the flesh, under the law, motions of sins by the law, chap. vii. 5. and ver. 8. Sin taking occasion by the commandment, and thereby awakened, worketh in a man all manner of concupiscence. Hence,

5. Sinners under the law, and in the flesh, are under the dominion of sin, its servants and slaves, chap. vi. 14. 17. 20. unable by any powers of their own to deliver themselves from that slavery, or from under that dominion. The notion of dominion and slavery imports no less.

6. It is Christ who maketh a sinner free from this slavery, and from the dominion of sin. *Whosoever committeth sin, is (John viii. 34.) the servant of sin.* So here, chap. vi. 16. *To whom men yield themselves servants to obey, his servants they are to whom they obey.* But (John viii. 36.) *They whom the Son shall make free, shall be free indeed.* The apostle's discourse explains this general matter by the following particulars.

7. Sinners owe their being made free from sin, or being dead to sin, to the death of Christ, and to their fellowship with him in his death, and in the benefits and fruits thereof, which is exhibited and sealed to Christians in their baptism, chap. vi. 3, 4. For,

8. Christ, in his death, was a sacrifice for sin, chap. viii. 3. And as this was not for his own sin, but for the sins of his

people, the law which denounced death to sinners in its righteous sanction, is satisfied in their behalf, by his death. So,

9. Christians are redeemed from the curse of the law, (Gal. iii. 13.) by Christ's being made a curse for them ; and, as here, (chap. vii. 4.) they are dead to (made free from) the law, and the death and fearful curse it denounces, by the body of Christ crucified. If sin, by virtue of the law which gave it that strength, hath reigned unto death, Christ, coming in our place and stead, did become subject to that reign of sin. But by his death, (chap. vi. 10.) he died unto sin, and so became free from that reign of sin unto death ; and therefore it is, as ver. 9. that *he dieth no more—death hath no more dominion over him* ; in consequence of which, believers should reckon themselves *to be dead INDEED unto sin*, ver. 11. So that now their death is not by the reign of sin, nor is the sting of it in their death.

10. The consequence of Christ's becoming a sacrifice for sin is, likewise, that God hath condemned sin to be dethroned and deprived of the dominion it hath had in his people, chap. viii. 3.

11. This judgment and condemnation is executed by the gospel conveying the Holy Spirit into the souls of God's people, and so becoming the law of the Spirit of life (in or through) Jesus Christ, making them free from the law and dominion of sin and death.

12. Thus sinners, being justified through faith in Jesus Christ, even through faith in his blood, (Rom. iii. 24, 25.) and sanctified by being born of the Spirit, (John iii. 5. 2 Thess. ii. 13.) they pass from death to life ; from being under wrath and the curse of the law, to be under grace, Rom. v. 1, 2. And so sin shall not have dominion over them, according to chap. vi. 14.

13. Yet, whilst they continue in this life, sin remaining in them will give them trouble, and they will be ever in such danger of hurt by it, that their case will require constant fear, watchfulness, and conflict. But whilst, by their groaning for sin that dwelleth in them, and their conflict against it, they prove that they are not its slaves, nor under its dominion, they have, at the same time, cause to thank God through Jesus Christ, as for making them free from its dominion, so for the sure prospect of being hereafter perfectly delivered from it.

14. Christians having sorrow or serious regret for sin in them, and being in earnest conflict with the law in their

members, with the lusts, and irregular passions, and inordinate affections of the flesh, their way of walking cannot (as to their ordinary and habitual course) be after the flesh; nor can they be the slaves of sin; but being made free from sin, and become servants to God, (chap. vi. 22.) they walk after the Spirit, have their fruit unto holiness, (which is the necessary and certain characteristic of the true Christian) and the end everlasting life; to which end and final issue holiness is indispensably necessary—though, however necessary, yet eternal life is not proper wages which men win by their holiness, but is the gift of God through Jesus Christ.

SECT. II.—*Showing the advantage, with regard to holiness, that ariseth from persons being under grace.*

The advantage to sinners, with regard to holiness, is either such as is, in some sort, extrinsic, arising from the blessed privilege and benefits of a state of grace; or such as ariseth from genuine principles of holiness, and of holy practice in the souls of those who are under grace, that cannot have place or operate in any who are not so.

To explain the advantage, with regard to holiness and holy practice that is in some sort extrinsic, arising from the privilege of a state of grace, let the following matters be considered.

1. When men, by their guiltiness, were under the curse of God's law, this withheld from them these blessings and favourable influences of heaven, by which their souls, being made good soil, might become fruitful in holiness and good works. As the earth, when the curse seized it, was to produce naturally thorns and thistles, so the hearts of persons under the law and its curse, do produce no fruit truly good and acceptable. Men being in the flesh, in an unjustified state, and sin having the dominion over them, Satan hath ruled in them, and by means of sin, and the lusts thereof, he hath wrought effectually in them. But it will not be so with them who are under grace, in a state of favour with God. These enemies may infest, but shall not have the dominion over them. The virtue of Christ's death having reached them in their being born of God, and in their gratuitous justification, sin is condemned to lose its rule in them; the prince of this world is judged and cast out. If it is comfortable in relation to our outward enemies, it is especially so with respect to our invisible and spiritual enemies, as Rom. viii. 31. *If God be for us, who can be against us?*

Christians being justified by faith and under grace, this,

as hath been hinted above, opens to them the treasures of heavenly blessings. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, (now become their God and Father through him,) blessing them (as Eph. i. 3.) with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. This must have much sanctifying effect. Particularly and especially having been born of the Spirit, justified, and brought into a state of grace, God giveth them his Spirit to dwell in them, chap. viii. 9. and they are sealed by the Spirit unto the day of redemption. Formerly Satan wrought in them by means of the blindness and errors of their mind, and by means of the various lusts that prevail in their unrenewed hearts. But now the strong man is despoiled of his armour, the curse of the law, and sin dominant in them; and he hath not the advantage over them that he hath formerly had. Being renewed in the spirits of their minds, and having the Holy Spirit dwelling in them, he doth direct and rule their renewed faculties for the advancement of their sanctification. His more special reproofs and consolations, his humbling and quickening influences, he measures variously to them, with infinite wisdom, in the manner most proper for further subduing sin, and promoting holiness. Dwelling in them, and being in them as a well of water springing up unto everlasting life, he will be in them an effectual principle of spiritual and heavenly desires and pursuits, and a true source of holiness,—a principle effectually directing and disposing them to walk after the Spirit.

2. By reason of the influence of the Spirit thus dwelling in them who are under grace, and entitled to the comforts of it, they will find their comfort much concerned in holy living and practice. The comfort of Christians arises from objects which, however agreeable to right reason when revealed, yet are above the reach of reason to discover, and are not suitable to the principles and disposition natural to the hearts of men; such objects as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man. So the apostle says concerning the doctrine of Christ and of grace, 1 Cor. ii. 9.: As we need the Spirit that is of God, ver. 12. that we may know the things that are freely given us of God; so to maintain usually, and with advantage, the comfort of our heart on such grounds, requires the ordinary and favourable influence of the same Spirit of grace. But, as sin indulged and entertained in the heart, or having course in men's speech and behaviour, grieveth the Holy Spirit, (as the apostle

speaks, Eph. iv. 30.) the consequence will be, that he shall withhold his favourable influence, and leave them to that sense of condemnation that is natural to the hearts of the guilty, and to the darkness of mind and inward frame that naturally flows from it. In this case the reasoning of their own minds, however just, will have but very weak influence or effect for recovering their peace, and for enabling them to overcome the temptations which the enemy of their peace and comfort will in such cases be ever ready to suggest. Now, as the peace and comfort of his mind from grace is a very important interest of every one who is under grace, the connexion between holiness and comfort by the influence of the Holy Spirit, which I have been representing, is a constant and most cogent reason to every such person, to be watchful against sin, and earnestly studious of holiness.

3. Holiness is greatly promoted by the advantage which persons under grace have in worship. Divine worship, inward and outward, public and private, makes of itself a considerable branch of holy practice; and when it is followed out with good conscience, sincerity, and success, hath much good effect in all the course of holy practice and good works. One under grace approaches God in worship with great advantage. I observe this connexion in the apostle's words, Heb. ix. 14. where he represents *the blood of Christ as purging the conscience from dead works, to serve* (*λατρευειν*) *the living God*. When the conscience unpurged lieth under guilt and condemnation, one is greatly at a loss in serving and worshipping God. But when one is justified, brought under grace, and hath his conscience purged from guilt and condemnation, he may approach and worship God with confidence and comfort. Godly persons under the Old Testament, however truly under grace, had not this benefit in so great a degree as now under the New Testament, when grace is more fully displayed, and the Spirit given in greater ordinary measure. Now all believers are priests, with respect to the privilege of near approach unto God. Yea, (which exhibits the matter in a still stronger light,) whereas anciently the high priest only went into the most holy place, in near approach to God's throne, the mercy-seat; now all believers have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, through the vail that was rent,—that is to say, his flesh, and to come up as to God's very throne of grace. Believers have (according to Eph. iii. 12.) *boldness*, or liberty (in opposition to bondage of spirit) *and access with confidence*,

by the faith of him. This makes the worship of God comfortable. When the Spirit helpeth our infirmity in such holy exercise, making intercession for us, according to the will of God, and likewise in return intimates, in due time and measure, the love, mercy, and favour of God to the heart, this further engages the heart to God, which is of itself the further sanctifying of it, and gives great alacrity and vigour in walking with God, and in all good works. When in worship God gives inwardly the sense of his favour, and the light of his countenance, or when he gives in outward providence proofs of his faithfulness, mercy, and care, in consequence of earnest recourse to him, and as in answer to prayer, it powerfully disposes the heart to say, as Psal. cxvi. 1, 2. *I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice, and my supplications. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.* And ver. 9. *I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.* And ver. 12. *What shall I render unto the Lord?* Such is the good consequence of comfortable and successful recourse to God in worship. It is easy to understand what happy effect this sort of intercourse with God must have in all holy practice, and in walking with God. Thus they who are under grace have the strongest engagements, and the greatest excitements to holy living, by the advantage which they comfortably have, in their intercourse with God in worship, beyond what men can have who are under the law and its condemnation.

4. The grace they are under doth especially give efficacy to the doctrine of the word of the gospel, to every part of the word of God, and to all divine institutions, as the chief ordinary means of promoting holiness. The prayer of the great Intercessor, that *God might sanctify them through his truth*, will have effect upon all his true disciples. The light of God's word doth mark out to them, in every part, the way in which they ought to walk; and giveth them instruction in righteousness. God's Spirit bringeth his holy commandments and righteous judgments into their renewed hearts, in such a manner as makes them sweeter to them than honey—than the honey-comb. By God's word they receive seasonable and apposite correction and reproof, agreeably seasoned with the love of their best friend. If the threatenings of it are made useful for curbing the rebelliousness and wickedness of the flesh, the promises and comforts of it are especially made useful for strengthening and quick-

ening the principles of grace, and for making them active in all fruits of holiness. The good hope through grace which God's word holds forth before them, is made effectual for raising them above the world, and making them victorious over the terrifying and alluring temptations of it, and for encouraging them to be steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. The securities of God's promises give vigour to their hearts in walking with God, and in maintaining the Christian warfare against sin inwardly, and outwardly also; even if there should be occasion to resist unto blood, striving against sin. If we observe how it happens as to them who are yet in an unconverted state, and under the curse, whilst they are under the same dropping of the word of God, usually with little effect; we have occasion to say, it is happy, with a view to the sanctifying effect of the truth, for one to be under grace, as to his real state before God.

5. The grace which God's people, freely justified, are under, will direct every thing in an effectual tendency to their sanctification and furtherance in holiness. It will give that direction to all providential dispensations. If these be favourable, it will be for encouraging and strengthening them in the Lord's ways. For sometimes they are encouraged to serve the Lord their God with joyfulness and gladness of heart, in the abundance of all things.<sup>1</sup> If they have the cross to bear, that will tend to make the fruits of the cross of Christ the more precious to them; to take off their hearts from the world; to preserve them from the prevailing evils of it; and for that end, to co-operate with divine grace to mortify their members that are upon the earth; to cause the consolations of grace have the better relish in their hearts; to humble them, and keep them in the greater dependence on the Lord and on his grace.

Nor are strokes and crosses dispensed to them indiscriminately. The Lord corrects them in judgment, not in mere anger.<sup>2</sup> In measure when it shooteth forth, doth he debate with it; he stayeth his rough wind in the day of his east wind.<sup>3</sup> Judgments are not proportioned to the demerits of those who are under grace, but are suited to their strength, and the good purposes to be accomplished by them. God is faithful, and will not suffer that the objects of his grace and special favour be tempted above that

<sup>1</sup> Deut. xxviii. 47.—<sup>2</sup> Jer. x. 24.—<sup>3</sup> Is. xxvii. 8.

they are able.<sup>1</sup> If they are chastened, it is in order to separate them from their sins. The declared intention of all God's chastisements is the profit of his children, that thereby they may be made partakers of his holiness.<sup>2</sup> If there is special danger from a particular lust of the flesh, (for instance, from pride, or being exalted above measure,) the Lord knoweth how to give some special trial or thorn in the flesh, to prevent its operation and effect. If the flesh breaks forth in evil works, he will visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes.<sup>3</sup> When the Lord sees that, through their weakness and the greatness of their distress and trouble, they are in danger to fail in their faith, or in their general integrity, he will relieve them by a seasonable interposition of his providence.— *He repenteth himself for his servants, when he seeth that their power is gone.*<sup>4</sup> If, through their unwatchfulness, the flesh and the devil prevail against them, and they fall into grievous sins, (the leaving them to which is the most fearful of all providential dispensations) yet divine grace, wisdom, and omnipotence, will make even this to contribute, as to making them more humble, so to the making them more circumspect and holy in all their ways; as we have cause to think concerning David and divers other saints. What wonder of grace this! Such is the direction which the grace they are under gives to every sort of providences respecting God's people, causing all things co-operate with grace for good to them, sanctifying all dispensations to them, to be the means of sanctifying them. How different the case of the men of the world, who, though under an external dispensation of grace, yet are not under grace, as to the real state of their souls!

6. The habitual view and impression of the great day of the Lord must give great excitement to watchfulness against sin and temptation, to holiness and fruitfulness in good works. But to them who are under condemnation, the thoughts of that day bring so great terror, as tends to turn away their mind from the view of it; or, if they cannot do so, to give them such alarm and confusion, as bring distress and perplexity upon them, with so much weakness as is prejudicial to holiness. But a soul truly converted to God, justified and under grace, has cause to think of that day with great comfort; looking for the grace that is to be

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. x. 13.—<sup>2</sup> Heb. xii. 10.—<sup>3</sup> Psal. lxxxix. 32.—<sup>4</sup> Deut. xxxii. 36.

brought unto him at the revelation of Jesus Christ,<sup>1</sup> which will bring him complete deliverance from sin, redemption from misery and death, with the consummation of holiness and happiness. He may with confidence wait for the Son of God from heaven, whom God raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.<sup>2</sup> Such is the advantage of being under grace, whereby a Christian, delivered from the wrath to come, may fix his mind on that day with peace and comfort; excited by the hope he hath in Christ Jesus against that day, to purify himself as he is pure;<sup>3</sup> while there remain to be considered, consistently with the consolations of grace, those awful circumstances of the coming of the Lord, that may, though without confusion or amazement, awaken in the Christian the utmost concern, to be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless.<sup>4</sup>

7. As the people of God are the purchase of Christ's blood, so when his blood is actually applied to them, and they are justified and brought under grace, they are from thenceforth his most special charge, committed to himself to rule and preserve them, and complete their salvation. He is sufficient for the charge, and faithful in the execution of it. He doth fulfil the will of his Father, of which he saith, John vi. 39. *This is the will of him that sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.* With a view to this important charge of its happy objects, which divine grace commits to the Redeemer, all things are delivered to him of his Father, who hath given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as he hath given him.<sup>5</sup> All power is given him in heaven and in earth;<sup>6</sup> and it is given him to be Head over all things to the Church.<sup>7</sup> The Captain of our salvation, infinitely powerful in himself, and mighty to save, being furnished with such extensive power in his mediatory character for bringing many sons unto glory, the great work he hath to do upon them, upon his church, is, *that he may sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he may present it to himself a glorious church!*<sup>8</sup> It is when all his church shall be gathered in, and fully sanctified, that he shall bring them home to God, (his and their Father) to be perfectly happy in the immediate fruition of him—when God himself shall be to his people

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. i. 13.—<sup>2</sup> 1 Thess. i. 10.—<sup>3</sup> 1 John iii. 3.—<sup>4</sup> 2 Pet. ii. 14.—  
<sup>5</sup> John xvii. 2.—<sup>6</sup> Matth. xxviii. 18.—<sup>7</sup> Eph. i. 22.—<sup>8</sup> Eph. v. 26, 27,

eternally *all in all*.<sup>1</sup> Thus the sanctification of believers is insured by their being given in charge, for that purpose, to him who died for them, and rose again.

He is the great Shepherd of the sheep, who saith, (John x. 28.) *They shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.* Is this merely, that the enemy cannot pluck them by *force* out of the hands of Christ or of his Father? Surely this is not the way in which the enemy chiefly attempts to work against Omnipotence. 'But this may be 'done' (saith a learned writer, Dr W.) 'by deceit and allurements, through the negligence of men who have the freedom of their wills; for such men, who, by the allurements of the world, the flesh, and the devil, thus cease to obey Christ's laws, are not snatched out of Christ's hands, but 'choose to go from him.' But if souls may, in this way, be brought away from Christ, and from his ways, to perdition, (as this is the way in which the enemy doth ever attempt it, even by allurements or terrors, or some means or other of deceiving, to gain their will) is not this snatching them out of Christ's hands? And if, through the cunning of the enemy, and their wandering disposition, the sheep are brought aside from their pasture and from the right way, and finally perish, alas! what a small matter doth the care of the great Shepherd amount to? If *one* might perish by these means, and by the choice of their own will, however influenced, might not all? and so this great Shepherd have no flock to bring home to the fold in the end of the day; and Christ, having died for his church, that he might sanctify it, and present it a glorious church, in the end have no church to present? Can we not hold what is just concerning the liberty of human will, without holding concerning it what would make it possible that the Son of God should have no work to do at his glorious second coming, but to execute eternal vengeance upon them all whom, when he came first, he redeemed with his blood? Surely the divine council of grace, and the death of the Son of God, have been contrived by infinite wisdom with greater certainty of effect.

8. It appears, then, that the Lord's people have very great advantage with regard to sanctification and the preserving them in holiness, by their being *under grace*. But, further, this is secured by a sure covenant. The grace they are under is the grace of the new covenant. If we consider, that man, in his first and perfect state, did fall from God through

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 28.

the temptation of the enemy, and his abuse of the freedom of his own will—if we consider what place and strength sin retains now in the hearts of the best whilst in this life, how weak they are, and what innumerable snares and temptations they are surrounded with—we may venture to say, that it were not becoming the wisdom of God to make a new display of his grace to such creatures, in a new covenant, without ordering it so as would secure the effect of grace. It becomes us, indeed, to reason modestly concerning the wisdom of God, and what becometh it. But with regard to the present subject, we may thus reason the more confidently, that his word hath declared his new and second covenant to be everlasting, well ordered, and sure.

Here is the sum of it, as the Lord hath given it forth, Jer. xxxii. 40. *I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them (Heb. from after them) to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.* Here, besides the general declaration, that the covenant will be everlasting, the Lord doth more particularly describe how it shall become so. Upon the one hand, he promises that he will not turn away from after them to do them good. Thus he expresses and promises his constant care of them. As they are, whilst in this life, but as children learning to walk, and still in danger of stumbling, he will set them before him—he will follow after them, to observe them, to care for them. Thus the Psalmist, Psalm xli. 12.: *As for me, saith he, thou upholdest me in mine integrity,* and adds for comfortable explaining this, *Thou settest me before thy face for ever.* As if he had said, I am ever before thy face—under thine eye, to be seasonably corrected and helped by thee; and thus it is that thou upholdest me in mine integrity. Thus also, Gen. xvii. 1. *The Lord said unto Abram, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.* Here there is a hint to him of being careful to be perfect, or upright and sincere, as walking before an all-seeing God. Yet God's omniscience is only implied, not expressed. The thing expressed is God's being almighty; and the encouragement meant we may conceive thus: When I have engaged thee to walk in my way, have good courage; consider thyself as a child walking before, and under the eye of a kind father; consider me as ever after thee, to observe and care for thee, to assist, support, and protect thee. Thus the Lord promises (Jer. xxxii. 40.) that he will not turn from after his people, to do them good.

The only thing, then, that can be imagined to deprive them of the benefit of this divine care and grace, is, that they should depart from the Lord, and from his ways, and so refuse his care, resist it, and withdraw themselves from it. But this is provided against by the promise, *I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.* If the tenor of the covenant were thus: I will not cease to do them good, on condition that they cleave to me, obey me, and not depart from me; if, I say, the covenant amounted to no more than this, it would be a law-covenant, even if there should be some abatement in the condition, in condescension to human infirmity. Whereas the covenant of grace is a covenant of promise, that gives security, by mere grace, on all hands, with regard to the sanctification of God's people, and their preservation in a state and course of holiness, to their final salvation. The right inheritance is not by the law, or by works. *For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by GRACE, to the end the PROMISE might be SURE to all the seed,* Rom. iv. 14, 16.

But is it not true, if the Christian should wholly and finally depart from God, that this would deprive him of all the benefit of grace? I answer, This hypothetic proposition is of undoubted truth; yea, the truth of it is implied and presupposed in the promise itself, which is likewise of certain and infallible truth,—*I will put my fear in their hearts, that they SHALL NOT depart from me.*

But how can it be consistent with that freedom of will that is essential to moral agency, that the sanctification and perseverance in holiness of God's people should be thus previously secured by grace, and by the promise?

*Answ.* It is acknowledged that none can be called moral agents who do not act with freedom of will; yet there are moral agents who are incapable of doing what is evil, and at the same time, do not act with the less freedom of will; yea, they enjoy the liberty of the will in its perfection. There are likewise moral agents who cannot do what is truly morally good, yet act with free will. This is acknowledged by the greatest patrons of the pretensions of free will. So, the general proposition, that the power alike to do good or evil is essential to the freedom of the will, and is necessary to moral agency, is deserted, I see, by the most able and learned of them. The saints in a state of glory will, by the grace that brought them to that state, be preserved in holiness

eternally, and that very consistently with the freedom of their will. Shall it be said concerning the saints on earth, amidst their own imperfections, and the snares that abound in the world, that it is indeed beyond the reach of infinite wisdom and grace to preserve them in holiness, to advance and perfect them therein, without destroying the freedom of their will? It certainly were very unreasonable to say so. As it is certainly true, that men, as all other moral agents, do act with free will, so we have seen that God's covenant of grace and promise hath secured the sanctification and perseverance of those who are under grace. The word of God abounds with promises to that purpose. If any say that God cannot accomplish with *certainly* these purposes of his grace and providence, that are to be brought about by means of moral agents endowed with free will, without destroying the freedom of their will, they are far from being well founded in philosophy or sound reason, and speak in extreme opposition to the word of God, yea, to the common notions of mankind, who pray to God to bring about events that must, by the nature of things, be brought about by the free will of rational agents, without ever thinking that he is to destroy or suspend the liberty of their will.

We have been considering the advantage, in some sort extrinsic, respecting holiness and freedom from the dominion of sin, even that which ariseth from a *state* of grace, from the believer's being under grace, the object of special divine favour. Let us now consider the advantage of an intrinsic sort, which the true Christian hath by being under grace, as to the true and necessary inward principles of genuine holiness, which cannot take place or have effect in any soul that is under the law and its curse, under guilt and condemnation.

It is of essential consequence with regard to holiness, that a man have right inward principles in all his actions. A man's external actions and behaviour may be good, and yet have nothing of true holiness, if all doth not proceed from right inward principles. Yea, a man doing much good outwardly, from evil principles, and to a wrong end, his course upon the whole may be quite diabolical and wicked. A man's external practice when it is good, makes but one side, the outside of practice. From rational moral agents, God, who is a Spirit, requires the worship and service of the heart and spirit; and their practice is to be judged of by Him who searcheth the reins and heart, (Jer. xvii. 10. Rev. ii. 23.)

according to the inward disposition and principles that influence it. If one should, from ambitious views, as Absalom, strive to reach by iniquity a state of life in which he might gratify every lust, and after obtaining it, recommend himself to men by all acts of kindness and beneficence, by mercy and liberality to the poor, by avoiding every immorality, yea, and by showing great regard to religion and devotion; should this man's practice be denominated holiness? No, surely; all his apparent goodness is from sinful lusts dominant in him. Men may, yea ought, to judge favourably of one, when his speech and behaviour express only what is good; but this is still with a reserve to the judgment of the heart-searching supreme Judge, who only can with absolute certainty judge of a man's holiness. It is therefore of essential consequence to advert to the inward principles of practice and behaviour; and if even the good outward behaviour of a person yet under the law and its condemnation, cannot proceed from right and holy inward principles; if these can only have place and effect in the heart of one under grace, it proves the advantage with respect to holiness, of being under grace; yea, that sin will have dominion, and there cannot be true holy practice with any who is not in a *state of grace*.

We learn from the word of God, that there is no good or acceptable work without faith and love. The doctrine concerning the first of these is precise and clear, Heb. xi. 6. *Without faith it is impossible to please God.* The inspired writer explains this, and gives the reason thus: *For he that cometh to God, must believe that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* Dr Whitby says, in his annotation, that this is the heathen's creed—(I thought there could be no creed without revelation); and thereafter he says: 'God must either have laid upon them no obligation to please him, or required what he knew to be impossible, or given them sufficient means to know this,'—viz. that he is a rewarder to sinful men who seek him, and are virtuous. This is rare divinity. One thing appears in it at first sight, viz. that the gospel revelation was not necessary to lead men to a state of acceptance with God, and to happiness; natural religion, influenced by the heathen's creed, being sufficient for that purpose. As many who write well in defence of the truth of the Christian revelation, do yield this point, I apprehend their doing so hath a greater tendency

to make many infidels easy in their mind than their ingenious defences of revelation have to bring such over to the faith.

I observe the speculations of divers heathen philosophers adduced by Dr W. concerning the regard the gods (as they spoke, according to their creed) have for good men, and their care of such. It was indeed easy for the self-flattering hearts of men, who esteemed their own goodness and virtue, to entertain such favourable notions, overlooking their own sinfulness, and the charge which the holy and righteous Sovereign of the world had against them on that account. But certainly the learned writer could not show, from all the heathen writers he was acquainted with, that they knew any true and sufficient grounds on which they could believe that God would be a rewarder to sinful men. They could, at best, have but doubtful unfounded speculations concerning it—could not possibly have the faith of it, according to the description of faith there, ver. 1.

The Scripture shows us the only true and solid ground on which sinful men can have faith in God, 1 Pet. i. 21. *Who by him (Christ) do believe in God that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God.* The atonement made for men's sins by Christ's sufferings and death, and God's testifying his acceptance thereof by raising him from the dead, together with the testimony of the word of God concerning divine grace through Christ, makes the only proper and solid ground upon which sinful men can have faith in God, or believe him to be to them a rewarder. Now it is by this sincere faith in Christ, and in God through Christ, that sinners do pass from death to life, and, being justified, come under grace; nor can it be an habitual principle of practice, in any who are not so, as to their real state before God. So, whatever appearance of virtue or goodness they may have, they who are in the flesh, (and so are yet under the law) cannot please God, Rom. viii. 8. nor have for a principle of action and service that faith, without which it is impossible to please God.

The other principle essential to true holiness, to acceptable obedience, and good works, is love. This, according to the apostle, Rom. xiii. 8. is *the fulfilling of the law*; and if it is so with respect to the second table, which he hath there particularly in his view, it is so as to the first, according to Matth. xxii. 36, 37. *The great commandment in the law is, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God.* This is indeed the sum of the whole law, and a necessary principle of obedience to it

in every part. But how doth this love enter, and reside in the heart of man, to whom it certainly is not natural? The apostle accounts for this, 1 John iv. 10. *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.* Faith representing, with satisfying conviction, to the heart of an awakened, serious, and humbled sinner, this most wonderful and endearing love of God, testified in redeeming us from death and wrath by the death of his Son, engages the heart to him, to love, and to serve him. When the love of God, thus manifested in Christ Jesus, touches the heart with comfortable effect, it doth, as the flame of one candle touching another, kindle the love of God in the heart. But then, if this love, that is essential to holiness, enters into and arises in the heart only by means of that faith by which one comes under grace, it is plain it can be a principle of practice only in the hearts of such as are under grace. It is faith that worketh by love, Gal. v. 6.

The true inward progress and connexion of things respecting the principles of holy practice and obedience, we find 1 Tim. i. 5. *Now the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.* It is worth while to consider this verse somewhat closely.

As to the first clause, *The end of the commandment*; this, saith Dr. W.'s annotation, some refer to the law. Himself rather thinks it here refers to the gospel; and to this purpose observes, that the Greek word here, and the two other words he mentions, are always, in the epistles, used of the gospel. But as these three words have not in the use of language the same meaning, so as to the word in this text (*παραγγελια*), I see not in my lexicon any sense of it that would favour that interpretation. As to the only two texts he mentions, (1 Thess. iv. 2. and here, ver. 18.) the word is justly rendered as we translate; nor is there any thing in the scope that requires rendering otherwise than by *commandment* and *charge*. It is plain that the apostle hath in his eye some who, as ver 7. *desired to be teachers of the law*; against whom he reasons concerning the law in the following verses. The *law*, or *commandment*, is the subject in this place. As he charges these men with ignorance, ver. 7. not understanding (so the Doctor's paraphrase) the scope or true meaning of the law; here he, ver. 5. goes on to speak concerning the law, or commandment, by representing, in oppo-

sition to them, the true scope and end of the law in its holy commandment. But though the rendering and sense is to be retained as we have it, (*the end of the commandment*) yet it is certain this end of the commandment cannot be attained by sinful men, as to the conformity it requires, but by means of the gospel, and the grace which it exhibits; and the apostle gives such a view of the subject here as makes this clear, as we shall see.

*The end of the commandment is charity.*—This word in our language hath undergone a considerable change of meaning in the use of speech. The Greek word is no other than the common word for *love*; as it hath been observed, that *love is the fulfilling of the law*. The apostle shows here how this love is connected in the heart, and mentions a series of causes by which the true love, whereby the end of the commandment is obtained in the practice of men, is produced.

1. It is love *out of a pure heart*. Without giving any prolix explication of this, we may learn what a pure heart means, from James iv. 8. *Purify your hearts, ye double-minded*. The *pure heart* here is the same with a *true heart*, Heb. x. 22. and means its sincerity. So love out of a pure heart is the same as out of a sincere heart; and the apostle's expression means the sincerity of love.

2. This sincerity of love comes from a *good conscience*. A man's conscience may be called good, in general, when it hath in it a true light to direct a man's way and behaviour, with such impression of the authority of God, the great Lawgiver, as powerfully and effectually enforces conformity and obedience to its dictates. In short, it is a good conscience that doth its office in the proper manner. But the apostle's special meaning of a good conscience here, is, I think, to be understood as opposed to an *evil conscience*, mentioned Heb. x. 22. *Having your hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience*. There is evidently in these words an allusion to the ancient typical sprinkling of the blood by which atonement was made, and persons were made free from the charge of guiltiness and defilement, and from the consequences of it. An evil conscience is a conscience charging guilt, a condemning conscience, that gives the sad impression of wrath and judgment for sin.

Now, it is (Heb. ix. 14.) the blood of Christ that purgeth the conscience, so as that (Heb. x. 2.) there shall be *no more conscience of sins*; the conscience once purged, retaining no longer a charge of guiltiness, and of judgment for it.

So there are two ways of having a good conscience ; one is, by not having transgressed ; the other is, by having the guilt taken away by the application of that blood which taketh away the sin of the world.

By means of a conscience condemning, and terrifying with the apprehension of wrath and judgment, God's enemies may (as Psal. lxvi. 3.) *submit themselves unto him*, (or, according to our margin, *yield feigned obedience*: Heb. *lie unto him*.) But whilst the conscience retains the charge of guilt, condemnation, and wrath, there cannot be purity, or sincerity of heart toward God, or sincerity of the love of God. Human nature is so formed, that it cannot love any object that is adverse and terrible to it. There is good sense in a passage of Simplicius, a heathen writer, as Dr W. on Heb. xi. 6. gives it thus : ' We cannot love, honour, ' and worship the Deity, whatsoever reasons may be alleged ' for so doing, if we conceive him hurtful, and not profit- ' able to us, because every living creature flies what is ' hurtful, and the causes of it ; and affects and follows what ' is profitable.' So that philosopher. (As to the purpose for which Dr W. adduces this passage, on Heb. xi. 6., upon what good grounds could such a man assure himself that the holy and righteous Ruler and Judge would be favourable to the guilty, or that such could have profit by him, with regard to their spiritual, everlasting state ; if they had any firm belief of an everlasting state, which many of the most eminent heathen philosophers had not ? Here was an essential defect in the religion of the heathen. This by the by. Now to our present purpose.)

It is when the conscience is relieved from the sense of condemnation and wrath, and from the sad misgivings which haunt them who do most labour to be easy in that condition ; I say, when it is relieved from these impressions and apprehensions, and that by means so wonderfully endearing as the redeeming love of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ ; it is then that the heart kindles in love, and comes, with purity and sincerity of heart, to be well affected to God, and to his service. Then God's people come to *serve him* (Luke i. 74, 75.) *in holiness and righteousness, without FEAR* ; then the Christian hath *boldness and access with confidence* ; the conscience being *purged from dead works*, he serves God comfortably. The fear arising from an evil conscience hath torment, and excludes love. But this fear being removed by the heart's being sprinkled from

an evil conscience, and love entering, it (1 John iv. 18.) *casteth out fear*; for *there is no fear in love*. If, through the Christian's neglect and unwatchfulness, fear shall return with some bondage and torment, love recovering itself, with the proper force, casts it out. The Christian, sensible of being under Divine grace and favour, love hath free course and prevalence in his heart, and alloweth him not to entertain harsh, or unfavourable, or discouraging thoughts of God. So wisdom's ways become to the Christian ways of pleasantness; he walks cheerfully in them, and is encouraged to say, *If God be for us, who can be against us?*—There is,

3. *Unfeigned faith*. This is at the top of the series in this text; and is in the Christian the proper source of those other principles of holy practice here mentioned. Concerning it these general things are to be considered:

1. It is unfeigned. Not merely as opposed to a false and lying profession, when there is not within a faith of any sort. It is a sincere, in opposition to an insincere faith: which, however, may be real in its kind. *Ἀνυπόκριτος* (if the use of speech with us would admit it) might be rendered precisely, *unhypocrite*; a faith of such kind as hypocrites never have. The apostle John says, 1 epist. v. 1 *Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God*. This faith is not a mere assent of the mind to the truth of the proposition, that Jesus is the Christ; for such faith the devils have: it is such a faith as is an evidence that one is born of God, as this text says. So also, John i. they who believe in Christ (ver. 12.) are (ver. 13.) born of God. When Philip preached Christ at Samaria, it is said, Acts viii. 13. that *Simon* (the sorcerer) *himself also believed*. It is not said merely, that he professed to believe, which one might do who had inwardly no faith at all,—The Scripture is not to be contradicted, that says expressly, he *believed*: Yet the man remaining (ver. 23.) in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity, surely he was not born of God, nor had the faith that is the fruit and consequence of being so. We see, 2 Thess. ii. 13. that *sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth* are connected.

It is said, John ii. 23, 24, that *many believed in his name, but Jesus did not commit himself unto them*. Can it be said, that these were born of God, or had that faith that comes by being born of God? We are told (John vi. 60, 61.) that many of Christ's disciples murmured and were offended at his doctrine; and (ver. 64.) Christ said to them, *There are some*

of you that believe not; for (so the evangelist adds) *Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.* Here, upon the one hand, these men were disciples, which they could not be without some sort of faith; yet, on the other hand, they believed not—Christ told them so—they had not the unhyprocritic, the unfeigned faith, which they have who are born of God.

By what hath been said, we may be satisfied that the opinion is far from being well founded which hath been held by some learned men, agreeably to their scheme and system, viz. that the faith of hypocrites and that of sincere Christians are, in themselves, of the same nature and kind.

2. This unfeigned faith is such as hath for its natural and proper consequence a good conscience, with love in purity and sincerity of heart. We have here occasion to observe the sentiments expressed by Dr Taylor in his paraphrase of Rom. viii. 1. and which he gives as the meaning of the blessed apostle in that place: '*Now—we have the highest assurance that those are quite discharged from the penalty of the law, and disengaged from the servitude of sin, who embrace the faith of the gospel, if so be they make that faith a principle of obedience, and do not choose to live in wickedness, according to the investigation of fleshly appetite, but in truth and holiness,*' &c.

I had occasion to make observation on this passage formerly: what I now observe is, that it is therein implied, that a man may have that faith by which he comes to be in Christ, (which is the expression of the text, and which is the effect of being born of God) and yet continue under the servitude of sin, and choose to live in wickedness. As to this of choosing, it is true, that if a man live in the practice of wickedness, or of holiness, he doth the one or the other by his free choice; though, in the last mentioned sort of practice, there is a superior hand, to which the right choice is especially owing. It is also true, that a Christian should have at heart to advance, as in faith, with regard to light and establishment, so in holiness, obedience, and all good works; and that Christians do too often fall short in these, yea, deviate too often from purity and holiness. But to say, that a man may have true faith, by which he comes to be indeed in Christ, and unto real union with him, as that expression imports; and that holiness and obedience, in the man's habitual and ordinary practice only comes by an uncertain and merely arbitrary choice and determination of his

will, which might determine him to live in wickedness, notwithstanding his faith; is in extreme opposition to the scripture, yea, to the nature of things, if we consider the human faculties, and the natural order of their operation.

We have seen, that (2 Thess. ii. 13.) faith is connected with the sanctification of the Spirit. To say that a man, having the faith that comes by the sanctification of the Spirit, may choose to live in wickedness, is evidently absurd.

As it is said (1 John v. 1.) that he who *believeth is born of God*, so it is said (1 John iii. 9.) *Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God*. Dr T. says (Key, sect. 274.) that it is very common in the sacred writings to speak of that as done, which only ought to be done, and which, in fact, may possibly never be done. To this purpose he adduces several texts, in not one of which there is reason for that way of interpreting; and in some of them there appears what clearly forbids it. However, according to this observation of his, he supplies in such texts, or substitutes in place of the scripture words, *ought to be*, or some such expression. Thus, (Matth. v. 13.) *Ye are (ought to be) the salt of the earth*. Thus he makes a way for himself to contradict very express declarations of Scripture. Among other texts, he mentions this, (1 John iii. 9.) without quoting the words. But, according to his rule, the first clause is to be understood thus: *Whosoever is born of God doth not (ought not to) commit sin*. But what reason to mention being born of God to that purpose, when it might be said of any man, whether born of God or not, that he ought not to commit sin? What then would the writer say of the following clause: *He cannot sin because he is born of God?* It seems he did not extend his view to that clause. Concerning the interpretation of the first clause just mentioned, Dr W. says, ‘Vain is that sense which some put upon these words, *viz.* He that is born of God, *non debet peccare*, ought not to sin, or that it is absurd for him to sin; for the apostle speaks not of what he ought not to do, but of what he doth not.’

The interpretation of Dr Hammond on the place, note c, comes to this: ‘The affirming here, of the regenerate pious convert, that he cannot sin, is not the affirming that he cannot cease to be what he is—but that remaining thus, a pious follower, imitator, and so a child of God, he cannot yield deliberately to any kind of sin.’ Dr W. on the place, says. ‘False seems to be the sense which Origen, &c.

‘ put upon the words, that *he that is born of God, sinneth not, quamdiu renatus est*, whilst he is born of God, because he ‘ ceaseth to be a child of God when he sins.’ Indeed, according to Origen’s and Dr Hammond’s interpretation, these two contradictory propositions are true at once : He that is born of God cannot sin ; and, He that is born of God, can sin : even understanding sinning in the same sense in both propositions.

It is true, Dr W. is not quite consistent with himself as to this text, in different parts of his writings. His long annotation on this text seems to be pretty harmless, with respect to the doctrine of the reformed churches concerning the perseverance of the saints, and the argument taken from this text to that purpose. But in his book on the five Arminian points, (ed. 1710.) he says, p. 468. ‘ The interpretation ‘ which many of the ancient fathers give us of these words, ‘ are a demonstration that they believed not the doctrine of ‘ the saint’s perseverance, for they expound the words thus : ‘ He that is born of God sinneth not, neither can sin, *quamdiu renatus est*, whilst he is born of God, because he ceaseth to be a child of God when he sins ; and this (saith the ‘ Doctor) must necessarily be the import of the words, if you ‘ interpret them of living in an habit or any course of sin.’ So indeed they must be understood ; for as to acts, even gross acts of sin, the Doctor had with good reason, rejected the interpreting of them by these. So the interpretation which he called false, when he wrote his annotations, he considered as the necessary and true interpretation when he wrote on controversy.

But the text says clearly and expressly, that *he who is born of God hath his seed remaining in him*, (which is inconsistent with his ceasing to be born of God) ; and *he cannot sin, because he is born of God* ; which shows clearly, that by being born of God, and having his seed remaining in him, he hath a sure preservative against sinning, or falling into a course of sinning. This sufficiently proves against Dr T. that a man having true faith, that is, the fruit and evidence of being born of God, cannot be, or choose to be, in servitude to sin, or to live in wickedness.

The same thing appears from its being said, Acts xv. 9. that God put no difference between believing Jews and the Gentiles there mentioned, *purifying their hearts by faith*. But though God conveyed to them the light of faith, how could it be said, that he purified their hearts by faith, if

faith had not efficacy by its proper influence in the heart to purify it; but that a man, notwithstanding his faith, may still choose to live in wickedness?

It is said, Gal. v. 6. *In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love.* Here the true, unfeigned, unhypocritical faith is distinguished from the false faith of hypocrites, by this, that it *worketh by love.* But how could love, and working by love, be ascribed to faith, if faith hath in itself no efficacy or power in the heart thus to work? Christian love and holy walking might be ascribed to the will of the man, who so chooses, when he might choose to live in wickedness. But when working by love is ascribed to faith, it certainly imports, that true faith hath efficacy so to work, and to determine the heart to the choice of what is right and holy. So this shows, that there is in the nature of the true unfeigned faith that which is not in the faith of hypocrites, whose faith hath no such efficacy, no such fruit; whose faith therefore is in itself of a different nature and kind from the genuine faith of the true Christian.

However, the notion of some has been, that a person coming to true faith, and having faith of the same nature and kind with that of the true Christian, doth nevertheless, at believing, stand as (*in bivio*) where roads part, to choose going to the right or left, without any thing in his faith to determine effectually his choice, as to wicked or holy living. How contrary this is to the views the Scripture gives of the matter, hath been shown.

Upon the whole, as the apostle doth, Rom. viii. 1. give it as a certain distinguishing mark of them that are *in Christ*, united to him by faith, that they *walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*, (much contrary to Dr T.'s interpretation); so in the text we are now especially considering, (1 Tim. i. 5.) it is plain that the love that is the end of the commandment, is, as to the ordinary habitual disposition and practice of the Christian, certainly connected with unfeigned faith, and is its native certain consequence. One thing remains yet to be observed for explication, concerning faith as here meant.

3. Faith, in the comprehensive view of it, doth in various ways influence holy practice. When the inspired writer is to show, Heb. xi. how faith enabled holy men of ancient times to do and to suffer as they did, he sets out, ver. 1. with giving this general and comprehensive description of it: *Faith is*

*the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.* Faith doth, by the light and authority of the word of God, demonstrate with powerful conviction and impression, and realizes to the heart the being, and grace of God, ver. 6. 27. It inwardly realizes divine threatenings and promises, ver. 7. 13, &c. It realizes Christ, and the things of Christ, to the heart.

But, then, as I have said before, that a good conscience is most fitly to be understood here, (1 Tim. i. 5.) as opposed to an evil conscience; so that a good conscience is a conscience relieved from condemnation, a conscience that enjoys and gives peace; it seems, upon this view, that faith is to be considered here in the special view and precise notion, as it is connected with our justification, reconciliation, and peace with God. The apostle's doctrine concerning that subject he thus expresses, Rom. iii. 24, 25. *Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ,* (compare Eph. i. 7.) *whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through FAITH IN HIS BLOOD.*

It is the blood of Christ (he having given his life a ransom for many) that hath made peace. It is by the application of it to the conscience, that the sinner, thereby truly purged, hath no more conscience of sins, Heb. x. 2. It is, chap. ix. 14. this blood that purges the conscience. It is by it, chap. x. 22. that our hearts are sprinkled from an evil conscience. This is that blood of sprinkling, chap. xii. 24. that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.

Now faith in Christ, faith in his blood, is, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, the intellectual means, or instrument, by which this blood is effectually applied, as by sprinkling, to the conscience, to free it from condemnation, and to give it peace; to free it from fear and terror of wrath, and so to diffuse comfort through the soul, from a sense of reconciliation and peace with God.

Let us now take a brief view of the series of inward principles of holiness, as contained in the text under our eye, beginning at the first. An unfeigned faith in Christ, and in his blood, gives peace in the conscience, and removes that apprehension of wrath that is so powerful a cause of the alienation of the heart from God. By this the heart comes to be reconciled to God's sovereignty; and holiness, and love, out of a pure sincere heart, prevails; and thus the end of the commandment is truly attained, according to the Christian's measure in this state of imperfection

Though these principles of holiness are formed, and have real effect in the heart of a Christian, yet often he is not so sensible thereof as he hath cause, and as his comfort would require. This is often owing to ignorance and mistake, to the remaining darkness of his mind, to the perplexity that sin which dwelleth in him, and the motions thereof, give him, and to the various temptations of the enemy. Yet these principles have place and real effect in every soul that is, through Christ, brought under grace, however much such souls may, for the causes just mentioned, not have the distinct view or sense thereof, nor the proper degree of comfort.

At the sametime, it is evident that these essential principles of true holiness cannot exist in a soul yet under the law and its curse, and not under grace. Such an one being destitute of the faith that would unite him truly to Christ, and bring him under grace, and not having his heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, is incapable of the love of God, that is the end of the commandment; and so is incapable of true holiness, whatever appearances may have.

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SECT. III.—*Containing several directions, which the doctrine of the context before explained affords to the souls of sinners who are seriously concerned about their most important interests, with the explication and solution of divers questions respecting the conversion of sinners.*

WE have been observing the advantage, with regard to sanctification and holy practice, which they have who are under grace, by the privilege of their state, and the benefit thence arising of having divine grace, faithfulness, care, and power to act for them; and by the true and genuine principles of holy practice in their existence and operation, and which cannot be in any such as are under the law, and its curse, and not under grace. From the scripture light and doctrine concerning these matters, there is important direction to those who have at heart their greatest interest. I begin with suggesting two things that ought to be particularly adverted to.

One is, that persons should not rest or found their hope on mere external privilege. All the members of the visible church are under a dispensation of grace, that encourages sinners to seek God, and to return from their strayings, by the prospect of pardon and acceptance through Jesus Christ. But, as hath been formerly observed on chap. vi. 14. many are thus under a dispensation of grace, who are not under

grace as to their true spiritual state before God, but remain under the curse of the righteous law, and have the wrath of God abiding on them. Men's trusting to external privilege with regard to the state of their souls, is not better than the vain confidence of Jews heretofore, who said within themselves, (Matth. iii. 9.) that they had Abraham to their father, and so were entitled to the privileges of the covenant. A man may have been, by virtue of birth-right, solemnly admitted a member of the church—he may have a sort of faith that is no effect or evidence of being born of God, and, by virtue of his profession of it, may externally enjoy all external church-privileges as a believer, as one in Christ, and under grace; but how little may all this amount to as to his present real state? as he may all the time be destitute of that faith by which he would be truly united to Christ, and so be a member of that church of the first-born (Heb. xii. 23.) which are written in heaven.

Another thing that should be carefully adverted to is, that persons trust not to their own works of righteousness for their acceptance with God, or for changing their natural state into a state of grace and favour. All have sinned, and so incurred the curse of the righteous law. If a man should thereafter do his duty as completely in every part as an angel, he but doth in so far what he was bound to do; and this doth not make amends for transgression, nor is pleadable against the curse of the law. This must be removed by other means than the righteousness of a man's own works. What makes the delusion of trusting to these, for bringing a man into a state of grace, still the more absurd, is, that, according to the apostle's doctrine, which we have been illustrating, a man is incapable of the true acceptable practice of righteousness and holiness, until he is under grace as to his real spiritual state, being, until then, under the real dominion of sin.

We learn from the apostle's doctrine, that the condition of a person under the law is truly very wretched. To be delivered from the law (chap. vii. 6.) is a great deliverance; and to be dead to the law (that is, to be set free from the thralldom and bondage of it, (as ver. 4.) is a happy freedom. Without this, one is incapable of bringing forth fruit unto God, and of serving in the newness of the Spirit. This deliverance and liberty hath been purchased at a costly rate—the crucifixion of the body of Christ. For the law (chap. v. 15.) worketh wrath to sinners; it denounces a curse

against every transgressor, so that the natural condition of every one not delivered from the law is, to be under wrath, and under the dominion of sin.

As divine love and mercy hath, with infinite wisdom, made a way for the relief and deliverance of sinners, which is set before them by the gospel of the grace of God, it is of the utmost consequence, in order to persons improving seasonably, truly, and effectually, the great means of salvation which the gospel sets before them, that they should have the most serious consideration, and deep impression of their most wretched spiritual condition by sin, and the curse of the law.

Such, however, is the vanity of the mind—the self-flattering disposition of the heart, with a strong inclination in men to keep their mind at ease, and this often supported by erroneous notions and principles, that it is a matter of the utmost difficulty to bring persons to a fixed consideration, just views, and serious impressions of their present spiritual wretchedness, and of their fearful prospect of a future eternal state. The strongest reasoning, and the most cogent arguments, often appear to have little or no effect in this way. They who become truly serious about their salvation, have commonly occasion to observe a superior hand bringing them to it; by some sudden alarming providence, bringing their sins to remembrance, awakening their conscience and heart—by continued or repeated tribulation and affliction opening their ears to discipline—or by the word of God, particularly of the holy and righteous law, conveyed in a striking manner into the conscience.

But when it so happens, the love of inward ease inclines the heart to avoid and divert these sad views and apprehensions. As when Felix trembled, on hearing (Acts xxiv. 25.) Paul reasoning of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, and said, *Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee*; so men often deal with their own consciences suggesting to them fearful, but just apprehensions; they divert them, and resolutely endeavour to avoid them. So it is done by many sinners, with fatal consequence to themselves.

It were well that sinners would lay their heart and conscience open to the light of God's word and holy law; that they should have full views of their manifold sinfulness; that their sins and transgressions should come particularly to their remembrance; and that the righteous judgment of

God, and the wrath to come, should appear in their awful reality to their apprehension. But as nature avoids and abhors every thing that gives dread and terror ; and as men's hearts are disinclined to every view of things that tends to give them low and humbling views of themselves, there is need of the Spirit of God, whose office it is to convince of sin. If the law gives the knowledge of sin, and worketh wrath in the sense and apprehension of sinful men, it doth not so with the proper force and effect, until it is conveyed into the heart and conscience by the power of the Spirit of God, and that with a degree of light, impression, and energy, such as the self-conceit, the vanity, and carnality of the heart, cannot surmount or overcome, so as to divert or extinguish it. If awakened sinners understood their true interest, they should, instead of avoiding or resisting the Spirit of God, or the convictions of sin, and the impressions he gives, rather pray earnestly for the Spirit to do this his office more and more powerfully in their hearts and consciences. If they understood the merciful design of God, during this day of salvation, in thus awakening, searching, bringing their sins to remembrance, and pleading with them by his Spirit and law in their consciences, they might see cause thankfully to submit themselves to this his discipline in their conscience, and be disposed to fall in with the gracious design of it, betaking themselves by faith to Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

But matters do not commonly take this turn all at once. If the conviction of sin, and the impression of wrath continue to go deep in the heart, and the arrows of the Almighty stick fast in it, the sinner is led naturally from this to groan and cry out, *What shall I do to be saved?* And whatever encouraging and comfortable answer to the important question is suggested by the gospel revelation, nature doth secretly insinuate its own way, and gives a different direction. The awakened conscience, sensible of the eternal and indispensable obligation to holiness, to all manner of duty and good works, applies itself thereto, and labours in reformation of life and practice. So far it is right in itself. Indeed, if there is in an awakened conscience a sense of the danger of sinning, with an impression of divine wrath for sin, and yet the lusts of the heart so far prevail, as to have a free course, and to exclude reformation in practice, it makes, for the present, a condition of very unpromising appearance.

But although practical reformation is right in itself, the unhappiness often in the case is, that sinners incline to trust thereto, and to found their confidence of pardon, reconciliation, and acceptance with God, on their own righteousness and good works. Indeed, in the first state of mankind, it was by the law, and by works of righteousness in conformity thereto, that men were to be justified. Man being without sin, in the perfection of his nature and moral powers, the law *could have given life*; and in that state of things, *verily righteousness should have been by the law*; but the state of things is altered; *the Scripture* (Gal. iii. 21, 22.) *hath concluded all under sin*; and the law, with all the righteousness of a man in conformity thereto, cannot justify the sinner, or bring him to a state of acceptance with God. Yet this having been the old way, the bias of nature is still towards it. Though the minds of men under the gospel may have orthodox notions, yet the ground of hope which the gospel sets before them is contrary to the previous conceptions of the natural mind. It is necessary that the ground of confidence and hope which the gospel presents should be realised to it by a superior light and power. Until it is so, the natural man doth not receive the things of the Spirit, (1 Cor. ii. 14.) which are no other than the things of Christ, (John xvi. 14.) which he is to show to men effectually: I say, the natural man doth not receive these things of Christ and of the Spirit, so as to rest his soul on that sure foundation which God hath laid in Zion. In that view, the heart treats them as foolishness, and doth not trust to them for hope and salvation. The self-exalting way of self-righteousness is what the natural mind suggests,—is what the natural heart inclines to trust to. It was not owing to any thing peculiar to the Jews, but to principles that are natural to mankind, that (Rom. x. 3.) *going about to establish their own righteousness, they submitted not themselves to the righteousness of God*.

However, an awakened serious sinner, going on in this way of self-righteousness, hath what the apostle dignifies, Rom. x. 2., with the character of *a zeal of God*. He labours earnestly for higher and higher degrees of devotion; he labours hard in reforming his practice, and in every good work. But they to whom the Lord doth at length give a better light, and brings unto a better way, have occasion to observe and acknowledge, that, whilst they were in the course I have been now representing, they have felt a struggle between

the law in their conscience and the flesh, or the power of sin in their hearts, according to the sad experience represented in the past time by the blessed apostle, Rom. vii. 5—13., and that all their concern and labour to avoid and subdue sin, and to be truly holy, hath been miserably unsuccessful.

Being yet in the flesh, not having their nature renewed, nor being under the sanctifying influence of the Spirit of grace, if the law in their conscience hath strict and urgent demands of holiness, and all manner of duty, yet the flesh, which (Rom. viii. 7.) is not subject to the law of God, acts rebelliously against it, and exerts itself in unholy lustings and affections. So that with those who are in the flesh, there are motions of sin, even by the law, though it opposes sin with all its light and authority. If the deluded sinner formerly thought of the law as only requiring external conformity, and so found it easy to have a good opinion of his own purity and righteousness, yet now the law, which is spiritual, entering into the heart, saying, *Thou shalt not lust*, prohibiting and condemning the inward lustings and affections of the heart that are contrary to holiness; he now hath by the law the knowledge of sin in good earnest,—hath amazing and confounding views of the extent of sin's dominion—of the deep root and great power it hath in his nature. But though sin is thus discovered in its extent and power, all the endeavours of a serious soul, with all the authority of the law in the conscience, are not able to subdue it. Instead of that, sin taking occasion by the commandment, thereby awakened and irritated, (chap. vii. 8.) works in the heart all manner of concupiscence. If the conscience of the sinner is awakened by the law coming with force into it, sin in the heart, with its unholy lusts and affections, is thereby likewise awakened, and exerts itself with the greater vehemence. So *sin, working death to the wretched sinner by that which is good*, (ver. 13.) *becomes* (shows itself to be) *exceeding sinful*, exceeding rebellious and wicked, unconquerable by mere human power.

The consequence will be, as Paul found it, and represents, chap. vii. 9. *I was alive without the law once*; (without its light and authority he entertained a good opinion of his own condition): *but when the commandment came, sin revived*, saith he, *and I died*. Former sins revived in his conscience with a fearful sting, and apprehension of wrath; and the conscience, enlightened by the holy commandment, feeling the force of its authority, and insisting most urgently for

present conformity, the issue is far otherwise than it ought. Instead of the heart's conforming cheerfully and dutifully with the holiness of the law, sin revives in its various lustings, unholy affections, and rebellious motions; nor doth the sinner find that the authority of the law, or the force of his conscience, or all the endeavours of his yet carnal heart, under the bondage of the law, and not truly sincere on the side of holiness, can subdue these unholy motions and lustings of his soul. His heart being searched by the holy law, his best devotions, good works, and righteousnesses, do now, (Is. lxiv. 6.) appear to him as filthy rags. However wretched his condition had appeared by the wrath which his guiltiness subjected him to, yet whilst he expected, by his serious care and earnest endeavours, to bring not only his outward practice, but his heart inwardly, unto a conformity with the holiness of the commandment, he still had, in his own apprehension, some resource in himself, with regard to his comfort, and the confidence of divine mercy and acceptance. But when, after serious endeavour, under the authority and impression of the law, to restrain sin, and to work up his heart to a holy temper and practice, the effect is, that sin taking occasion by the commandment, worketh in him all manner of concupiscence; that sin, actively disposed to lust, taking occasion by the commandment, deceives him, and so slays him; that sin, that evil principle, showing its extreme wickedness and power, worketh death in him by that which is good, even by that good law, by the direction and influence whereof he sometime hoped to come to a good condition and state; it is now that the sinner dieth indeed, in his own sense and apprehension, and that his self-confidence evanishes.

But there is hope in Israel concerning this case. God is merciful. So he hath proclaimed his name, Exod. xxxiv. 6. *The Lord, the Lord God merciful and gracious.* He hath favoured, yea, he hath purposed the salvation of sinful men, and hath, with infinite wisdom, provided for accomplishing of it, in a way consistent with all his perfections, tending to establish the authority of his law, and to maintain the honour and dignity of his government. He hath provided a Saviour, and laid help upon One who is mighty. He hath sent his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and hath made him to be a sin-offering for us, though he knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. A good ground is laid for the reconciliation and peace of sinners with God

by the blood of the cross. If God doth, by the instructions and discipline of the law in the consciences of sinners, as with a violent shower of hail, sweep away the refuge of lies, which, through the delusion of their hearts, they have trusted to, he doth, at the same time, acquaint them in the preceding words, (Isa. xxviii. 16.) that *he hath laid in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth, shall not make haste—He that believeth on him shall not be confounded*, as 1 Pet. ii. 6. A Mediator hath, by the appointment of the Father, interposed to make reconciliation for the sins of the people, and to maintain the peace, and all the interests of his people, by his continued intercession, being able (Heb. vii. 25.) *to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them*. He is a Captain of salvation, appointed to bring the many sons unto glory, and as he hath been consecrated to this office through sufferings, he is able to execute it by his power.

It is, at the same time, to be considered, that, according to the various ways in which Christ is set forth and represented to us in the word of God, there is requisite a suitable acting of men's minds and hearts corresponding thereto. Is he set forth as a *propitiation*, and his *blood* (his giving his life a ransom) as that which taketh away our guiltiness and condemnation? This requires *faith in his blood*,—the faith by which the sinner shall trust in that blood for pardon and peace,—the faith by which the heart shall be sprinkled from an evil conscience, and so the conscience purged from dead works,—the faith that giveth confidence, with reference to that blood, in approaching unto God, even as unto the holiest, according to Heb. x. 19. 22. *Having—boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, &c.*; and according to Eph. iii. 12. *In whom we have boldness and access with confidence through the faith of him*.

Is Christ represented as *the sure foundation which*, not man, but *God hath laid in Zion*? then *believing on him* is the soul's secure resting on that foundation, and building thereon a good hope, which will not give disappointment or shame to any, not to the chief of sinners. For, 1 Pet. ii. 6. *He* (any sinner; whosoever heareth the gospel) *who believeth on him shall not be ashamed*.

Is Christ set forth as a *Saviour*, and offered as such to perishing sinners? then faith is a *receiving him* (John i. 12.) with an eye to the several offices, by which he executes the

great undertaking of saving sinners: to receive him not only in the character of our great High Priest, to procure for us reconciliation and peace, and all the blessings of grace, but also in the character of the great Teacher and Prophet, submitting our minds absolutely to his light and instruction, with regard to all the truth he reveals; and likewise in the character of Lord and King, subjecting ourselves to his government in the way of cheerful universal obedience, yielding ourselves to be ruled by him, and trusting in his power for all the purposes of our salvation.

Thus, I say, faith in Jesus Christ is, in the acting thereof, somewhat varied according to the various views in which the word of God exhibits him to us. Yet we are not to conceive as if this variation in the acting of faith in Jesus Christ made so many different kinds of faith. For the truth is, that true faith in every soul in which it is, hath in it all that these different forms of it import; and that either implicitly, or more explicitly and sensibly, according as the different Scripture views of Christ do strike the mind, suitably to the different views and feelings of the soul, in which the influence and power of a superior hand is to be acknowledged.

But man is a reasonable being. His trust, and his whole conduct, will be directed naturally according to the light that is in his mind. He cannot found his confidence or hope on any thing, without having in his mind a true perception of it, and a satisfying conviction of its truth and reality. Now the Scripture represents the minds of sinful men as ignorant and blind with regard to the matters of God, the things of Christ and of the Spirit. These things of Christ, and of salvation through him, are not deducible from any principles or notions that are naturally in the minds of men. They are (1 Cor. ii. 9.) such as *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man*. Now, as it was the Spirit of God that discovers these divine counsels of grace in the gospel-revelation, so it appears that the inward instruction and illumination of the mind by the same Spirit is needful, in order to men's knowing effectually these spiritual and gracious truths, according to ver. 12. *We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God*: (see also 2 Cor. iv. 6. It is to be considered, besides, that this method of salvation is not agreeable to the disposition of the natural and carnal heart, (as hath been formerly observed,) which powerfully inclines to seek the

grounds of a man's justification and acceptance in himself, and to trust to a man's own powers and endeavours for sanctification. Hence it is that men are so averse to *submit* themselves unto the righteousness of God, or to despair of their own powers and endeavours, with regard to any thing in the practice of religion. As there is need of a divine illumination of the mind, there is need of a powerful divine influence to renew the heart, and change the disposition of it.

— Until this divine illumination and influence take effect in the mind and heart, the awakened sinner must be in great perplexity, being painfully sensible of the curse of the law for transgression, that excludes all possibility of the sinner's working out a justifying righteousness for himself; and having a deep impression and experience of such dominion of sin, as makes it impossible for him to subdue it, or to sanctify himself in any true degree, or in sincerity, whilst under the law, and in his natural state in the flesh. Under these views and impressions, I say, the condition of a serious awakened sinner will be very doleful. His condition may be fitly represented, in the figurative way, by the case of Hagar the bond-woman, as related, Gen. xxi. 15, 16, 19. When her own provision was spent, she sat desponding and weeping, until God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; which, it seems, was near, when she was most sorrowful and despondent, though she did not perceive it until God opened her eyes.

In this condition the sinner is called to be assiduous and earnest in prayer to God for his mercy, and for his Holy Spirit, to give that illumination and influence that will enable him to live by faith in Jesus Christ, and to attend in the most careful and earnest manner on the preaching of the gospel, by which divine grace works so great effects on the souls of men; thus endeavouring to watch daily at Wisdom's gates, waiting at the posts of her doors.

There is an objection that may be suggested here to this purpose; viz—By what good reason, or to what good purpose, can such sinners be urged and exhorted to do as hath been now said, if the truth of the case is indeed, that a sinner in his natural condition, in the flesh and under the law, cannot do any thing pleasing to God, or acceptable; and that no assurance can be given him of any spiritual mercy or blessing to be certainly connected with the utmost exertion of his natural powers, which in that state he is capable

of, in seeking God and his mercy? Yea, if we will deal reasonably with such sinners, in advising and exhorting them to earnestness in using the means of grace and of salvation, should we not assure them, if they do what they can by their natural powers, that grace will not be wanting, to connect certain spiritual blessings with their earnest endeavours? Are we not well warranted in giving them such assurance, by what our Lord says, Luke xi. 9—13. *Ask, and it shall be given you—For every one that asketh, receiveth, &c.*

Concerning this, I have these several things to suggest.—

1. It does not appear, that the meaning or design is to connect the promise in this text with any thing of duty or means that a sinner is capable of by his natural powers, whilst in an unregenerate state. The foregoing and following parables show the contrary. *Which of you, ver. 5. shall have a friend—and ver. 8. Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend—and ver. 13. If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children.* It appears then, that they are these, who, by their spiritual state, are the friends and children of God, that the Lord means by this declaration and promise to encourage to importunity and perseverance in prayer. It appears by the Scripture, that it is only the prayer of faith that will be acceptable, and will procure blessings: *Ask (in faith), and it shall be given you; and, Every one that (thus) asketh, receiveth.* So Dr W.'s paraphrase of ver. 9, 10. And the faith by which men please God, and by which their prayers become acceptable, cannot proceed from the heart of any sinner without special divine influence. But, however we understand the promise in this place, it must be acknowledged, on all hands, that a command to seek God, and to pray to him, is directed to persons who are in their natural unregenerate state. So also are they commanded to turn to God with their whole heart, to repent, and to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, with the encouraging promise of mercy and acceptance through him. But these commands to repent and believe, with the promises annexed, do not establish a connexion between the promised mercy and any thing that sinful men are capable of doing, by the utmost exertion of their mere natural powers.

2. Though sinners, yet in the flesh, and under the law, can do no work in the manner pleasing to God, or that would entitle such to any spiritual blessings by any divine promise, yet such are capable of conceiving, with deep impression, their extreme wretchedness by sin, and its consequences.

Though their sense of sin and misery does not proceed from the same principles and views as in the children of God, yet they may have a deep sense of their misery by the curse of the law, and the divine judgment, to which, by sin, they have become obnoxious ; and by their inability to make themselves free from the dominion of sin in their nature and heart, to subdue sin and the lusts thereof, or to sanctify their own hearts. They are, even in their yet unregenerate state, capable of such a sense of things in these respects, as will destroy their carnal confidences, and bring them very low in their views respecting their state, despairing of all help from themselves or others,—sensible that there can be no help for them but from divine sovereign grace and mercy alone. Surely it is in this posture, and with this sense of things, that sinners ought to lay themselves before the footstool of divine mercy. If the Lord will show the riches of his mercy, and the abounding of his grace, surely he will be most likely to do it to those by whose views of their own state his grace and mercy will be most exalted and most glorified.

3. It were most unreasonable to say, that sinners, in their natural condition, should not be exhorted to pray, to repent, or believe in Jesus Christ, without assuring them of a certain connexion between their own exertion of their natural powers, and their obtaining saving mercy and blessings. The apostle Peter did not think so, when he said to that vilest of men, (Acts viii. 22.) *Repent, and pray God, if PERHAPS the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.*

4. The command to seek God, and to believe in Jesus Christ—to believe the testimony and record of God concerning him, lays obligation to these duties on every one to whom such command is directed, as it is to every one who hears the gospel. It therefore becomes every such sinner to be very careful that his conscience and heart be duly affected with the authority and encouragement of such command, and with the obligation it lays upon him, so as to exert himself in the duties required, and that with the most earnest endeavour. Will a person under the law, and feeling its force and authority in his conscience, exert himself in other commanded duties, as prayer, alm-deeds, and every good work besides ; and should he not, with a view to the authority of the divine commandment, exert himself in earnest attempts to obey it in such duties as have been now mentioned ; yea, should he not be very much excited thereto, by considering

that it is a matter of very great encouragement to his dark and comfortless soul, that such command hath been directed to him ?

Christ is offered to the sinner—he should attempt to lay hold of him. His hand is withered ; but he should, without hesitation, stretch forth his withered hand at Christ's command, which is a command of grace, and often conveys the strength needful for the obedience required. He should endeavour to apply to his wounded conscience and troubled heart, the blood of sprinkling, by which there is peace. He should, as his need requires, endeavour, on every occasion, to feed his famished soul with the bread of life,—with the flesh and blood of a crucified Saviour, as the gospel represents it before him. Nor should he for this require any other internal call than that of his needy condition. Neither should he require to have his faith warranted, by having the secrets of the divine counsels displayed to him ; nor needs he to entertain notions, not sufficiently warranted in the Scripture, as that Christ gave himself alike a ransom for all and every one of mankind. He hath most sufficient warrant for his faith in Jesus Christ by the full and free offer and call of the gospel, and by God's testimony and command.

The sinner, continuing in this way of serious efforts, hath no cause to despond, being under such a dispensation of grace. Though his natural powers and endeavours come short, it may happen to him as to the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda, (John v.) with respect to an outward bodily case. Still sensible of his ill condition, he continued to make earnest efforts. But being quite impotent, his natural powers and his endeavours came short. When he had, however, cause to despair of any good coming in that way, divine mercy interposed seasonably, and the Saviour cured him with a word of power. Such an issue the sinner may look for, in continuing the serious use of means and suitable endeavours.

What gives effectual relief to the heavy laden soul of a sinner is, when, by the direction of divine sovereign grace, the word of the grace of God doth seasonably impress the mind with special light and power, so as to realize to it the unseen things of Christ, and of his gospel, with full and satisfying conviction of the truth thereof, and of the report of the gospel concerning the abounding grace of God, the sufficiency and efficacy of the blood of the cross, and the sufficiency of Christ as a Saviour, mighty to save ; as well as

of the free offer and call of the gospel, as warranting him in particular to receive Christ, to apply the blood of sprinkling to his conscience, and to have peace thereby. By this light, and by the satisfying views of the love of God, as manifested in Jesus Christ, the heart is gained to God: and if a sense of guiltiness and condemnation in the conscience, and if the terrors of the law affecting it, do tend to put the soul to a distance, with alienation of heart from God; yet by the comfortable light which the word and Spirit of God have diffused into the mind, it conceives such satisfying views of Christ and his redemption, as disposes and enables the sinner to have that faith in his blood by which he is justified, and comes under grace; even unto that happy state, in which he hath the advantages with respect to communion and intercourse with God, and walking with him in newness of life, that hath been formerly explained. Nor is there, with respect to the particular things I have hinted, in the conversion of a sinner, occasion to think of priority or posteriority of time, or of a progressive work or exercise; all is instantaneous in the soul, and in the exercise of its faculties, with regard to these blessed objects, from which, by a divine illumination, it receives peace, life, and comfort.

There are, however, some things respecting the subject, of which it may be fit to give some further explication. We learn from John i. 12, 13. that they who truly and sincerely believe in Jesus Christ, are born of God, and their faith is a consequence and evidence of their being so. Now, this new birth is sometimes ascribed to the Holy Spirit, as John iii. 5. *Born of water, and of the Spirit.* Sometimes it is ascribed to the word of God, as 1 Pet. i. 23. *Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God.* So James i. 18. *Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth.* How is it to be understood, that this new birth is ascribed to these different causes?

But there is no difficulty in the matter. These are not opposite or inconsistent causes; but causes co-operating, the one in subordination to the other. For, on the one hand, according to Gal. iii. 14. *we receive the promise of the Spirit through faith*; that is, the doctrine or word of faith, the gospel: and (as 2 Cor. iii. 8.) the gospel is *the ministration of the Spirit.* So by the gospel the Spirit is conveyed into the heart. On the other hand, the Spirit gives efficacy to the gospel in the minds and hearts of men. He doth by a pleasant exertion of mighty power change the disposition of the

heart, forming it for God, and putting a new spiritual life and strength into it; while, at the same time, by the word of the promise, or of the gospel, (the blessed means by which he worketh,) he conveys that comfortable light, and satisfying conviction into the mind, that hath the happy effects before mentioned, of turning the heart to God, with faith in the Lord Jesus Christ: thus working on the souls of men in a manner suitable to their faculties and rational nature.

On this occasion some may readily suggest what they consider as a considerable difficulty, thus: In that regeneration by which men are begotten, or born of God, the principles of holiness are infused into the soul. If then this being born of God, is previous, in order of nature, to the faith by which the sinner is justified, it follows that the sinner's sanctification is previous to his justification, by which he comes under grace; which they may readily consider as a notion of hurtful tendency, and contrary to the statements concerning sanctification we have given.

It will tend to elucidate this matter, that we distinguish between the habit, or physical principle of sanctification, and the practice of holiness. As to the first of these, it is plain from the texts formerly cited, (John i. 12, 13. and 1 John v. 1.) that being born of God, is previous to a man's truly believing in Jesus Christ. Yea, we may be satisfied about it, by considering the nature of things. If faith is not properly or merely an act of the Holy Spirit, but an act of the human soul, it cannot be produced without a principle in the soul that shall be an adequate cause of such an act. A gracious act, as faith is, cannot be without a gracious principle producing it.

It is, at the same time, to be observed, that when, for the relief of a burdened and distressed soul, the word of faith enters into the mind, with the influence of the Spirit of faith, whose power renews the heart, the first thing that must follow in such a soul, by means of the light which the Holy Spirit introduces into it by the word of God, is that faith in Jesus Christ, and in his blood, by which the sinner is justified, and so comes under grace.

From this it follows, that the practice of holiness and good works cannot intervene between a man's being born of God, and his coming under grace by his justification. It appears also, that asserting a man's being born of God to be previous to justifying faith, is very consistent with what hath been said in the explanations formerly given, viz. that a man can-

not have all that is essentially requisite to the true and acceptable practice of holiness, until, being justified by faith, he comes under grace.

As it appears by the texts formerly cited, that being born of God is previous to one's exercising faith in Jesus Christ, the same thing appears further from the language used in these texts which mention the sanctification of the Spirit previously to believing. So (2 Thess. ii. 13.) *God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.* So also (1 Pet. i. 2.) *Elect—through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, (that is, obedience to the gospel by that faith in Jesus Christ which it especially requires) and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.* It is still to be remembered, that this sanctification of the Spirit is the consequence and fruit of Christ's having died—having risen again—having ascended to the right hand of God—and his having (John xvii. 2.) received power over all flesh, that he might give eternal life to as many as the Father hath given him.

As the Scripture evidence respecting this point is clear, I think none need to apprehend any ill consequence from asserting, that the sanctification of the Spirit, which is the same in the stricter sense as being born of God, is, in the nature of things, previous to the faith by which the sinner is justified.

But with respect to holy practice—as it is a rational practice, proceeding from a right and sincere disposition of the heart, influenced by right views, to a right end, the truth stands that hath been here asserted, that none is capable of such a practice and course but one who is justified and under grace; and that such practice of holiness and good works cannot intervene betwixt the sanctification of the Spirit and the sinner's being, through faith, justified, and brought under grace, as hath been said before.

What hath been now observed, may serve to answer a question which has been thought to have some difficulty; viz. How can it be accounted for, that in the chain of grace represented Rom. viii. 30. a matter so important as sanctification is not mentioned? It has been endeavoured to solve this difficulty in various ways. But as the *calling* is by the sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, I see no good reason why sanctification may not be understood to be included in the *calling* there mentioned, which is a *holy call-*

ing, 2 Tim. i. 9. ; and Christians are said to be *called saints*, Rom. i. 7. ; 1 Cor. i. 2. that is, saints by their calling.

It will not be amiss, in this place, I think, to consider another question respecting the conversion of a sinner, viz. Which takes place first in such souls, repentance, or faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? I expect it will appear, by a due consideration of this point, that it is not of such importance as some have thought. But to proceed distinctly—

Sometimes repentance is mentioned in Scripture in a more large and comprehensive meaning. So Luke xxiv. 47. *That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name.* Acts iii. 19. *Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.* And Acts v. 21. *Him hath God exalted—to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins.* Now, as justification and remission of sins are by faith in Jesus Christ, which is not mentioned in these texts, it is plain, that repentance, which alone is mentioned in them, as required in order to remission of sins, includes that faith in Jesus Christ, with which justification and remission of sins is connected. We are therefore by *repentance*, in such texts, to understand all that is comprehended in the conversion of a sinner ; and so it seems to be for explication of repentance, according to this larger meaning, that, being converted, is added, Acts iii. 19. *Repent—and be converted.*

At other times, repentance, and faith in Jesus Christ, are distinguished, and distinctly expressed ; as Acts xx. 21. *Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.*

1. *Repentance towards God.* The sinner hath strayed from God. He set up his own will, his lust, and the desire of self-gratification, in opposition to God. He withdrew himself from his authority and rule, and sought his happiness in the creature, and not in the Creator, who is blessed for ever. The heart, under the influence of carnal lusts, wanders in pursuit of good and happiness in the enjoyment of the creatures ; and being insatiable by any thing found in them, says, (so do the *many*, Psal. iv. 6.) *Who will show us any good?* But the soul of the sinner, deeply convinced of sin, and its fearful consequences, by the law, distressed with its terrors, persuaded of the vanity of its former pursuits after imaginary happiness ; being now renewed by the sanctification of the Spirit before mentioned ; and viewing God in the encouraging and amiable light, in which the gospel

represents him, doth, with shame and sorrow for his past conduct and straying from God, return to him, to seek his happiness in him, in his favour and enjoyment, as Psal iv. 6. *Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us ; yields himself to his government and rule, with sincere purpose of dutiful obedience.* Thus we see repentance explained by turning to God, Acts xxvi. 20.—*That they should repent, and turn to God.* See also 1 Thess. i. 9.

2. *Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.* The faith here mentioned, is not the faith of God's being and perfections ; nor the faith of the word of God, as it marks out to us the way in which we ought to walk ; nor the faith of a future life and happiness. All these are indeed comprehended in faith, in the large sense of it. But the faith here mentioned, with respect to the conversion of a sinner, is *faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ.* God hath in himself infinite glory, excellency, and amiableness ; but it is the glory of God that shineth in the face of Jesus Christ, (2 Cor. iv. 6.) that makes him especially amiable in the eye of the sinner, and that doth effectually attract his heart toward God. It is Christ, and him crucified, that the sinner needs to be told of, to encourage his conversion and approach to God. It is the blood of sprinkling that alone gives confidence to the guilty soul in returning and approaching to God. By his mediation, Christ is the way, John xiv. 6. and no man cometh unto the Father but by him. In the conversion of the sinner, God is the end, and Christ is the way to that end ; and thus it is that the conversion of the sinner imports *repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Now, as to the question concerning the priority of repentance or faith, the one to the other, it is right to understand and hold, that the light which entereth into the mind by the illumination of the Holy Spirit, and by the word and doctrine of the gospel, showing, in the most satisfying manner, the truth, reality, and excellency of the things of God, of Christ, and of things unseen, must be prior in the soul to any particular acting of grace, which is necessarily directed and influenced by this light, which is the light of faith, as it is the evidence of things not seen.

But if we consider the question as respecting the activity of the soul in conversion, then, as I have said, that in conversion God is as the end in which it terminates, and Christ the way to that end, through faith in him ; the only way in which the sinner can come to God acceptably, and with any

well founded confidence: then the question concerning the priority of repentance or faith is such as this other question: Which is first, in order of time, or of nature, my setting out for Edinburgh, or my taking the way to it? which were an useless question.

It has been right and useful to consider faith in Jesus Christ, and repentance, separately, and to give different definitions of them. Yet as they are acted in the soul, they are involved the one in the other; and as they are acted inwardly, both might well be comprehended in the following definition—‘Repentance unto life, or the conversion of the sinner, is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, from a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, turns from sin unto God, founding his confidence, and resting on Jesus Christ for pardon and acceptance with God through his mediation, and for complete salvation.’

I know that some will not bear to hear that repentance is previous to justification, but will have it to be wholly the consequence and effect of a sinner’s being justified, and coming under grace, and that repentance is, from thenceforth, the continued exercise and practice of the Christian to the end of his course. I doubt not but many such do mean what is right in the main, though their way of conceiving things hath this evident inconvenience, that it would direct them to express themselves in a way contrary to the language of Scripture, which calls on sinners to repent, in order to (and so previously to) the remission of sins.

It may tend to give some further light concerning this point, that we consider how, and in what cases, the true believer is required in Scripture to repent, or is said to repent.

1. I observe, that when such have considerably declined with respect to their love, fruitfulness, or integrity, they are called on to repent. Thus, Rev. ii. after giving commendation to the angel of the church of Ephesus, the Lord says, ver. 4, 5. *I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works.* Thus also in that same chapter, the angel of the church of Pergamos having much offended the Lord, by suffering those who held the doctrine of Balaam, and those who held the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, the Lord says to him, ver. 16. *Repent.* So likewise the angel of the church of Laodicea having fallen

into a fearful condition of lukewarmness, the Lord says to him, chap. iii. 19. *Be zealous, therefore, and repent.*

2. When a Christian hath come under the predominance of any particular lust, he is called to repent and forsake it, and the practice that hath been the consequence thereof. Thus the apostles having, Matth. xviii. 1. shown pride and ambition to be very predominant in them, the Lord said to them, ver. 3. *Except ye be converted, (the same in meaning as, Except ye repent,) and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.* Job was happy as to his state and general character, and gave a very exemplary proof of patience; yet in one thing he was dangerously wrong, because (chap. xxxii. 2.) *he justified himself rather than God*; so far even as to insinuate what was reproachful to God with regard to his dealing with him; saying, (as Elihu represents, chap. xxxiii. 9, 10.) *I am clean, without transgression—Behold, he findeth occasions against me.*—This in Job's views and disposition might continue to be matter of controversy between God and him. But by Elihu's pleading with him, and more especially by the Lord's own appearance and pleading, he was at length brought down from his height; and after so confident pleading his own righteousness, and impeaching divine providence, he comes to this, chap. xlii. 6. *I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.* It was then, and not till then, that the Lord gave forth judgment for him against his friends, and turned the captivity of Job. It is only in such special cases as these, that I observe sincere believers, or true Christians, called on to repent, or the word *repent* used with respect to their disposition and course.

According to our conception, we may, perhaps, say, that the whole life, exercise, and practice of a true Christian is no other than repentance continued and extended to the end of his course; nor can I think that way of conceiving things is to be found fault with. But we are inquiring here concerning the Scripture meaning of the word, and as to that, I have not observed any where in Scripture, that the ordinary exercise and practice of the Christian is set forth under the name of *repentance*. These things, which some do conceive as a continuation of repentance, should, according to Scripture style, be accounted *fruits, or works meet for repentance*, Matt. iii. 8. Acts xxvi. 20. rather than be called any of them, or the whole together, by the name of *repentance*.

Let me observe, by the way, this affords what may satisfy us about the meaning of our Lord's expression, Luke xv. 7.

where he explains his parable of the hundred sheep, whereof one was lost, and recovered, to the great joy of the owner ; *I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.* It seems reasonable to think, that the ninety and nine sheep are creatures of the same species with the sheep that went astray ; that is, not angels, but men. Who then are the ninety-nine just persons among men, who need not repentance ? What hath been just now observed helps us to answer—They are those sincere Christians, who walk uniformly in a pure and upright course, free of any remarkable sins, or predominant lust, labouring earnestly to perfect holiness in the fear of God. These, according to the Scripture style and use of the word, need not repentance.

Some earnestly maintain, that repentance is not previous to, but is a consequence of justification, in order to secure against the legal disposition, which men are so naturally prone to, or rather, that is so deeply rivetted in men's hearts naturally, and which is indeed of the worst tendency and consequence to the souls of men. Upon the same view, some have denied regeneration, or the sanctification of the Spirit, to be previous to faith or justification. It is certain, however, where true regeneration is, and the sincerity of repentance, that there is a disposition of heart the most remote from legal. At any rate, when men would provide an antidote against error upon one hand, they should be very careful that they strike not against the truth, on the other hand, or give advantage to the adversaries of the truth. To me it appears to be the truth clearly set forth in the word of God, that no sinner is justified but the penitent sinner ; and that the penitent, or repenting sinner, is justified by faith alone, by faith in Jesus Christ, and in his blood ; from which blessed object faith derives its virtue to justify the sinner, and not from any thing in a man, previous, concomitant, or subsequent to his faith, however certainly connected true unfeigned faith is with good dispositions and good works. To represent repentance distinguished from faith, as in a class of co-ordinate conditionality with faith in the matter of justification, or attaining an interest in the covenant of grace and blessings thereof ; I cannot consider otherwise than as a notion ill founded, and of hurtful tendency.

Thus we take considerable time, and use many words, in explaining what happens instantaneously in the human soul,

so as not to be measured by time. A ray of divine light, by one declaration or promise of God's word, entering the mind and heart, with an effectual touch of divine power, may effect, in an instant, in the soul of a serious and humbled sinner, all that hath been here said concerning the sanctification of the Spirit, repentance towards God, and that faith in Jesus Christ, and in his blood, with which the justification of the sinner is immediately connected, and that hath for its certain consequence, freedom from the dominion of sin, and holy practice.

One or two things remain, however, which it is fit to add in this place. Though as to the great substance of it, the conversion of the sinner is effected as hath been represented, yet there may be a considerable variety as to manner and circumstances. The spiritual state of all men by nature is the same, yet there may be a great difference as to circumstances. Some are in great ignorance; their course hath been in remarkable opposition to purity, and they have perhaps fallen into ways of gross wickedness, highly dishonourable and provoking to God. In such, the law giving the knowledge of sin, and working wrath, often strikes the conscience with greater force and terror, and alarms the whole soul to a high degree; so that, if divine goodness and care did not secretly work to prevent it, the consequence might be fearful. In such, when divine grace directs these convictions to a happy issue, their conversion and relief by faith may be more evident and observable, and sensibly comfortable in a higher degree. The Lord may likewise design to prepare some for more special usefulness, or for more special trials, by greater experience of the terrors of the law, and of the consolations of grace. Yea, some have greater softness, vivacity, and sensibility in their natural spirit and temper; and thereby more sensible terrors and consolations than others who have perhaps the reality of this work in greater degree, and with greater effect in all holiness and good fruits.

Upon the other hand, some have been brought up under the purity of the gospel, and with a greater degree of light and knowledge, perhaps under the best examples, which have not altogether been without effect, being preserved from the more gross ways of the world; and possessing, perhaps, greater natural vigour of spirit, with greater equality and sedateness of natural temper. Though such have experienced most serious conviction, and deep impressions of their sinfulness, and their wretchedness by sin, yet, per-

haps, the law of God doth not strike them with such sensible force, or alarm them so very much by its terrors. The law may impress them more gradually, and may (if I may with propriety use the expression) soak by degrees into their minds and consciences. In such, their relief, peace, and comfort, through faith, may at first be less sensible and observable; but the word of the grace of the gospel entering into their minds and hearts by slower degrees, their faith grows up to greater strength, and with its proper effect in holiness and fruitfulness in every good work.

At any rate, as to vital principles, whatever difference may be as to manner and circumstances, yet matters will be with every soul truly converted to God, according to the general views given by the Scripture, which acquaints us, that they are (Matt. ix. 12.) the sick who need the physician; that (1 Pet. ii. 7.) to them who believe, Christ is precious; that true faith will not allow the Christian to be habitually (2 Pet. i. 8.) idle and unfruitful in the knowledge of Christ. It will be an active working principle, a faith that worketh by love.

Another thing fit to be added here is this: However needful the ministry and discipline of the law in the conscience and heart of a sinner, giving the knowledge of sin and of wrath, is to determine him to flee for refuge, yet he is not to consider the views and impressions that come in this way, as qualifications that entitle him to the comforts of the gospel, or to think, as if without these in a certain measure and degree, it were unwarrantable and unfit for him to lay hold of Christ, or of any comforts of grace. If he is truly and seriously convinced of his need of a Saviour, it were well for him even immediately to betake himself to him, believing in him. If they are the sick that need the Physician, it were vain and highly imprudent to stand off till they were more sick. Many a life has been lost in that way. Whatever the disorder, whatever the pain, as to the degree of it, it were good for a man to betake himself soon and seasonably to the Physician. Delay in such cases is often hurtful, and extremely dangerous. It were good for a man to be often thinking seriously concerning his spiritual condition, which is his most important interest. When he is so, and obtains increased views and impressions of sin and wrath, it were good for him, having Christ and his grace set before him, and freely offered, to endeavour, having an eye upward for divine influence, to lay hold of Christ by faith, to apply the blood of sprinkling to himself, for giving him peace; and to

apply the comforts of free and rich grace, and of the promise, suitable to his condition ; yet this still so as that the conscience and heart shall be kept open to further views and convictions of sin, and of judgment for it, from the law ; in order to cause a man take the more fast hold of the hope set before him, (which is *the hope of righteousness through faith*, Gal. v. 5.) to hold Christ the more precious, to have the greater relish of the consolations of grace, and of the promise, and to have ever the greater fear of sin, as of the greatest of all evils.

The special design of this section was, to point out what direction the Scripture, particularly the context we have been considering, gives to sinners yet in their natural, unconverted state, with respect to their most important interest, especially with regard to their justification and sanctification. When the sinner, who hath been at ease in his sins, is first awakened to seriousness, what especially affects his mind and conscience is, the law as it worketh wrath ; and the great concern is, to be freed from condemnation and judgment. Some, when they have got some kind of peace and settlement of mind with regard to this matter, take their ease, and have no further concern. They rest in a form of religion with no real holiness, or fruitfulness.

But they, in whom this work comes to a better issue, through the mercy of God, are led farther into themselves, to perceive the alarming dominion which sin hath in them, and their inability to sanctify themselves. This becomes matter of weighty concern with them.

The remedy with respect both to the sinner's guilt and his depravity, is, to be made free from the law and its curse. Whilst he is in this condition, as he is under wrath, so sin hath dominion in him. He is at once delivered from the divine wrath, from the dominion of sin in his heart and nature, and made capable of holy practice, by being justified through faith, and brought under grace, Rom. v. 1, 2. with chap. vi. 14. Sinners coming into union with Jesus Christ by faith, they (Rom. vii. 4.) *become dead to the law* (free from its curse and bondage) *by the body of Christ, that they should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that they should bring forth fruit unto God.* This is the doctrine of the Scripture, and the way which it marks out to sinful men, in which alone they can come to a capacity of bringing forth fruit in a practice truly holy and acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

We should now show what direction our context affords, as to comfort, and holy practice, to persons now truly in a state of grace. But as this will, in some form, come in our way hereafter, I shall not lengthen this section, by saying any thing particular concerning it in this place.

SECT. IV.—*Concerning True Evangelical Preaching.*

WE proceed now to point out some directions that our context, and the apostle's doctrine in it, afford to the preachers of the gospel. As there are commonly persons differing as to their spiritual condition and state in every public audience, the discourses should exhibit things suited to such various conditions of men. There may be such difference in the case, even of persons in the same unconverted state, that may require their being addressed and treated in a different manner. Some such are quite secure and thoughtless about their condition, whilst others of them are serious, and under the sharp discipline of the law in their conscience. There may also be considerable difference in the particular condition and circumstances of persons in a state of grace; some such are weak, others are strong. A distinction that includes all the members of the church is, That some are, in their natural condition, under the law and its curse, and under the dominion of sin; and that others are in a state of grace. As the apostle says of the ancient Israel, Rom. ii. 28. *He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh;* and chap. ix. 6. *They are not all Israel which are of Israel;* so may be said of the New Testament Israel, the gospel-church, all members of the church externally are not the true circumcision described, Phil. iii. 3.

It is, however, the way of some preachers to consider all their audience under the general character of believers and Christians, (as they are by profession and outward privilege,) and to exhort them indiscriminately, without any hint of the difference that may be, as to their real spiritual state, to the practice of holiness; explaining it and each particular virtue, and enforcing these with such motives as the nature of the subject affords; pressing them to labour earnestly to overcome their evil habits, and withdraw themselves from under the power of them, and by careful attention to their heart and practice, to acquire new habits of holiness and virtue; encouraging sometimes their sincere endeavours in this way, with the prospect of the aids and assistances of the Holy

Spirit. As to these, the children of God do indeed need them, with regard to all their course, work, and exercise ; but persons in their natural state need much more than particular aids and assistances.

This way of preaching tends to keep persons in ignorance of their natural condition, and of the sad disadvantage which they therein labour under with respect to true holiness ; or to cause them overlook it, and to imagine their powers amount to more than they do. It is certain there can be no true holiness, no sincere serving of God, until a person is made free from sin—from its dominion. It is in that order that the apostle conceives and represents things, chap. vi. 22. *Being made FREE FROM SIN, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness.* It is right that a man should strive against ill habits ; but there is a great deal more in the dominion and slavery of sin than acquired evil habits. The dominion of sin is too strong for any human power or endeavour. The apostle says, chap. viii. 3. that the law could not make a man free from the law of sin and death. Why ? the law doth not encourage reformation (so some explain) by any promise of pardon. True ; but this is not all ; nor is it to this that the apostle ascribes the disability of the law ; but he says, the law could not make a man free, in that it was weak through the flesh, the corruption of our nature, that evil principle in men, whose tendency and influence is ever in opposition to the direction and demand of the holy law.

The case hath required a great deal more than were requisite for curing and reforming any mere ill habits. It required, as we have seen, that Christ should become a sacrifice for sin ; as to procure pardon, and to bring sinners under grace, so to procure that sin should be condemned to be ejected from its throne and dominion. It becomes sinful men to labour in every way of duty and means against sin. But the condemning sentence against sin must be first truly executed by a superior hand, before a man can do any thing sincerely and successfully in the matter. So the apostle says, chap. viii. 2. *The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.*

The first main intention, therefore, of the preacher with respect to such sinners, should be, to bring them truly to Christ, by the faith that would truly unite them to him, and derive from him peace and comfort, sanctifying influence and strength, that so, being married to him, they might bring forth fruit unto God.

Subservient to this main intention is this other ; viz. to acquaint such sinners with the wretchedness of their condition, by the light of the law ; to show them the evil of sin in itself, and the fearful judgment, curse, and wrath, which by the law is due to it ; to explain to them the holiness which the holy and spiritual law requires ; and besides their actual sins, to mark out to them the contrariety to this holiness, which they may observe in their own nature and heart, by comparing these with the perfect rule, and the light of the word of God ; and to convince them by the word of God, and what they may find in their own experience, how impossible it is for them, (being slaves of sin, and it having invested all their faculties and powers,) to reform or sanctify their own hearts, or to practise holiness in a manner truly sincere and acceptable to God.

At the same time, with a view to sinners becoming serious and earnest in the matter of salvation, it is fit that the preacher lay fully before them the abounding and exceeding riches of divine grace ; the sufficiency of the Saviour ; his love to sinners ; the complacency he hath in their betaking themselves to him ; and the absolute freeness (without money and without price) with which Christ, and all grace, is offered in the gospel, even to the chief of sinners. This should be done in such a manner as to obviate the temptations of various sorts, which arise from their own ignorance and mistake, or from the device of the enemy ; which, by reason of the darkness and weakness of their minds, they are commonly too ready to entertain to their great hurt. It was appointed anciently, that the highways to the city of refuge should be open and clear, that nothing might impede the course of a man thither, when he was fleeing from the avenger : So should the preacher labour, by the direction of the word of God, to obviate and remove every thing that might discourage or hinder the motion of a serious and humbled sinner towards Christ by faith, for refuge and salvation.

I have noticed the directions which our context affords to sinners themselves, with regard to their wretched natural state. As these may serve likewise for the use of the preacher in dealing with such, I shall insist no longer on this part of the subject.

The other class, of whom the preacher ought to have much consideration, are sincere believers, who are truly in a state of grace. The important intention with regard to them is, the building them up in holiness and comfort ;—in comfort,

particularly in what concerns their sanctification ; as indeed their feelings and experience do often occasion more sorrow and discouragement with regard to this subject than with regard to any other. Yet it is of great importance that their comfort and joy should be maintained, as the joy of the Lord is their strength.

We see the apostle in our context acting on this view very remarkably. His special purpose is to exhort to the practice of holiness, to the avoiding and resisting of sin. But he brings forth every argument, clothed, as it were, with consolation, respecting the subject (concerning which Christians do commonly find such cause of discouragement) and respecting the happy and certain issue. To be *dead to sin*, (chap. vi. 2.) affords a strong argument why Christians should not live in sin. But how great the comfort, to be made free from its dominion, as that expression imports? Christians are obliged to be in practice conformed to Christ's death, and to the design of it. But how great the comfort, that they have fellowship with him in his crucifixion and death, so that though sin remain in them, and gives them much molestation, yet the old man is crucified by virtue of the cross of Christ, and so being enervated and weakened, they may take courage to decline its service ! If Christians have fellowship with Christ in his death, whereby they are made free from the dominion of sin, how unspeakably great the consolation, that they shall be planted together in the likeness of his resurrection, and, having died with him, that they shall live with him in newness of life here, and in eternal life hereafter ; and may reckon themselves to be dead indeed unto sin, (made free from its reign and dominion) and alive unto God through Jesus Christ ! Such consolations tend greatly to sweeten and recommend to the heart the arguments enforcing holiness and holy practice.

This particularly hath that tendency, chap. vi. 14. *Sin SHALL NOT have dominion over you ; for ye are not under the law, but under grace.* As if he had said, The law would have left you wholly to your own free will, to stand or fall according to its direction and determination. If a sinner were delivered from the law, and that miserable condition into which his sin had brought him, and put anew under the law, he could have no security for preserving himself from coming anew and quickly under the dominion of sin. But the Christian being under grace, the object of special divine favour, yea, a child of God, divine grace will take

care that he fall not under that thralldom again, according to the declaration of the last mentioned text, and according to the promise of God's covenant of grace, Jer. xxxii. 40. And though the means needful to be used, by way of chastisement, may be so bitter and painful as may make sin ever fearful to him, yet he will be recovered from his straying, and from his disordered frame; his faith shall not fail, or be quite eradicated, but his seed shall, by Divine influence and care, abide in him. Thus the apostle goes on, comforting and exhorting at once, by the most encouraging considerations, and the most cogent arguments, to ver. 22. *But now, being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life;* in which words he gives a summary of what he had said more largely in the whole chapter.

Let us go a little farther in observing how the apostle manages this subject. As the condition of sinners under the law is so extremely miserable, the apostle sets out on that subject, chap. vii. 4. with stating this very comfortable sentiment to Christians; viz. that they were dead to the law, and entered into marriage with a better husband, by whom they would become fruitful in holiness. It is not until after this, that he shows from his own experience, when under the law, how great the power of sin, in opposition to holiness, is, in the case of those who are under the law. But as sincere Christians, acquainted with the spirituality of the law, and with their own hearts, might find still with themselves what was very opposite to the holiness of the law, there was great need of providing comfort against this. He doth so by representing his own case and experience in his state of grace, in order (as Augustine said judiciously) that a sincere soul might not conceive excessive dread or discouragement from what the apostle found in his own case; and in the end he leads the true Christian, ver. 25. to a joyful thanksgiving to God for what he had attained, and for his happy prospect.

Thus the apostle's arguments against sin, and for enforcing the practice of holiness, are all along dipped in consolation, and this way ought the preacher of the gospel to follow in exhorting Christians to holiness.

Yet often it is needful in dealing with Christians, to administer something else than mere consolation. The case even of true Christians is commonly various. If some espe-

cially need comfort, others need something else in the mean time.

For this we may observe the apostle's distinction and advice, 1 Thess. v. 14. *Warn them that are unruly, or disorderly.* If a Christian doth in his practice, perhaps in a remarkable degree, leave the rule of holiness, and act contrary thereto, it is needful, for recovering him, to warn him with proper authority, and sharpness of rebuke, acquainting him with the danger of his present course: it is not comfort that is then most needful or fit. *Comfort the feeble-minded.*—Some Christians, through the weakness of their spirit, do not retain their comfort; but it is easily shaken or overturned; especially when there is the pressure of heavy affliction and tribulation, with various temptations. Their case needs to be carefully attended to, and all proper means used to revive and strengthen them, and to establish them in comfort and hope through faith. *Support the weak.*—Some labour under too great degree of ignorance, (as, for instance, of the Christian Gentiles, their full liberty from all the Mosaic yoke, which was the weakness of some heretofore, Rom. xiv.) and with unsteadiness of temper otherwise; their ignorance makes them easily stumble, or puts them in danger of going out of the right way. Such need to be supported by those who are strong, particularly by their teachers, with proper instruction, increase of light, and with charitable condescension to their weakness, so as not to give them needless offence. Though, as to matters of necessary and strict duty, other Christians or ministers are not to be brought into bondage to their weakness, by virtue of any claim they can found on considerations of offence.

Thus true Christians should, according to their different cases, be somewhat differently treated. But it is still true in general, that Christians, from their inward and outward condition in this evil world, do need that care should be taken by preachers and others, to labour in advancing and establishing their comfort, in the proper, seasonable, judicious, and well warranted manner.—I should now proceed to the other special purpose which a preacher of the gospel should have in view, with respect to true Christians, and that is, the advancing them in holiness. But I choose a following place for that subject.

Before we go farther, we have full occasion to observe, of how great importance it is, to preach the special doctrine of the gospel, the doctrine of faith; and that, not only in

order to give sinners encouragement respecting free justification, but also with regard to sanctification. The gospel, the doctrine of faith, is the special truth of God, and of divine revelation ; this is the great means of sanctification, according to that declaration and petition of our blessed Saviour to his Father, John xvii. 17. *Sanctify them through thy truth ; thy word is truth.*

It is not always the gospel that is delivered from the pulpit. A man may preach very sensibly concerning the divine perfections, and the authority of God's government and laws. He may set forth the general obligations to duty and obedience. He may inculcate the amiableness of virtue in general, or of particular virtues ; and may represent many worthy examples, for men's encouragement and excitement. He may earnestly call on men to repent of their sins, and to reform the disposition of their hearts, and their course of life. He may inculcate this with all the advantage of elocution, earnestness, and action, that would entitle him to the character of the complete orator. The composition may be very skilful, the language elegant and pathetic, and the preacher may be so greatly applauded, that it may sometimes be said, *He hath his reward.* Not only may the ears of the hearers be tickled, but their minds may be very agreeably entertained with sentiments that are in themselves just, and with many a good thought. Yet in all this there may be nothing by which a soul may be relieved and refreshed, that labours and is heavy laden ; nothing by which a serious soul may be directed to the proper sources of sanctification. A discourse may have in it much truth that is consistent with the gospel, and presupposed by it, and yet have nothing in it of the gospel, properly so called. Of such a discourse, with all its advantage of sentiment and expression, it may be said, as the apostle says of the law, that it is *weak through the flesh.* The corruption of nature, in which sin hath dominion, is too strong for philosophy, logic, and rhetoric—too strong for refined speculation, strong argument, and the greatest oratory.

It is only the law of the Spirit of life that can make men free from that unhappy law of sin and death, that prevails naturally in the hearts of men ; and what arguments or exhortations will prevail with the hearts of men to be truly holy and virtuous, whilst they are under the miserable law and dominion of sin ? It is the gospel that is *the ministration of the Spirit.* Men receive the Spirit *through faith,*

Gal. iii. 14. *by the hearing of faith*, Gal. iii. 2. It is the gospel that exhibits God's highest glory, which he chiefly designs to display before sinful men, even that glory of God that shineth in the face of Christ. It is the gospel that sets forth the glory of Christ, and by which the Holy Spirit himself is glorified; and it is it that will be honoured with the concomitant influence of the Holy Spirit. It is true, after all, that whilst the faithful preacher may be *to God* (2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.) *a sweet savour of Christ*, he may be *to them who perish the savour of death*, through their own fault; yet the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit is not likely to attend any other means, even any other truth, than the truth and doctrine of faith, the gospel, which will be *the savour of life unto life* to some. But, however it may happen to hearers, or however the blessings of grace may be dispensed, it is happy for the preacher that himself should be *to God a sweet savour of Christ*.

If it should now be asked, what is that special doctrine of the gospel, and, strictly speaking, the doctrine of faith? I shall answer briefly—

All revealed truth ought to be greatly valued, and received by faith; and, if properly used, may be subservient to the main subject and design of the gospel. But the special subject of the gospel is Christ; and preaching Christ, according to the light and direction of the word of God, is preaching the gospel. The angel preached it to the shepherds, Luke ii. 10, 11. saying, *Fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.* To preach Christ the SAVIOUR and the LORD, is the sum of gospel-preaching. To exhibit him as a powerful Saviour, not merely to save us from our ignorance or our errors, as a Prophet and Teacher sent from God, or merely as a powerful Lord to protect us during our course of obedience to him in our way through this world, and at last to raise us up by his power to eternal bliss; but in the most comprehensive sense, to save us from our sins. Under this character was he introduced into the world, Matth. i. 21. *Thou shalt call his name JESUS; for he shall save his people from their sins.* The whole extent of this salvation is comprised in these few words, 1 Cor. i. 30. *He is of God made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.* Besides that illumination of our minds, and instruction by his word, that

is contained in the sense of his being made unto us *wisdom*, the two great parts of our salvation that are to be carried on and effected in this life, are his being made unto us *righteousness and sanctification*: and how he is the Saviour to us with respect to both these, is what the blessed apostle explains and asserts in the context I have been explaining, and in the preceding part of the epistle.

With regard to the first of these, as he had proved, chap. iii. 19. that all the world is guilty before God; so he had shown how Christ is made unto us righteousness, and how sinners are justified, ver. 24, 25. formerly cited; to which is to be added, Eph. i. 7. And as to the other part, our sanctification,—as by his being a sacrifice for sin, he hath procured the condemning of sin in the flesh, so he doth make sinners free from its thralldom by his Spirit, and carries on their sanctification by his Spirit, by his word, and by his providence, until at length he shall present his church a glorious church without spot. Thus is Christ a Saviour, saving us from our sins. When we were under the guilt and dominion of sin, thus hath he saved us by him, Tit. iii. 5, 6, 7. ‘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.’

We may observe how exceedingly careful the apostle was, in preaching, to make Christ and his cross his chief subject. To the Corinthians, those Greeks who were as much taken up about wisdom of sentiment, refined speculation, and elegance of language, as the men of most politeness and fine taste in our times, he says, 1 Epist. i. 17. *Christ sent me—to preach the gospel; not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.* When men labour greatly about artful composition, refined philosophical sentiment, and well turned expression, it were well that this saying of the apostle should occur to their minds; and that they would beware lest the tendency of their labour should be to make the cross of Christ of none effect. It appears the blessed apostle wished not that the brightness of the preacher, or his performance, should obscure the glories of the cross, or should obstruct its virtue and effect in the consciences and hearts of men. *We preach*

not, saith he, 2 Cor. iv. 5. *ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord.*

Although the preaching of Christ crucified was to the *Greeks foolishness*, yet he asserts, that *Christ crucified* is (ver. 24.) *to them who are called, the power of God, and the wisdom of God.* So, to these same polite, speculative, wise, and elegant Greeks, he says again, chap. ii. 1, 2. ‘And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.’ We have reason to think the apostle had very extensive knowledge; but from whatever part in the circle of knowledge he drew his lines, they all, with him and in his preaching, centred in Christ, or were drawn from that centre in every direction.

In all this, the preacher hath large scope for his meditations and discourses. But, with propriety, purity, and gravity of language, it is only the most unaffected plainness and simplicity of style that can suit subjects so very sublime. To endeavour to set forth such subjects with flourish and ornament of speech, is silly and pedantic, hath nothing in it of true oratory, and shows that the man’s own heart is not seriously enough affected with the importance of the subject to himself and to his hearers. Though propriety of style, with gravity and plainness, is commonly fittest, yet there seems to be a great deal in what was said long ago by an eminent person: *Qui pueriliter, qui trivialiter, (I would add here, sed non futiliter,) is utiliter.* The low, but decent and grave homely style, is most adapted to the profit, commonly, of the greatest part of an audience; and they of better rank and education who wish to have their conscience open to, and their hearts seriously affected by, the word of God, may reap the most valuable advantages by those sermons that are most profitable to persons of lower condition.

What shall I say of that most foolish custom of reading sermons to the congregation, which hath come from the Southern, (I know not if it takes place in any other countries) to be in use of late with some in the Northern part of the Island? It is too dull for the orator, and puts such a man in fetters; and it hath a strange appearance, that an ambassador of Christ should deliver his message in this way. What the Lord hath given in writing, he should read to his people; and if the minister should from a distance send an

epistle to his congregation, the clerk might read it to them from the desk. But that the messenger of Christ should appear personally, and address the consciences and hearts of his people, praying them, beseeching them, 2 Cor. v. 20. earnestly exhorting them from his papers, is extremely incongruous. We speak of a man's getting a discourse by heart; and it were right that preachers should (in a sense somewhat different from the more common meaning of that expression) have their sermons by heart, and preach from the heart to the heart. At any rate, the appearance of this is the most becoming, the most likely to be profitable, and generally the most acceptable. Some hearers who have, or pretend to have, better judgment and taste than their neighbours, may like the reading of sermons; but it may well be doubted if these are the sort who have the best taste of gospel-preaching, or are most serious in religion. With us, this way is hitherto so generally disgusting to congregations, sometimes without the exception of a single person, that often the reader may be vindicated from the charge of setting up for applause; if it is not, perhaps, the self-applause, which his notion of his own superiority makes him fond of, with the contempt of others. I would not, however, be understood to mean, that the church should be wholly deprived of the useful preaching of those who, through old age, or accidental infirmity, are disabled from delivering sermons in any other manner; but I have known very few instances of that kind among those who could prepare such discourses, or could preach at all.

I have been saying, that the chief thing in preaching should be to preach Christ, and the doctrine of the gospel concerning him. Too many sermons come abroad into the world that are much wanting in that respect. I venture to give, for an instance of this, a sermon of the Reverend John Alexander, said, in the title-page of the book in which it is contained, to have been composed (which I much doubt of) by the author the day preceding his death. This circumstance might have afforded reason not to mention it here in this way, if, after its being published, it did not appear needful to report such a circumstance, in order to make some observations on it, for the sake of the living.

The text is, Eccl. ix. 10. 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest.'

The heads under which he enlarges on this text are two. The first, What is implied in the advice in the text. On this he says : 1. It teaches us diligence and assiduity in the daily employments of life. 2. The speedy execution of every worthy and important scheme. 3. The constant and strenuous exertion of all our faculties in the proper business of reasonable and moral agents ; the improvement of our minds, and the government of our passions and affections, &c. The second general head is, to illustrate the motive contained in the text. As to this, there is, 1. The nature of that state upon which we enter by death. There is neither *work*, &c. It is a state of perfect ignorance and inactivity, in which we retain no sense of our present condition, no memory of former transactions, nor any of the pleasing capacities of action and enjoyment—(so it is indeed in the full sense, if after death there remain no more of man than what goes to the grave.) 2. This state, as it is real and certain, so it is continually approaching—the grave to which thou goest.

This is the sum of the sermon. He mentions the second life, to which we aspire, by the favour and goodness of the Creator ; and a little thereafter, mentions the reviving prospect of immortality, and that glorious hope of a resurrection, which is promised in the gospel. One might think, if the writer relished that subject, that here was a fair opportunity of mentioning Christ, who by his death and resurrection abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. A few lines from the end of the sermon he says, ‘ We must live to God, and lead an heavenly life, ‘ if we ever expect to reach those blissful abodes ; and we ‘ must form the habits of goodness and holiness, in order to ‘ be admitted there.’ Would the Apostle Paul have discoursed of living to God, of living a heavenly life, of forming habits of goodness and holiness, without making mention of Christ, or of his death and resurrection ? This may be judged of from the context we have been considering. This author had learned from the gospel, that there is the hope of the resurrection and future life ; but there is nothing in all the sermon by which one would learn that ever he had heard of Christ the Saviour, or of the Spirit of Christ, or the need which sinful men have of the one or the other : nothing of these subjects is insinuated or hinted in the remotest manner ; only the name Christian occurs, from whatever root that word is derived. It might be thought, that in the full

light that hath come by the gospel, a preacher of the gospel could not easily preach on that same text, Eccl. ix. 10. without setting Christ before his hearers.

There has an apology been provided for such a case by a very celebrated preacher, who gave as his excuse for not mentioning Christ in his sermon, that he was not mentioned in his text. Nor is he mentioned in that text, Eph. ii. 8. *By grace ye are saved, through faith*; yet one might think it were not easy to preach properly on it, and give the proper explanations, exhortations, and directions, without mentioning Christ. It is however possible, that though the name Christ is not mentioned, the sermon may be truly evangelical; and also that Christ may be often mentioned, and the sermon be far from being evangelical. After all, it would seem more becoming a minister of Christ, to take all occasions to set Christ and his grace before his hearers, rather than be so ready to sustain for himself, and offer to others, an excuse for having nothing about him at all. Such preachers would do well to compare their sermons with our context, yea, with all the epistles of Paul, where we see he could not proceed a step without introducing that important, necessary, and favourite subject. But since the time of that blessed apostle, many have appeared to be far from the disposition he expresses, Rom. 1. 16, 17. *I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation—For therein is the righteousness of God revealed.*—There are some who speak much about righteousness, who seem not to be fond of that righteousness of God meant by him, and which he counted the glory of the gospel, and a special cause why he should not be ashamed of it. As they incline not to borrow righteousness from Christ for justification, so neither do they appear to see need of Christ for practical righteousness and holiness; if it is not for a clearer illustration of the law that is the rule of it. Many, who wish not to bear the character of infidels, do, under Christian profession, appear to have gone far in the way to a sort of philosophical heathenism, borrowing from the gospel-revelation what they think fit for adorning and recommending their new form of heathenism.

But if it is fit and necessary to preach Christ, and him crucified, and the special doctrine of the gospel concerning him, it is also necessary to set forth and to inculcate earnestly the design of his death, and of the grace manifested in the gospel through him. If it was his gracious design to

bring sinners to peace, grace, and favour with God, and at last to a state of blessedness and glory, it was no less his design to sanctify them. So Eph. v. 25—27. *He gave himself for his church, that he might sanctify it ;—and Tit. ii. 14. He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* The demand for preaching Christ and free grace is so far from being opposite to the end of preaching holiness and good works, that indeed men cannot preach holiness and good works to good purpose, and with good effect, without bringing along with them all the way the doctrine of Christ, and of free grace. It is at the same time true, that men's preaching is essentially defective, if they preach not Christ in a manner subservient to holiness. Some men, when they hear a demand for evangelical preaching, and the doctrine of grace, with complaints of legal doctrine, have been ready to exclaim, and to say, that those who make them cannot bear to hear of holiness and good works. This is far from the disposition of pious souls who have a true relish of the truth of the gospel, and a just zeal for it. Yet, if the manner in which some preach holiness and good works gives disgust, there is often too much cause for that disgust. They are particularly happy who have the skill to give free grace through Jesus Christ, and holiness, their proper place, in a proper connexion the one with the other.

In the meantime, if faithful men are most frequently employed in preaching Christ, and the doctrine of grace, there is special reason and need for it. The consciences of men have naturally in them light and impressions favouring holiness and good works ; whereas the peculiar doctrine of faith, in which all the comfort and hope of sinful men are founded, are such as nature gives no hint of. They are, according to that text formerly cited, 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10. things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, and which we could not have discovered by any light or principles naturally in our minds, nor have come to the knowledge of them, if God had not revealed them to us by his Spirit. Yea, as hath been also formerly observed, there are principles and dispositions naturally in the hearts of men, which tend to lead them to some other foundation of their confidence and hope, than that which the gospel and the doctrine of grace directs them to. It is the more necessary to labour much in explaining and establishing the truth concerning Christ crucified, and all the proper

doctrines of faith that are connected with that fundamental subject, and in inculcating these upon the consciences and hearts of the hearers. When the truths of faith are effectually received into the heart, they of themselves dispose it to holiness ; and the true faith of these truths works by that love which is the fulfilling of the law. Indeed, in sincere Christians, love to God and men, with its fruits, in all kinds of duty, and of holy dispositions, is to be considered as the effect rather of the doctrine of grace itself received into the heart, than as the consequence of the direct exhortations to that love and duty : so that when a preacher is not employed in direct and explicit exhortations to holiness, but in setting forth the love and grace of God in Christ Jesus, he is not so remote from the purpose of advancing holiness as some apprehend.

But still the practice of holiness and good works is of too much consequence not to be insisted on and urged in the most careful, direct, and earnest manner. Some who insist only on the encouragements and consolations of grace, are defective in this respect. I am not apprehensive of very considerable danger by this to true believers, sincere Christians, for the reason I have been just now suggesting. But as all who have the appearance, are not truly such, many may be much hurt in this way. The doctrine of Christ crucified, and the consolations arising from the richness and freeness of divine grace through him, may be to many as a *very lovely song* (Ezek. xxxiii. 32.) *of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument ;* when these doctrines have never been truly, and with proper effect, received into their hearts. There is a description of sermons that do not urge the holiness which the hearts of too many professed Christians are not disposed to, that do not reprove their vices and unholy passions, or the false and foul steps in their walk, or their unfruitfulness in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ ; and the preachers themselves may be greatly applauded, whilst their preaching is very defective. Yea, as the children of God themselves have the remainders of the flesh in them, they sometimes have much of the fruit thereof in their disposition, temper, and behaviour, that they do not choose should be touched or exposed in a proper light, even to their own view. Yet the health and purity of their souls require that these evils should not be cherished under any disguises.

The doctrine, then, of faith, and of Christ crucified, should

be exhibited in its proper connexion with holiness and good works. This connexion hath been much mistaken by some, who represent holiness and good works as necessary to men's having an interest in Christ and being justified, which is very contrary to the gospel, and is extremely hurtful and dangerous. Some, upon the other hand, who teach justification by faith, and not by works, and have just sentiments concerning the necessity of holiness in the general, yet in preaching are too negligent in insisting upon the certain and necessary connexion between faith and good works—between justification and true holiness; the one as the fruit and consequence of the other. As this may be of pernicious effect to hypocrites in the church, it cannot be doubted but it must be very hurtful to those who are sincere, not to have the instructions and excitements, with respect to holy disposition and practice, that are proper.

It is then to be considered, that the gospel and doctrine of grace is *the doctrine that is according to godliness*, 1 Tim. vi. 3. which tendeth, in the whole and in every part of it, to promote the practice of godliness. Let us likewise consider what the apostle, in divers places, means by *sound doctrine*, and *wholesome words*, particularly 1 Tim. i. 9, 10, 11.—*The law is made—for the lawless—for liars and perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to SOUND DOCTRINE, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God.* Here it is plain, that *sound doctrine*, (*υγιαινουσα διδασκαλια*, *healthful, wholesome doctrine*) is the doctrine of the holy commandment, the rule of duty, as enforced by the gospel. So chap. vi. after he had (ver. 1, 2.) enforced the duty of Christian servants, he adds, ver. 3. *If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, (υγιαινουσι λογοις) he is proud, knowing nothing.* Thus also, Tit. ii. 1. *But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine, ver. 2. that the aged men be sober, &c.* And so he goes on, speaking of practical matters, the duties of Christians in the several relations, ranks, and conditions of life. I conclude, if any do urge holiness and good works, without connecting these, as the proper consequences, with the doctrine of Christ crucified, and with faith, they certainly, according to the whole tenor of the gospel, have not sound healthful doctrine. At the same time, if any do separate the doctrine of faith and of Christ crucified from that of holiness, practical righteousness, and good works, surely, according to the apostle

Paul, in the places I have been observing, neither is their doctrine sound, wholesome, or healthful doctrine.

It appears in the context we have been considering, how much the apostle had at heart to excite Christians to the practice of holiness. This is so obvious through the whole of it, that after the close view we have been taking of it, we need not speak more particularly on it here.

Let us then proceed to observe what arguments remain, consistent with the doctrine of grace, by which the preacher may excite Christians to watchfulness against sin, and to the practice of holiness and all kinds of good works.

It is, in the first place, needful that Christians should be deeply impressed with the authority of the laws of God, their Creator and Supreme Lawgiver, and that preachers should inculcate this on all classes of their hearers. Some who, I am persuaded, did not mean any thing unfavourable to holiness, or to any duty, seem to have thought as if the believer's being delivered from the law included in its meaning their being released from this original obligation of the law, and their having substituted in its place to them the law of Christ. That expression, *the law of Christ*, doth indeed occur in one place, Gal. vi. 2. where it evidently signifies the law of mutual brotherly love, by which Christians bear one another's burdens, which is the subject of exhortation there. As to the law in general, it is to be acknowledged that the law and holy commandment coming to believers from the great Prophet and Apostle of their profession, and being the instrument and rule of his kingly government over them; there is a great deal in this view, and way of conveyance of it to them, to sweeten and recommend it to their hearts.

But still it is wrong to set up the law of Christ in opposition to the authority of the law of the great Creator and Sovereign of the world, or to suppose that the doctrine of faith gives any reason for this, or any countenance to it. When the apostle is, Rom. vii. giving an account of things respecting those who were strangers to Christ, being in the flesh, and under the law, he commends the law *as holy, just, and good*. This certainly is the law of God the Creator. When, a few words thereafter, he says, ver. 14. *the law is spiritual*, it is plain it is the same law he speaks of, as he gives no indication of his using the word in a different sense, now that he speaks with a view to the case of a believer. A little downward he says of the same law, that he *delighted*

in it according to the inward man ; and concludes the chapter with saying, that *with his mind he served the law of God*. If he served it, surely he was under its authority.

Our apostle says, Rom. viii. 7. that *the carnal mind is not subject to the law of God*. Shall it be said, that the spiritual mind and spiritual man, under the influence of the Spirit of grace, doth voluntarily conform to the law of God, but is not indeed *subject* to it, or to its authority? this would seem to be too absurd. For as the unhappy distinction of the carnal mind is not to be subject, we must suppose the spiritual mind to have the opposite character of being *subject* to the law, and its authority.

The apostle says, Rom. iii. 31. *Do we make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law*. It is true, that the law was greatly established and magnified by the satisfaction Christ gave it ; yet it is not easy to conceive that a doctrine did not tend to make void the law, if indeed it released all true Christians from its authority and obligation.

If the matter be justly considered, the obligation which true believers, or others, are under to regard and submit to Christ the Mediator's kingly government, and his other mediatory offices, is founded upon, and proceeds from the authority of God the Sovereign Lawgiver, and of his law. If it were possible for them to be loosed from the obligation of the law of God the Creator and Supreme Lawgiver, they would at the same time be set free from the government of the Mediator. But they are subject to the kingly government and authority of the Mediator, by virtue of their being, and continuing to be, under the authority and law of him who said, Psal. ii. 6. *I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion*. They regard him as the great Prophet, by virtue of his authority, who said from heaven, Matth. xvii. 5. *Hear ye him*, and, as Deut. xviii. 15—18. They consider him as their great High Priest, for his being *called of God, as was Aaron*, Heb. v. 4—6. Let not then the Christian think, that, by being free from the law in the sense meant by the apostle, Rom. vii. he is not under the authority of the holy commandment, as it is the law of the Creator and Supreme Ruler of the world.

Another set of arguments that ought to be carefully urged and inculcated, are these that arise from the grace of God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ. The authority of God in his laws is that which doth, and still ought to effect the con-

science. But consolatory arguments are these which do most effectually and powerfully affect the heart. The exceeding riches of the grace of God, in his kindness to us through Jesus Christ, should make the authority of his government and laws venerable and amiable to us, and every one of his commandments acceptable to us; and ought for this end to be much inculcated. The love of our Lord Jesus Christ, who loved his people, and gave himself for them, is a most powerful argument for that love, which engages the heart to the Lord, and to the study of holiness. *Ye are not* (saith the apostle, 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.) *your own; ye are bought with a price.* This is wonderful grace, inexpressibly comfortable; and how strong and engaging the argument it affords for Christians to *glorify God in their bodies, and in their spirits, which are his!* In temptations to sin, how powerfully may that thought, *Do ye thus requite the Lord,* strike the heart that hath any sincerity in it!

A strong argument to enforce holiness, arises from the necessity of it, in order to the actual attainment of future happiness and eternal life; and the certain inseparable connexion between fleshly, unholy living, and eternal death. Heb. xii. 14. *Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.* On the other hand, Rom. viii. 13. *If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.* Upon this latter text some have unreasonably commented, and argued thus: Therefore it is evident, say they, that true believers and saints, (and the apostle considered the Romans he wrote to as such,) may fall wholly off from holiness to fleshly living, and die eternally, else why should they be thus warned? But there is no ground for this argument in the apostle's proposition. The thing asserted is, according to the nature of such hypothetical propositions, the certain connexion between one thing and another: between continued fleshly living, and dying eternally. Let us apply this way of arguing to such another hypothetical proposition, and see how it will hold. When the mariners attempted to leave the ship wherein Paul was, he said, Acts xxvii. 31. *Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.* Would it be inferred from this, that the mariners might actually leave the ship, and that the other people aboard might all actually perish, notwithstanding God's having absolutely promised them by his angel and by Paul, ver. 22. 24. that there would not be the loss of any man's life among them? Surely this could not be inferred. Neither from the conditional

proposition, Rom. viii. 13. can any thing be inferred contrary to the absolute promises of God's covenant, Jer. xxxii. 40. The truth declared to the Romans is, that eternal death will be the certain consequence of living after the flesh; and the conviction and impression of this in the minds and hearts of God's people, and powerfully affecting them, is one considerable means by which the purpose and promise of God will take effect, in their perseverance and salvation. There is nothing in the promises of God that derogates from this certain truth,—If men shall live after the flesh, that they shall die; nor any thing in this that derogates from the truth and certainty of the promises of the new covenant.

It is likewise needful and fit that Christians consider, and that preachers inculcate upon them, that the practice of holiness and good works is the sure way to attain and maintain the fixed and habitual assurance of their good state, and of their eternal salvation. If (as Rom. viii. 16.) the Spirit of God shall bear witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God, and so heirs of God, this is the evidence by which our spirit, mind, and conscience hath its parts in this witnessing. It is by their fruitfulness in holiness, (as 1 Pet. i. 4—7.) that Christians are exhorted, ver. 10. to make their calling and election sure. When the apostle commends the Hebrews, chap. vi. 10. for their good works, he desires them, ver. 11. *to show the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end.* A Christian may have well-founded present consolation by the direct exercise of faith on Jesus Christ, and the promises of a new covenant; but fixed, habitual, and well established comfort, as to their state and hope, cannot be maintained but in the way of purity and upright walking with God; nor will the Holy Spirit, whose influence is needful in this case, countenance or support the comfort and hope of the Christian in any other course. As something hath been formerly (Sect. II.) said on this and the next following point, the less needs to be said on either in this place.

There occurs next the consideration of divine chastisements. Fatherly chastisements indeed they are to believers, the children of God, and designed to make them partakers of his holiness; but how fearful may these chastisements be for what is wrong or defective in the Christian's general course, or for particular deviations from purity and integrity! Many instances of this sort are related in the word of God, with

respect to those to whom grace did abound in pardoning. Thus, Psal. xcix. 8. *Thou wast a God that forgavest them; though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions.* What terrible dispensations, outward and inward, may be included in this vengeance! A child of God, who had great assurance that things would go well with him finally, felt as he expresses, Psal. cxix. 120. *My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments.*

Further, it is in the way of holiness that the Christian may have, not only inward peace, but that fellowship and intercourse with God, and light of his countenance, that will make wisdom's ways, ways of pleasantness to him. Thus, 1 John. i. 7. *If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.* By this the Lord sometimes putteth more gladness in the hearts of his people than the world have (Psal. iv. 7.) by the increase of their corn and their wine. The apostle John's words show us in what way and course this may be looked for. Indeed, in any course that the Christian can hold, whilst in this life, sin will cleave to him and to all his best works and righteousness, which might make him very uncomfortable, if it were not for what is added,—*And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.* But if the Psalmist had so much gladness by the light of God's countenance, he experienced also a contrary dispensation, Psal. xxx. 7. *Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.* Ver. 8. *I cried to thee, O Lord.* Ver. 9. *What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit?* They who have the experience of these various dispensations, and of walking (Psal. lxxxix. 15.) in the light of God's countenance, will feel great weight in this argument and motive for fruitful and holy walking with God.

Finally, a very powerful argument to encourage and excite the Christian to holiness, to advancing therein, to avoid and strive against sin, arises from that comfortable consideration and principle suggested, chap. vi. 14. that *sin shall not have dominion over him.* This is express and clear, and the inconceivably valuable advantage of this is represented, not as depending merely on the slippery free-will of man, but on the Christian's being under grace. This grace he is under; and that Christ is set at the head of the kingdom of grace, a Captain of Salvation, secures the Christian from ever falling again under the dominion of sin. There is a great deal in this to excite the Christian to labour in advancing in holiness and good works, maintaining warfare against sin, an

enemy already dethroned and deprived of its power and dominion, with a sure prospect of complete victory over it at last. The apprehended impossibility of accomplishing their design, doth often hinder men from beginning or proceeding with courage even in a laudable attempt or undertaking. But to be called to a course of holiness, in warfare against an enemy already deprived of his power, and that with sure prospect of victory and glory, surely there is in this very much to give incitement to every soul that can think wisely and dutifully on the important subject.

Such are the arguments that may be suggested to Christians for enforcing holy practice, consistently with the doctrine of grace, and with the comforts of the grace they are under. Yet the cry with some is, as if by this doctrine the necessity and care of holiness were quite superseded, and as if there remained not arguments and motives sufficient to enforce holiness. But do there not remain sufficient reasons and motives for holiness and good works, unless we delude sinners, by directing them to look for their justification before God by their own righteousness and works? which is a way of justification incompatible with the condition of a sinner. If there were no other way of justification, certainly sinners beloved to be under condemnation for ever. Yea, this would exclude true holiness and works truly acceptable to God, from among men for ever, as is clear from the apostle's doctrine in the context which we have been explaining; in which it is evident, that the sinner must be gratuitously justified, through the redemption that is in Christ, and by faith in his blood, and so brought under grace, before he is capable, being delivered from the dominion of sin, of holy and righteous practice, or of works truly good or acceptable to God. However, though men's good works have no place or part in justification, yet the doctrine of grace, and the experience of that grace, directs Christians to say, as, Eph. ii. 10. *We are God's workmanship, (not our own workmanship,) created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which he hath before ordained (προετοιμασεν, before prepared) that we should walk in them.* And the glorious preparation which divine wisdom and grace have made, for bringing sinners, who were at the same time under the curse of the law, and under the dominion of sin, unto a state of grace and favour, and unto a course of holiness and good works, is what our context explains and proposes in a clear and strong light.

But can there be arguments sufficient to enforce holiness

and good works, if God's purpose and promise do absolutely secure the salvation of every one of God's true people? We have seen in the various arguments formerly suggested, that there are indeed such; and if these have not effect, it proves the person to be under such dominion of sin, as will be too strong for all arguments and motives whatsoever.

Some seem to think it the only way to enforce holiness effectually, to acquaint men that their salvation depends absolutely and merely on their own behaviour, and the determination of their own will; and that if Christians are delivered by God's promise and covenant, and by their faith therein, from the terrors of damnation and the wrath to come, that there can remain no sufficient force in any argument or motive to holiness. But the truth is, if Christians have no security against the wrath to come, otherwise than from their own behaviour and use of their free-will, they, conscious of the deceitfulness of sin, and of their own hearts, and of all the temptations and hazards attending their course, might see reason always for terror and dread, in a manner and degree not favourable to holiness. For, though fear hath its use for the restraining and curbing of sin, yet the proper principle of true holiness is love, and the faith which worketh by love. But if the Christian hath nothing to look to for securing him against damnation and wrath but his own use of his free-will, with such aids and assistances as his free-will may use or neglect, there will be cause for continual fear and terror, even such fear as hath torment, and is inconsistent with the love that is the principle of holiness, according to 1 John iv. 18.

But the divine scheme of grace hath mixed and tempered things well for the advancement of holiness. Is the salvation of God's people secured upon the best and most solid foundation? yet there remains a great deal for the children of God to fear, with regard to sin and its consequences—with regard to God's threatenings against the sins of his children, and the terrible dispensations, outward and inward, that may be the actual consequences of their sins. This, in so far that it is among the marks of God's people, that they tremble at God's word; and we see, Ezra ix. 4. that the special designation and character of godly persons is, that they *tremble at the words of the God of Israel*.

There is, at the same time, a sure and well founded hope, a strong consolation, an exalted prospect, the most endearing and attractive motives, tending to increase love to God, to

his sovereignty and holiness, and to strengthen the hearts of Christians in labouring for conformity to it. Certainly it was the best scheme for promoting holiness, that, with a proper curb of fear upon the unholy lusts and unruly passions of the heart, did and still doth contribute most to the advancement of love, and strengthening the hearts of Christians in their course. Thus then it is, while by divine grace the Christian hath the greatest cause for the love that is the true principle of holiness, there remains at the same time a fear subservient to this love, and to holiness, not a tormenting fear, inconsistent with love, but a fear that hath its root and spring chiefly in love.

Some who seem not to employ much thought on the argument, express it thus in general:—If God's purpose of grace, and his promise, hath absolutely secured the salvation of God's people, then they may go on as they please in unholiness and fleshly living,—their salvation being so well secured. But for the argument to strike against the doctrine of grace we have been asserting, it should be formed thus:—If God's purpose and promise have secured the perseverance of his people in faith and holiness, to the attainment of a final and complete salvation, then they may live as they list in unholiness and impurity. This is the only form in which the argument can strike against the doctrine of grace; and the glaring absurdity it contains supersedes all occasion of giving it any direct answer.

Concerning holiness, this is evidently the issue of our whole discussion, viz. that the grace of the new covenant hath provided for the advancement of holiness and good works, and for the sanctification of God's people, in a manner and degree much beyond what the sentiments of the adversaries of grace will allow them to admit.

As to the argument taken from the liberty of the will, that impotent idol, that hath been set up against the glories of divine grace, something hath been said before concerning it, and I shall here add but a little, briefly. All moral agents act with free will. But there is a principle in nature of powerful influence and effect, previous to all exercise of free will, that directs and determines the will in its actings, and in the use of its liberty. In angels and saints in a confirmed state of holiness, this principle is the perfect rectitude of their nature, that directs their free will to that only that is holy, just, and good. In some other moral agents, the previous principle is the corruption or pravity of their nature,

or the dominion of sin therein, which directs the will to that which is evil, and makes it at present incapable of true holiness. In both cases the moral agent acts freely, according to the direction of his own mind, and according to his inclination, without any sort of force or violence ; and so the will may have all the liberty that is necessary to moral agency, whilst, at the sametime, it, and all the faculties of the soul, may be enslaved, and under the dominion of sin, until it shall be made free according to the glorious scheme of grace through Jesus Christ, and by him. So that when Luther was publishing his answer to Erasmus' book on free-will, he did very properly entitle his own excellent treatise, *Concerning the Enslaved Will, (de Servo Arbitrio.)* Free it is in its manner of acting, yet truly enslaved to sin in every natural man, until the Son shall make him free indeed.

True believers, whilst they are in this life, are in a sort of middle state between the two characters before mentioned. Their nature is renewed by grace, and they have the seed of holiness in them, which seed shall remain in them. They have also in them a sad remainder of the original corruption ; and both these draw different ways, so that they cannot do completely the things that they would, Gal. v. 17. But though this remaining corruption considerably disables them, and too often draws them aside from the right way, yet the grace they are under will preserve them from ever falling under the dominion of sin, and will rather care effectually for their safety in the final issue, according to our context, chap. vi. 14. Should it be thought a thing incredible that the sincere Christian should be certainly kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ?

But how can we conceive or comprehend, that the previous certainty of God's prescience of future events, that are to be brought about in concurrence with the will of man, or that the certain accomplishment of Divine counsels and purposes that are accomplished by means of the human will, can be consistent with the freedom of the will ? Can the will be free in its determination, and yet, at the same time, that determination of the will be fixed and certain in the Divine prescience and decree ? So it is, however, on both sides ; there is such a previous certainty of events, and the human will having its part in bringing about those events, is free. Besides that the Divine prescience and decree, and the certainty thereof, can be proved by just reasoning from the infinite perfection of the Divine nature, so the doctrine can be satis-

factorily confirmed from the Scripture ; and it can be shown, by very many particular instances recorded in the word of God, that this previous certainty of events in the counsel and purpose of God, is consistent with the liberty of the will.

What if we cannot conceive or comprehend *how* it is so? We shall comprehend it when we shall be as gods. The mischief of aspiring to know and comprehend beyond our sphere and capacity began very early with us. But it becomes us to confine our understanding, as to knowledge, inquiries, and conceptions, within its proper limits and capacity. It will be a happy time and state, when the mind shall be satiated with the best knowledge, without aspiring to comprehend all things ; even things which no finite mind can comprehend ; more than we shall aspire to the dignity and glory of God in general. I do indeed suspect, that in this matter,—viz. to comprehend the consistency of the liberty of the will, with the previous certainty of events to be brought about by it, there is something of this sort,—something that cannot be fully comprehended by finite beings in any state. I therefore cannot think they have been wisely employed, who have pretended to explain this matter, so as to bring it within the grasp of human minds. I see that some with great and vain pretension to be ingenious, have produced on this subject speculations of most mischievous tendency,—speculations adverse to all freedom of will, and at the sametime to all moral agency ; consequently adverse to all virtue and religion. The rule of our faith and duty is set before us, and we should be satisfied with it. To pursue our inquiries in divine things beyond what this light and rule direct us, will be vain and dangerous.

But as this is not a proper place for enlarging much in the controversial way, I shall conclude this point with giving the sense of a passage of the great Augustine, in his book *De Spiritu et Litera*, thus : ‘Do we then make void free will by grace? Far be it from us: we rather establish free-will. For as the law is not made void by faith, so neither is free-will by grace, but established. For the law is not fulfilled but by the free-will. But by the law is the knowledge of sin ; by faith is grace obtained against sin ; by grace is the soul cured of the disease of sin ; by this cure or health of the soul is the will free. By the will’s being made free, is delighting in righteousness ; by delighting in righteousness, comes the doing of the duties of the law.

‘ So, as the law is not made void, but established by faith,  
 ‘ as faith obtains the grace by which the law is fulfilled ; in  
 ‘ like manner, free-will is not made void, but established,  
 ‘ because grace so heals the will, that righteousness is freely  
 ‘ delighted in. These things which I have connected as in  
 ‘ a chain, can be warranted by texts of Scripture to the sense  
 ‘ of each. The law saith, *Thou shalt not lust.* Faith says  
 ‘ and prays, *Heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee.*  
 ‘ Grace says, *Lo, thou art made whole, sin not, lest worse*  
 ‘ *happen to thee.* The soul healed saith, *Lord my God, I*  
 ‘ *have cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me.* Free-will  
 ‘ saith, *I will offer a FREE-WILL offering to thee.* Delighting  
 ‘ in righteousness saith, *The unrighteous have told me what*  
 ‘ *they delighted in, but they are not according to thy law.*  
 ‘ How then should wretched men dare to be proud of their  
 ‘ free-will before they are made free, without observing that  
 ‘ the very word *free-will* imports the will being *made free* ?  
 ‘ for *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.* If then  
 ‘ persons are the slaves of sin, why should they boast of  
 ‘ free-will ? for *his slave one is, of whom he is overcome.*  
 ‘ But if they are made free, why should they boast as of  
 ‘ their own work, and glory as if they had not received ?  
 ‘ Are they so free, that they will not submit to have him for  
 ‘ their Lord, who saith to them, *Without me ye can do no-*  
 ‘ *thing ; and, If the Son shall make you free, then shall ye be*  
 ‘ *free indeed ?* So far the excellent Augustine.

But with all this excitement to the practice of holiness and  
 good works, there is one thing yet remains which Christians  
 should have much at heart, and in which faithful preachers  
 should labour to assist them. As Christians should look  
 anxiously to the sincerity of their hearts, to the sincerity of  
 grace and love in them ; so ought they to labour carefully  
 for the increase of that knowledge and light that is needful  
 to direct the good principles that are in them, in their oper-  
 ations ; and herein they may have great benefit by faithful  
 and judicious teachers.

There are two places of Scripture especially worthy to be  
 considered on this occasion. One is Col. i. 9, 10. where  
 the apostle earnestly prays for the Colossian Christians thus :  
*That ye might, saith he, be filled with the KNOWLEDGE OF*  
*HIS WILL, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding : that*  
*ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being*  
*fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge*  
*of God.* Here, after great commendation of their faith and

love, in the preceding verses, we see he reckons their being filled with the knowledge of the will of God, so necessary in order to their walking worthy of the Lord, and being fruitful in every good work, that he makes the most earnest addresses to the throne of grace, on this account for them.

The other place is Phil. i. 9, 10, 11. 'And this I pray, 'that your love,' (some would express it in our more usual language, 'that your grace') 'may abound yet more and 'more in knowledge, and in all judgment; that ye may 'prove things that are excellent.' The margin hath it, *That ye may try things that differ.* I take the meaning to be, that they might have that knowledge, good judgment, and spiritual sense by which they might be able to distinguish between duty and sin, and to discover their duty in every case, however dark, doubtful, or disputable it might appear. He wishes their love to increase and abound, but at the same time that their knowledge and judgment might, for giving their love the proper direction, in every instance of conduct and behaviour. It is in this way, and not otherwise, he expects they might be, as he adds, 'Sincere, and 'without offence till the day of Christ; being filled with 'the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, un- 'to the glory and praise of God.' There is nothing has a more unpleasant and painful effect, than when a Christian, truly sincere in love, and in a zeal of God, falls into mistaken courses, through want of needful light, by which to distinguish between sin and duty, and which might obviate and counteract the influence of his own, and other men's passions. Yet so it happens. Some abound in light and knowledge, who are not so anxious about the sincerity of their hearts, and the uprightness of their walk, as they ought to be. Others, conscious and confident of their own sincerity, are no less confident on that account, whatever light or arguments oppose it, that their course is right; and so they despise and reject the offer of better light, that might show them what is wrong in their way. Therefore it were good not to engage hastily in any new course; for when once Christians are so engaged, too many things concur to exclude the light that may be unfavourable to their course.

In this preachers should labour much to be useful to Christians, for increasing their light and knowledge, and improving their judgment in all cases of duty and sin. Here they have a very large field, and great scope for show-

ing at once their ability and fidelity, in setting forth the obligation and necessity of holiness, in explaining its general nature and ingredients, in explaining particular virtues and duties, and in enforcing them; showing the fallacy of the various colours and disguises, under which a sinful work or course may be recommended to them. It is from the word of God that Christians are to derive all their light and knowledge concerning such subjects; and as their teachers have commonly more opportunities, and greater advantage for studying and understanding the word of God, so should they endeavour to enlarge their own stores, for the use of Christians, out of that treasure of divine wisdom. Let a man exert all the vivacity and vigour of his mind in refined speculation—let him abound in quaint and striking thought and expression—let him collect all that is most valuable concerning virtue, in the writings of the philosophers and wise men of the world,—all will come much short of the light and instruction, concerning such subjects, that is to be obtained from the word of God. 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. ‘All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness’—(is profitable for giving the knowledge of divine truth; for convicting and refuting contrary errors; for conveying the light and reproof that tend to correcting what may be wrong in men’s course and works; and for instruction in all that concerns the practice of righteousness)—‘that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works;’ that the Christian may be complete in that character, and furnished for every good work; that *the man of God*, so called in a more special sense, may be complete in the character of a minister of God, and thoroughly furnished for every good work pertaining to his office; for advancing the profit and salvation of his people; particularly in giving them from the Scripture all the instruction needful with regard to the practice of righteousness.

There are, however, several things respecting this matter which it were fit for preachers to observe. 1. That they especially use the language of the word of God. This is the style most proper for such subjects; the style most grave, serious, and emphatic. Human language, especially when it is much laboured, and wrought up to elegance and oratory, may tickle the ears and minds of hearers, and conciliate their esteem of the preacher’s talents; but will never make such

impression on the hearts of persons serious in religion, or be received with such relish, as the language of the Holy Ghost, properly used. He was a good, and very successful preacher, who said, 1 Cor. ii. 13. *Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual;* that is, as some understand the last clause, very suitably to the matter and scope of the verse, suiting spiritual language, such as the Holy Ghost himself useth, to spiritual things; which, in the next following verse, he calls *the things of the Spirit*.

2. That on occasion of explaining and urging duty, or particular instances thereof, they direct Christians to discover and observe what may have been, in omission or commission, contrary thereto in their practice; and to the renewed application by faith, of the blood of sprinkling, for renewing and supporting their inward peace and comfort. *With thee* (Psal. cxxx. 4.) *there is forgiveness, that thou mayest be feared.* Faith's views and improvement of the blood of sprinkling, and of pardoning grace, is essential in the religion of a sinner. Whatever improper use hypocritical and insincere persons may make of pardoning grace, the view and comfort of it is exceeding needful for every serious and sincere soul, for encouragement and support in godliness, amidst the views such may have of their own strayings and failures.

3. That in explaining holiness, and the particular virtues and good dispositions that are included in it, they mark out the opposite vices and corrupt tempers that are naturally in the hearts of men, that they show the fallacy of these appearances of virtue, that do oftentimes but colour over a very sinful disposition and practice; that they mark out to Christians the opposite plagues, lustings, and unholy affections, which, through remaining corruption, are yet commonly and in too great a degree in their hearts, with the difficulty thence arising in the practice of each virtue, and the hinderance this gives to their progress and advancement in holiness. To represent, as in contrast, the several virtues and holy dispositions, with the opposite evils of men's hearts, happily suits the real case of Christians. Without this, mere theories concerning virtues and duties, however just, and however much the nature, amiableness, excellency, and advantage of virtue be set forth, will not be really profitable. Some content themselves with setting forth the righteous and good man, and the man to whom they give a designation

from some particular virtue, in such a way as if indeed the man, in his real disposition and practice, did represent righteousness and goodness, or the particular grace or virtue, as completely as the preacher's definitions and illustrations do. This is flying too much above the heads of Christians. It is by all means fit to acquaint them fully with the operation and influence of the opposite principles that remain in them, in order to put them on their guard against those evils on the part of the flesh, which, if unobserved, may have a very ill effect with regard to their disposition and course.

It is fit, at the same time, that for their encouragement, Christians be acquainted with the condescensions of divine grace, which often doth grant favourable acceptance, through Jesus Christ, of the sincerity that is attended with much failure and imperfection, yea, hath a very considerable mixture of what is evil.

But if, with proper descriptions of Christian virtues and duties, men's hearts be searched, with a view to show the opposite evil dispositions and corrupt biases which, on the part of the flesh, are in them, as this will tend to make, them the more watchful, so will they be thereby led to have the necessary recourse to the fulness that is laid up for them in him in whom it hath pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell, and that for the renewed and more powerful influences of the Spirit.

Christians are often too easily satisfied with the disposition and frame of their own hearts. But if, with sincere and earnest desire to advance in holiness, they looked more closely into the law, as it is spiritual, and into their own hearts, they would see, to their great benefit, more of these motions of sin in them, by which they do what they would not, and are unable to do, in manner and degree, as they would; as the blessed apostle represents in our context, chap. vii. 14—25. Such views and feelings contribute greatly to the Christian's purity in heart, and in the practice of life, and to his advancement in holiness. The things above suggested in this section belong to the profitable and evangelical way of preaching, and enforcing holy practice.

But now, to bring this work to a conclusion: it is good for them who are the servants of sin, and under its dominion, to become sensible of the wretchedness of that condition, and to betake themselves to the Son, to make them free indeed; to pray earnestly for that Spirit of life, which cometh by Christ Jesus, to make them free; without trusting to any

powers or endeavours of their own for recovering their liberty. It becomes them, who, by being justified through faith, and brought under grace, are made free, to acknowledge the grace which hath made them so ; to keep ever in their eye the rule of duty, with earnest endeavours to attain conformity to it ; knowing that the design of divine grace, in delivering them from the law and its curse, and in making them free from the dominion of sin, was, according to our context, that they might be *the servants of righteousness*. It becomes them to have habitual recourse to the Lord, and to the promises of the new covenant, for renewed influences of grace, to enable them to hold on in their course of faith and holiness, and to encourage their hearts, and support their hope with this comfortable consideration, that sin shall not have dominion over them, as not being under the law, but under grace. It becomes ministers to labour in leading persons to know themselves and to know Christ, to mark out to them by the light of God's word the way in which they ought to walk, and to enforce holy practice by evangelical principles, arguments, and motives, which alone will have effect.

THE END.

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THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

FROM 1789 TO 1840

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**SERMONS**

ON

SACRAMENTAL OCCASIONS.

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THE following excellent Sermons are printed from the Author's manuscripts. It is uncertain whether they were intended by him for the press; but one thing is evident, that they are as accurately written, as if that had been the Author's original intention. The homely style in which they appear, it is hoped, will not render them the less extensively useful.

The Author possessed a singular talent for the illustration of the scriptures; and this is happily displayed by him in these Sermons: for in them appear that solid judgment, true learning, and genuine piety, so eminently conspicuous in his celebrated piece on Sanctification.

I had the honour to be personally acquainted with the Author, and consider that acquaintance as one of the happiest circumstances of my life. In him centered all the amiable qualities of the divine, the scholar, and the Christian. Indeed, one may say, without exceeding the bounds of truth, that the illustrious title marked out for gospel ministers by Paul, when he says, 'that they are the glory of Christ,' eminently belonged to him.

Having myself been much edified with the perusal of these Sermons, I know not how to render a more important and essential service to my Christian friends, and particularly to my younger brethren in the ministry, than to be happily instrumental in putting them into their hands.

I have no object in view by contributing mine endeavours towards their publication, but the advancement of the Redeemer's glory. And that this object may be attained, through the blessing of God accompanying the attentive perusal of them, is what I sincerely wish and pray for.

JOHN RUSSELL.

Kilmarnock, Aug. 16, 1785.

I read the following Sermons, in manuscript, with much satisfaction. They are, in my opinion, judicious, scriptural, and savoury discourses. The first, on Hebrews ix. 14. contains a very sensible illustration of some important doctrines of the glorious gospel: the two last, on James i. 22. enforce the practice of holiness upon the professors of Christianity, by evangelical and powerful motives. I readily concur in recommending them to the perusal of my friends and connexions; hoping and wishing, that, through the Divine blessing, they may be profitable for their direction and instruction in righteousness.

JAMES ROBERTSON.

Kilmarnock, Aug. 16, 1785.

# SERMONS

ON

## SACRAMENTAL OCCASIONS.

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### SERMON I.

HEB. ix. 14.

*“How much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”*

THE inspired penman of this epistle (whom many suppose, not improbably, to be the apostle Paul) does, from the beginning of this chapter, agreeably to the general design of the epistle, make a parallel and comparison between the Levitical tabernacle, priesthood, sacrifices, purification, on the one hand, and the great high priest, sacrifice, and purification of the gospel, on the other. He does, in these 13th and 14th verses, bring the matter to something of a period and conclusion, showing the advantage to be infinite on the side of the gospel.

He does, in these two verses, consider the effect of both kinds of atonement and purification. The Mosaical atonement and purification did, he says, ver. 13. ‘sanctify to the purifying of the flesh. The blood of Christ,’ he says, ‘purges the conscience.’

The first ‘sanctified to the purifying of the flesh.’ For opening the sense of this clause, ver. 13. I observe one or two things, relating chiefly to the explication of the words of it.

1. As to purifying the flesh; this is not said with a view

to the body ; for though the blood of sacrifices and the ashes of an heifer, in the water of purification, (of which, Numb. xix.) were sprinkled on the body ; yet was not the body thereby cleansed, but rather outwardly defiled. Purifying of the flesh I take to be a Hebrew idiom, which we would express by calling it a fleshly or carnal purification. Now *carnal* is an epithet of the ceremonial law. Hence do we read of ‘carnal ordinances,’ ver. 10. and ‘the law of a carnal commandment,’ chap. vii. 16. And so were the institutions of that law called, not chiefly because men’s bodies were much concerned in them, but rather and principally because in that infancy of the church, the Lord did suit these rudiments or elements to the carnality of men’s minds, which affect what is outward, showy, and pompous in worship.

2. I observe that the apostle says, not that these atonements typified or prefigured—so indeed they did,—but he says in direct and proper terms, that they sanctified ; which would imply, that there was a proper atonement, in some kind, by the sacrifices of the Old Testament. For explaining this, I notice, that there was in this matter considered, on the one hand, an uncleanness or guilt ; on the other, an atonement. The uncleanness was not moral, at least in this case it was not considered as such. In many cases the uncleanness was absolutely unavoidable ; or, if otherwise, was indispensable moral duty ; as was on many occasions defilement for the dead. So then, it was only carnal or ceremonial uncleanness. It had, however, thus much of a real effect, that it suspended a man’s church privilege with respect to the service of God ; debarred him the camp and the tabernacle ; and he that neglected the purification required, incurred a moral guiltiness, as neglecting God’s institution. As the uncleanness was only ceremonial, such was the atonement ; a ceremonial, carnal atonement by the blood of goats and of calves, and the ashes of an heifer. By this, in virtue of God’s appointment, a man was purged from his ceremonial guiltiness, and so restored to his church privilege as an Israelite. All this has a special respect to atonement, and the immediate effect of it, viz. remission. But I notice,

3. That the apostle expresses it by the word *sanctifeth*, which is commonly understood of another matter than justification, or remission. For explaining this, I say sanctification may be understood two ways : 1. There is a relative sanctification. 2. An inherent sanctification. In the most general notion, which includes both these, that is, holy, (sanctified)

that is, set apart for God, and is his in a special manner. Such is the church, a society set apart from the world for God; therefore are the Israelites so oft called an holy people; and the infants of believing parents are said to be holy, 1 Cor. vii. 14. Those without the church are common; or, in another word, unclean; for the word, ver. 13. translated 'unclean,' is in the original, 'made common.' Both words are sometimes joined in the same sense, as by Peter, Acts x. 14. 'I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.' While an Israelite was, for his uncleanness, debarred the fellowship of the camp and tabernacle, he was common: but by the legal, ceremonial atonement, taking away his ceremonial uncleanness and guiltiness, he was sanctified; restored to his holy privileges. This distinction of relative and inherent sanctification obtains with respect to believers. They obtain a relative sanctification by being justified; by which being taken into covenant with God, they become his peculiar people, his portion: 'God's portion is his people, Jacob is the 'lot of his inheritance,' Deut. xxxii. 9. It belongs to their covenant state that they should be no longer common to Satan, to the world, to sin. This is what they should have a dutiful consideration of. This is what the grace of God has made good to them who have put on Christ. 'They are 'dead to sin,' Rom. vi. 2.; by which the apostle expresses, not their ordinary duty in the practice of holiness, but the standing privilege of their justified state, in so far as 'sin 'shall not have dominion over them,' Rom. vi. 14. Believers are inherently sanctified in their natures, by a work of grace and of the Spirit of God upon their souls. This distinction may help us to a right view of some places where sanctifying is mentioned; particularly, 1 Cor. vi. 11. 'Ye are washed'—How? he expresses it in another word, 'ye are sanctified'—How sanctified? In two respects. 1. Relatively, as to your state, 'being justified in the name of the Lord Jesus.' 2. Inherently, with respect to your nature, 'by the Spirit of our God.' So sanctification is first mentioned in that place, as comprehending the other two.

Such was the ceremonial discipline of the Old Testament. The principal design of which was to lead to the knowledge and faith of Christ, and of that method of purification expressed in our text.

In the meantime, we are to notice, that the ceremonial atonement, above mentioned, had an effect which was real in its kind. This not only the apostle's manner of speech

conscience, of which he speaks ; therefore I understand purging of the conscience to import an effectual removing of condemnation, so as to produce peace of conscience. As we say in common speech, when a man is like to be found guilty in judgment, that he is not clean ; so while the conscience lies under condemnation, it is not clean. Implanted, inherent grace makes the soul otherwise clean ; but the taking away of condemnation, giving peace, in view of peace with God, is that purging which makes the conscience clean. How far inherent holiness is the consequence of this, we shall see hereafter.

3. When he mentions the effect of this purging to be, ‘ to serve the living God,’ in opposition to those dead works, he has a view to the effect of the ceremonial purifications, which was, to restore men to their privilege in the worship or service of God, from which their uncleanness debarred them ; and what he means is, to express the privilege of them who are justified, with respect to their access and communion with God, and their walking with him. Now the doctrine of the text is, in short, this—

Doct.—That the blood of Christ doth most effectually purify the conscience, to which it is applied, from all the guilt that lies upon it ; and so gives the sinner access to communion with God, and to walk with him.

For opening up this doctrine, I propose to speak on these four most important points.

- I. To explain what is the nature and office of the conscience, in relation, chiefly, to the guiltiness of the sinner, and what purification it requires.
- II. To show the absolute suitableness of Christ’s blood, to the purpose of purging the conscience.
- III. I propose to inquire, by what means this blood is applied to the conscience.
- IV. What are some of the principal effects of the application of this blood, and purification effected by it, in relation to the service of the living God.

I. To explain what is the nature and office of the conscience, in relation, chiefly, to the guiltiness of the sinner, and what purification it requires.—And here I find myself greatly at a loss to put a large variety of things together, in any method, consistent with the brevity needful. But to be as distinct as possible, I say, 1. It will be generally granted,

that is the life. We hold our life from God, the author of it, and who is vested with the sovereign dominion over it. Sin, which is a black treason against heaven, has forfeited the life, and the life must go for it ; so, 'the wages of sin is death,' Rom. vi. 23. Therefore, if one shall be substituted in place of another, in order to his redemption, the life of the one must fall for the life of the other. But then what kind of life must this be, that shall be a ransom and redemption for the life of man? Under the old law, the Israelites offered the life of brute creatures for atonement. What kind of atonement this was, has been explained. But could the life of a brute truly redeem the lost and forfeited life of a man? By no means. There was no equality, or adequate proportion betwixt them. That were eluding the justice of God and the eternal laws of heaven. To suppose, that the justice of God could be so satisfied, that the sentence of the law could be so accomplished, or rather eluded or trifled away, were some degree worse than to overlook the sovereign dominion, justice, and faithfulness of God wholly in the matter ; which were, however, denying God blasphemously, with respect to some of his most essential glories and perfections. No, 'it was not,' says the apostle, chap. x. 4 'possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins ;' that their life could redeem the life of the sinner from the forfeiture it underlay by sin. Therefore,

2. It is suggested, that this blood, this life, was of a more suitable kind ; it was a more likely ransom for our life ; for it was 'the blood of Christ, who offered himself.' And,

3. 'He offered himself without spot.' How much those two considerations, that the offering was himself, and with this special quality, of being spotless, make for the purposes of atonement and purification, we shall have better leisure and occasion to notice hereafter.

4. What is of most special consequence is, that 'he offered himself through the Eternal Spirit.' Some understand this of the Holy Ghost, the third Person of the glorious godhead. No doubt, the grace of the Holy Ghost, wherewith he was anointed above measure, working in his human nature inexpressible love, zeal, and strength, contributed to dispose and qualify him eminently for his hard service : however, I choose rather to understand it of his own Divine nature ; for which these reasons are assigned—1. Though the Holy Ghost be eternal, yet he is never mentioned with that epithet. 2. Christ's divine nature is elsewhere, several times, called

‘his spirit,’ Mark ii. 8. Speaking of what the scribes reasoned in their hearts, it is said, ‘Jesus perceived it in his spirit ;’ which can be understood of no other than his omniscient Divine nature. Again, it is called ‘the spirit of holiness,’ Rom. i. 3, 4. where there is distinction made between his flesh or human nature, (according to which he was of the seed of David,) and the Spirit of holiness, according to which he is the Son of God, and declared to be so by his resurrection from the dead ; so, 1 Pet. iii. 18. 3. We see, in the two last mentioned places, and often on other occasions, the Holy Ghost setting his human and Divine nature in an opposite view together ; judging it needful, where there is a view of the mean character and circumstances of the flesh, to suggest the supereminent glory of his godhead. Now that reason holds in this place. It contains a view of Christ in his lowest circumstances,—his human nature offered a sacrifice. It was very suitable, by the mention of the Eternal Spirit, to suggest the glory of his godhead. Besides, this sense is most suitable to the doctrinal purpose of the place ; which is, to show the infinite value and efficacy of his blood with relation to the conscience. And this is founded upon the dignity which his sacrifice derives from the union of the godhead with the human nature in his person. For these reasons, we understand the Eternal Spirit of his godhead. Through this he offered himself. No doubt he was a priest according to both natures ; and his human nature was, in several respects, active with relation to the offering of itself. Nevertheless, principally, by his Divine nature, was his manhood offered. It at the same time was the altar on which the sacrifice was born up and offered ; and, as the Lord says, Matth. xxiii. 19. ‘whether is better the gift, or ‘the altar that sanctifies the gift?’ So was the Divine nature of Christ the altar that sanctified the gift ; that gave it infinite dignity and value.

5. It is observed to whom he offered himself,—to God. How this offering was by the Father provided, and accepted for the ends of propitiation, we shall hereafter show. In the meantime, though Satan, as a kind of executioner with respect to the curse of the law, be represented as holding the sinner captive ; yet was not the ransom due, or to be offered to him, but to the public justice of Heaven, and to God the sovereign lawgiver. In which case, though all the Persons of the ever blessed godhead be alike the party offended, yet in the case of receiving satisfaction, suitably to the economy

pressions that are in the natural conscience of the heathen, Rom. i. 32. 'Who knowing the judgment of God, that they 'who commit such things are worthy of death.'

4. These things lead me to two or three cautions with respect to this subject. And, 1st, I say, we are not to measure the demand of conscience upon the sinner by his present light. Sin has darkened the light of his conscience, with respect to which he is himself highly faulty. This darkness is so great, that at present he may be said, for most part, to be without the law, and for that reason only alive. Yet when his conscience awakens, when the commandment comes, whether on occasion of God's word and Spirit entering upon it in time, or on occasion of final judgment hereafter, or otherwise, then conscience will extend its light, accusation, and demand as far as the law, which alone it acknowledges for its rule. I do not mean this, however, of laws merely positive, of which the sinner hath had no revelation. These certainly can never affect the conscience, or be laid in account to the sinner, in judgment by it; so the apostle declares, Rom. ii. 12. 'For as 'many as have sinned without law,' &c. 2d, Caution. We are not to measure the demand of conscience by what is presently under the view of the soul, or urges presently upon it. There is a narrowness in the conscience as well as in every other faculty of the soul, so that it cannot comprehend all in one view. Time likewise, constant divisions, and the constant accession of new things, weaken and wear out former impressions and convictions; but conscience is like a great book of record; when it is open, you see the face of it but in one page; when that is written out, or perused, the leaf is turned, the face of the book, in a new page only, is then under the view, and so on. The impression of grosser guiltiness, or of more late or present things, fill up the page of conscience that is under the present view; but when a throne of judgment is set, when the books are opened, and this great book is opened, when all its awful contents are produced at once, how then will those things that were asleep awaken? and those things that the sinner forgot and despised, as long ago dead, revive, and slay him, and be as a dark cloud that shall cover all the heavens from his eyes,—as a cloud discharging thunder and terrible tempest upon his head? From those two, follows the third caution. It is this, that there is great vanity, danger, and folly in a sinner's imposing peace upon his conscience, in its ignorant or its sleepy and seared condition. A little formality in good things, an atheistical

saying, a shameless sophism, may then suffice to please it, to fill its right hand with a lie, or at least to insult and divert it. Many deal by their conscience as a man that owed a great sum to an ignorant country man, or to one whom he should overtake in a fit of drunkenness or lethargy, and should take his advantage. He may, in such case, pay a great sum with a few farthings, or perhaps with good words, and procure ample discharge under a man's own hand ; but when he recovers, he will reclaim ; thousands will not then satisfy. Among men, if one should prove himself thus notoriously cheated, it would reverse and annul even the amplest writs : the judge would favour the injured, and put him in his own place, to the shame and ruin perhaps of the other party. So a man oft deals with his conscience in its evil condition. He has a little righteousness,—is conscious of some good quality by which he supposes he excels others,—has the honour of some swelling privileges,—perhaps some great, some notable good work. These things dazzle easily the eye of conscience in its dimness. Or, he has some set of poor reflections concerning preachers, or concerning the ordinary profession of godliness, offences, and so forth, that make the conscience as it were ashamed to insist. So it allows a man to judge of himself to his mind ; or, if it insist with more urgency, a man runs some heats in a course of duties and good works, and the form must be kept up when there is no more fervour to maintain it. Thus will conscience be easily satisfied or diverted ; but it will recover, reduce the false and wrongous claim, and dispossess a man of his unrighteous peace. The Judge of all the earth will favour it, and put it in its own place ; and, if this is when the day of a man's visitation is over, will arm it with an eternal vengeance against him. It is then of everlasting concern and importance for a man to look for peace in such manner as will do full justice to his conscience, which can happen in no way under heaven, but that which the Spirit of God lays open in our text.

5. What has been said leads me to observe a twofold defect ordinarily in the consciences of men. 1. A defect of light. Upon this I shall add none to what has been formerly said or hinted at. 2. There is a defect of vigour and strength. The conscience, in most of people, is like a bow off bend, or but very little bent. It shoots ; but alas, how faintly ! Its arrows strike the skin, but cause not the sinner to make a stand, or much alter his course. But when conscience is in its vigour, like a bow fully bent, how will it shoot ? how will

I hope, that every man, naturally and originally, has a conscience. When sin deprived man of his original rectitude and conformity to the law, only conscience remained, after the general ruin, greatly depraved, and some vestiges of the law itself, the greater lines thereof in it. Hence, the apostle says of the heathen, Rom. ii. 15. that 'they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness.' Infinite wisdom ordered it thus. The Lord maintained conscience, at least in being, amidst the general ruin; because he would, by means thereof, keep some restraint on the boundless wickedness of men, while the world is to subsist under his providential government; because he would not leave himself without a witness, by which 'he might be justified when he speaks, and be clear when he is judged,' Psal. li. 4. And, further, with respect to the effect, he would maintain conscience in being, that therein they might sometime receive the influence of the blood of Christ; and so it might be to them the instrument and mean of their everlasting consolation, through him, as it had been formerly the instrument of their most awful condemnation.

2. As to the nature of it; conscience is that faculty in man, by which he judgeth of himself, his actions, nature and state, with relation to God, and his supreme judgment. The understanding in man is otherwise employed about an endless variety of objects, that it is not concerned with; but as to conscience, it is employed about what is of most immediate everlasting concern. A man's actual sins lie openest to the observation of the conscience. From these it judgeth concerning a man's nature; and, by further reflection and inference, makes a conclusion concerning his state. In conscience there is a witnessing and a judgment. Sin bears witness there. Sin, as to the action of it, is transient; it passes, and ceases to have an existence, once committed; but it remains, and has a continued being in the conscience. There it testifies. 'Though our iniquities testify against us,' Jer. xiv. 7. It is said of Abel, with respect to his faith, 'by it, he being dead yet speaketh,' Heb. xi. 4.; so, as to sin, when it is passed by conscience, it yet speaketh,—speaketh, as Abel's blood did, when it cried to the Lord from the ground for vengeance. And, as the Lord said to Cain, 'Thou art cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood,' Gen. iv. 10, 11.; so sinner, thou art cursed from thy own conscience, which thou hast wounded, polluted, and laid waste by thy sin. Again, by his conscience

a man beareth witness against himself, and judgeth, condemning himself for sin. Further yet, by the conscience God bears witness and judges the sinner. Conscience is a window, by which the sinner perceives the all-seeing eye of God, looking in into the darkest recesses of his heart. Nor have sinners a greater demonstration of the being and presence of God than what they have by their conscience in this respect; for by the conscience does the Lord give a present experimental proof to the sinner, that he tries the heart and searches the reins. See 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25.; Heb. iv. 12, 13.

3. As there is in the conscience a witness and a judgment, this must be by a rule. And the rule is not any set of principles a man does voluntarily form to himself. It is the law of God, Rom. ii. 15. 'which shows the work of the law 'written in their hearts.' This law hath two parts that the conscience is principally concerned in; the precept, which shows the duty required; and the sanction, which imports the punishment of sin. 1. The precept, requiring duty, which consequently discovers sin; for by the law is the knowledge of sin. The original writing of this precept of the moral law upon the heart is sadly defaced by sin. Nothing but the more rough lines are visible; the greater letters only are legible. However, when the light of the word of God, revealing anew the holiness, spirituality, and breadth of the law, enters, then the law in the heart, which was darkened, and as it were folded up in a small compass in the conscience, opens and extends itself all that length, so as to receive and comprehend all the revealed explication of the law. Yea, as the reason of all obedience is fundamentally in the moral law, that is, in the natural conscience; so the revealed positive commands of God are ingrafted upon it, and become the ground of accusation and conviction, even in the natural conscience. As when a sinner accuses himself for neglecting the instituted means of grace, which a natural conscience however could not, of itself, ever have directed him particularly to. 2. The next part of the law is the sanction, which declares the punishment of sin. This is likewise in the conscience. It is true, an ignorant sinner cannot, perhaps, express in words, what is the precise wages of sin; but the sense of it produces a horror, and secret looking for of vengeance. This terror, this secret apprehension of vengeance, hath something boundless in it; and this boundless vengeance, which the conscience suggests, can amount to no less than death, which is the king of terrors. So the apostle constructs of the im-

its arrows pierce the soul? By such arrows were the multitude (Acts ii.) pricked in their hearts till they cried, at their wits end, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' The poison of such arrows drinks up a man's spirits. Such arrows stuck fast in the Psalmist, till his bones waxed old through his roaring all the day long, till his moisture was turned to the drought of summer. How terrible was such arrow to the jailor? He would run a sword into his own bowels. And if that was the cure, what must the disease have been? Now its vigour the conscience recovers by several means, and on several occasions. As, when terrible judgments are perceived, then the conscience awakens with a sudden start. We have heard of a heathen commonwealth that, when judgments threatened hard, offered two hundred of their noblest youth in sacrifice, to appease Heaven. There was no dissimulation in this, nor could religious custom have had such force. It could be from no less than a sense of 'the wrath of God, revealed from heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness,' Rom. i. 18. But such fright of conscience very commonly goes off as soon as the impending cloud seems to disappear. Again, conscience recovers its vigour when the word and Spirit of God enter, to convince of sin. By what means and in what manner the Spirit of God works on the conscience antecedently to conversion, and with what different symptoms, I shall not now insist on. I am but pursuing the same subject in a somewhat different view. In end, it recovers its vigour at the final solemn judgment, when it is raised eternally to its full light, vigour, and strength.

6. As there is in conscience, not only a witness, but a judgment, in the unconverted, condemning for sin, the sixth thing I notice is, a certain power it hath with respect to some present execution of this judgment; which leads us to consider some of the effects of a condemning unpurified conscience, such as shame, fear, terror, which make a bondage upon the soul. These have a deep root in human nature. But besides the ordinary common symptoms of these, the Scripture speaks of a spirit of bondage attending an awakened conscience, and belonging to their state who are under the law, Rom. viii. 15. Gal. iv. 24. and 2 Tim. i. 7. On these things I am not to enlarge. But there is this further effect that an awakened conscience has upon an unrenewed heart, that it produces special symptoms of enmity against God. Hence, many that smother sharp and continued convictions

of sin, going on in a course of sin, discover special enmity against the power of inward and real religion. The wickedness of the devil cannot be represented in stronger features than it is by such. There is with this, again, a distance and flying from God, that follows self-condemnation in the conscience. It may be said, perhaps, that this does not appear, for hypocrites have great boldness in drawing near to God; and when a man's conscience is awakened, it oftentimes puts him to pray oft, and to do many things. To this I answer, 1. That the formalities of hypocrisy, yea the painful labours of self-righteousness, do not contain a real approach of the soul to God. 2. The seeming boldness of many proceeds from a sleepiness or searedness of conscience; for we find it given as one part of the character of some who speak lies in hypocrisy, that 'they have their conscience seared as with a hot iron,' 1 Tim. iv. 2.; so that, from cases of that nature, we cannot judge concerning the native effects of a condemning conscience. In so far as it is awake and vigorous, doing its duty in condemning the impenitent sinner, it will no less really have the effect in every sinner of making him avoid God, than it had in Adam when he fled from God to hide himself; or in Cain, when he went out from the presence of the Lord, from the place of light and religion where he lived near his parents. There may perhaps be a forced painfulness in duties of outward religion, but the heart in its bondage will fly from God. Besides what I have said of the case of the unconverted, when the conscience is under the kindly, gracious influence of the Spirit of God in his people, its discoveries and reproofs will have such effects as are mentioned, 2 Cor. vii. 11.

7. Now, to bring this long deduction of things to the point, the last thing on this head I am to speak of, is, the purification of the conscience. The defilement of sin, or its uncleanness, so far as it affects the conscience, is the condemnation it produces there. Its purification is, when the sinner is, on good grounds, satisfied concerning his peace with God, or the removal of his guiltiness and condemnation, that 'sin shall not be imputed,' Psal. xxxii. 2. Now, it appears that these two questions—What will satisfy the conscience as to its peace; or will purge it? and, What will satisfy the law, and the justice of God expressed in it?—come to one and the same purpose. Nothing will serve the purpose of the former, but what is required to the latter. However conscience may, in its evil condition, (darkness and weakness,)

be imposed on, yet it will, as you heard, sometime certainly reclaim. No atonement then will be a suitable purification of the conscience, but what is fully adequate to the sanction and curse of the law, and answers all the ends of atonement, in the acceptation and judgment of God; to which conscience will have its appeal from the delusions of a heart deceitful above all things. This leads us full upon the second general head of discourse proposed.

II. To show the absolute suitableness of Christ's sacrifice and blood, to satisfy and purify the conscience, and to give it peace. This absolute suitableness appears by, and is founded on, these several things:—

I. The nature of the sacrifice,—‘He offered himself.’ Now, by-the-bye, herein it is that the great law of Christ to his people appeared. Job lost a family of children, and an immense wealth, and bore it patiently. Ay, but, says Satan, ‘skin for skin; all that a man hath will he give for his life,’ Job ii. 4. Had Christ given all that was precious in heaven and earth for the redemption of his people, it were no proof of his love like this, that ‘he gave himself,’ not to be happy with the church his spouse, but to suffer death and a curse for her. How great would this love be accounted in another, whose love would be infinitely less valuable? The apostle, in his love to Israel, could wish himself to be accursed from Christ for them; even the apostle, who had such inexpressible sense of the comfort of communion with Christ, that he sustains the loss of all things, and ‘accounts them but dung that he may win Christ,’ Phil. iii. 8.; yet to be accursed from him! The apostle's zeal in this has been a wonder and a mystery to the world ever since. Many choose rather not to understand his words, than believe them in their proper meaning. Christ was incomparably more sensible of the blessedness of his Father's countenance and fellowship; yet not in a wish, but actually, he undergoes to be separated and accursed from him. ‘O the breadth!’ &c. Eph. iii. 18, 19. But to the present purpose,—the purpose of the conscience. Christ offered himself. It was a human sacrifice! What was a brute creature, such as were before offered in sacrifice, that it should be substituted in the room of a rational creature? ‘It was not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.’ The justice of heaven would not, nor would conscience accept of such a substitution. The law behoved to have its course, if not upon the person, yet certainly upon the nature that sinned. When the hea-

thens knew, by tradition from the Church, the necessity and institution of sacrifice for expiating sin, even nature's light seems to have led them from all confidence, on many occasions, in brute sacrifices. Hence came these many barbarous and terrible human sacrifices among them, of which there are so many instances in profane history. Even a natural conscience then showed them the insufficiency of their ordinary sacrifices, and would not be satisfied with them, though it could not direct them aright. Yea, there are reasons suitable to infinite wisdom and justice, why he who was to expiate sin, since elect children did partake of flesh and blood, should partake of the same, and be made like to them in all things, sin only excepted. And this exception of sin is that quality and character of the nature of our propitiatory sacrifice, that conscience would indispensably require. Conscience, that is so sensible of the terribleness of sin, must, if applied to, consider the matter; be further sensible, that if our sacrifice were not free from the guilt and impurity of sin, his own guiltiness would exhaust his suffering capacity to eternity; so that there could be no superplus or supererogation that could do it service. Conscience, enlightened and awakened, that is so sensible, from its own experience, that no service truly acceptable could proceed from a heart affected with the defilement of sin, could have no comfort by a sacrifice, with respect to which it could have such suspicion. All these considerations receive confirmation as to their truth and importance, from the care the Spirit of God has taken to satisfy the conscience as to this particular with respect to Christ. Hence does He so carefully, under the Old Testament, in these sacrifices that prefigured Christ, require that they should be of a clean kind,—clean, perfect, without spot. Hence does the apostle Peter notice with particular emphasis, that 'he was as a lamb without spot;'<sup>\*</sup> and this apostle, in our text, that 'he offered himself without spot to God.' For the same reason is it so carefully observed, that 'he was holy, harmless, undefiled;'<sup>†</sup> that though 'made to be sin,' *i.e.* a sin-offering, 'yet he knew no sin;'<sup>‡</sup> that 'he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth;'<sup>||</sup> that 'he suffered, the just for the unjust.'<sup>§</sup> All the race of Adam were fallen, not into an ordinary mire, but were drowning in an ocean of uncleanness. Of all the race, only the Man Christ has kept this foot on dry ground. He escapes,

\* 1 Pet. i. 19.

‡ 2 Cor. v. 21.

§ 1. Pet. iii. 18.

† Heb. vii. 26.

|| 1 Pet. ii. 22.

to save his perishing brethren ; to stretch a hand to perishing souls. When conscience sees sin sweeping away all its confidences besides, what comfort must it have when it views with faith Christ, of the seed of the woman, its great High-priest, holy, harmless, undefiled, by the alone sacrifice of himself, procuring judgment against the serpent, the prince of this world, at the sametime that he is capable by power to execute it, by bruising his head ?

2. The absolute suitableness of Christ's sacrifice and blood for the purposes of the law and of the conscience, appears by the kinds of suffering he underwent. The sentence and judgment of the law denounced to the sinner sorrow ; so to the man, Gen. iii. 17. ' In sorrow shalt thou eat ;' and to the woman, ver. 16. ' I will greatly multiply thy sorrow.' Now Christ was, in the superlative degree, a man of sorrows. Read Isaiah liii. 2, 3, 4. How strong and moving were the outward symptoms of his sorrow ! Isa. lii. 14. ' What constant abundant matter of deep sorrow had he ! such as the prospect of the misery—the manifold misery, sin had brought upon the world. The world ! a stage of misery and wretchedness ! affording a dismal, melancholy scene every way he could look ! There were then the temptations of Satan that he suffered himself ; the disadvantage and trial of his outward mean circumstances in the world ; the hatred, enmity, reproach, snares, persecution of the world, even of those who on many accounts are called his own, for ' he came unto his own, and ' his own received him not.' There was further, the hypocrisy and treachery of professors, the weakness, instability, various provocations of his most genuine followers. In his human nature he was not of adamant ; to our great comfort, he had a soul most tenderly sensible of trial by all these things ; otherwise they could have been no temptations to him. But the apostle says, Heb. iv. 15. ' He was in all ' points tempted, like as we are.' Those temptations, it is true, could not produce sin in him, as they do in us ; but they produced sorrow. So as to his life in the flesh, it was the character of it, that he was, in the highest degree that human nature was capable of, ' a man of sorrows.' But then the period of life is death. The law had denounced against the sinner death,—that was the wages of sin ; death temporal, the separation of soul and body,—that he underwent ; death spiritual, the separation of the soul from God,—that he underwent ; death eternal, inconceivable torment and anguish—that, likewise, in kind, he underwent. To consi-

der it more closely with respect to what was outward and exposed to view, as well as what was inward, there was in his death, all the trial, to the uttermost, of treachery, enmity, shame, cruel mocking, buffeting, reproach, torture, and pain. The prince of this world, with full permission, did, on this occasion, exert his whole strength, not only by himself immediately (for 'he had departed from him,' Luke iv. 13. 'but for a season,') but by blowing up his instruments to their whole extent of wickedness and cruelty. Consider how Christ expresses his case, Psal. lxxix. 2, 4, 7, 8, 12, 19, 20, 21., for this had he spoken, as verses 1 and 2. See likewise Psal. xxii. 7, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18. But what was most terrible, the very quintessence of the law's curse, was the fill of wrath his soul received, and the hiding of his Father's countenance at the same time. This was the ingredient in his cup, that made his soul shrink, that made him 'exceeding sorrowful, even unto death,' with the prospect of which he was amazed,—that made him 'sweat great drops falling 'to the ground like blood,'—that made him cry, 'My God, 'my God, why hast thou forsaken me?'—that made him need an angel to comfort him. And how much would our bowels be moved for a great king, if we saw him in such circumstances of distress, deserted by all, that the assistance of a poor beggar would comfort him? And how low is Christ, the King of glory, when he needs comfort from an angel,—a poor creature that, to speak so, had ever subsisted by his own alms and bounty? None of his own disciples were capable to give him any encouragement or assistance on this occasion. If the encouragements,—at least the concern and sympathy of some of them,—could have been of use to him in his secret agonies, yet could he not obtain this; even that three distinguished disciples should watch with him to be witnesses of his trial, to pray for themselves, or the success of his undertaking,—'Couldst thou not watch with me one hour?' When he came to a more public trial, the boldness of one of them, the only instance of boldness or courage given by any of them, had like (as it often happens, to the increasing of the grief and trial of innocent and dutiful sufferers,) had like, I say, to have done more harm than good, when he cut off the servant's ear, Matt. xxvi. 51.; 'suddenly thereafter, 'all the disciples forsook him and fled,' Matt. xxvi. 56. When one of the most forward and zealous ventures farther and nearer than the rest, it was only to add to his trial, by denying him thrice, Matt. xxvi. 75. Little comfort had he

then, in his distress, from his disciples; for whose comfort, some hours before, he had laboured and provided so carefully; particularly, by instituting his supper, and by these wonderful discourses extant, John xiv. xv. and xvi. chapters. The faith of God's people has done wonderful and astonishing things on very trying occasions; but never was the faith of disciples cast into a more universal deliquium or swoon than on this occasion. This is of very humbling consideration. However, it was a very wise providence that ordered it so, that, 'when the Shepherd was stricken, the sheep should be scattered,' Zech. xiii. 7.; that, 'when he was to tread the wine-press of the people, there should be none with him,' Isa. lxiii. 3.; that, 'when Christ was under a cloud, there should be darkness over all the earth,' Luke xxiii. 44.; that, when darkness covered the Sun of righteousness, the lesser planets should undergo an eclipse; that, when the wrath of Heaven was poured upon the Surety, the principals, with respect to the guilt and obligation, should be struck with the most gloomy damp into an awful attention to the matter itself, and to the event. This however, in another view, was a part of his suffering, and at least an aggravating circumstance of his distress. But, to return to our chief purpose:—

The sting of death. The most awful sting of it was this wrath of God which Christ underwent, with the concomitant circumstances above mentioned. I will not, however, say that Christ actually expired with this wrath on his soul and with the sense of it; all that he suffered was as the wages of sin; yet are we to distinguish betwixt this wrath he underwent, and what he suffered otherwise. This wrath was not an ingredient in every part of his suffering. It was, as it were, served in a cup by itself. I think there is reason to say, that this cup he fully drank out while he lived upon the cross; and that, in great part, it might be with respect to this, he said, 'It is finished;' and that it was with the comfort of this he said, 'Unto thy hand, Father, I commend my spirit.' Yet so precisely must the letter of the law be fulfilled, that he must actually die, and his human nature undergo its dissolution; yea, as by the judgment of the law the sinner must return unto the dust, though Christ's body saw no corruption, yet so precisely must the letter of the law be fulfilled in this too, that his body must go to the bowels of the earth. In all this, indeed, there was no despair or eternal duration; but these are only consequential to the circumstances of the finite, mere creature under wrath, who, because he cannot

drink it fully out, is in hell eternally hopeless. But this is not essential to what the law requires. It is further true, that the inherent prevalency and power of sin and the power of Satan belong to the curse of the law upon the sinner; yet it is only a consequence of the curse upon the sinner himself, and so could not affect our Surety, as not being any kind or part of what the law and justice of Heaven required for expiation and atonement, but absolutely contrary to, and inconsistent therewith. It appears that there is no kind of expiatory suffering the law requires more than he underwent, or that the most awakened conscience can justly require. The most awakened conscience may be fully satisfied, that the Supreme Judge, to whom the vengeance belonged, and who knew how to measure it out, hath not fallen short of the needful measure and kind; but that Christ hath undergone it all. But besides the suitableness of Christ's suffering, with respect to degree and kind, to the purposes of divine justice and of the conscience, 3. There is, after all, remaining a most relevant and competent demand that the conscience hath to make, and it is this: There is an infiniteness of evil and demerit in every sin. What proportion of value does Christ's propitiatory sacrifice bear to this infinite demerit of every one of the infinite sins of the whole elect multitude, of every tongue, language, and kindred, that, as John says, Rev. vii. 9. 'cannot be numbered?' This is a demand unexceptionably competent, that can be answered no way but by considering and believing the eternal Godhead of Christ. This is so necessary, and evidently required, that they who deny his Godhead, do exert all their strength to disprove, if possible, the truth of his proper satisfaction for sin, at the same time. Hence then is the dignity and infinite value of Christ's blood, that he is God, that, through the Eternal Spirit he offered himself. The Godhead acted not in this case, as on other occasions, by foreign instruments, means, and second causes, in the ordinary course of things. The Godhead is united in the same person with the human nature; and it is so united with the Godhead, that it has a right to be called himself—'He offered himself;' therefore has the Spirit of God been so careful in this likewise to satisfy the conscience, by laying before it so oft the evidence and glory of Christ's Godhead; especially on these occasions when his humiliation, blood, sufferings, and death are mentioned. Hence is this represented as the fundamental mystery of godliness, 'God 'made manifest in the flesh,' 1 Tim. iii. 16. To this purpose

is his name, Isa. ix. 6. the first epithet, the first letter whereof, is, 'The Wonderful;' what follows shows in what respect. Though he be 'a Son given, a Child born unto us,' yet is he 'the mighty God, the everlasting Father.' Again, as, Acts xx. 28. the church of God is said to be purchased with his own blood, so, 1 John iii. 16. 'hereby perceive we 'the love of God, because he laid down his life for us.' In like manner, Phil. ii. 8. 'He who became obedient to death, 'even the death of the cross,' is the same, ver. 6. 'who, 'being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God.' Infinite justice refuses every thing else that could be thought on. Heb. x. 5. 'Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst 'not, but a body hast thou prepared me.' No body besides, made as glorious as creating power could make it; but 'a 'body prepared me;' a body, says the Son of God, in which I may suffer, and become a sacrifice. Now the question is concerning the proportion of value betwixt the sins, or the forfeited lives of an elect world, and this price of their redemption. But the ransom exceeds all proportion, as God is beyond all proportion. There is no such thing as proportion betwixt Him and all his creatures. But if we will speak of proportion, see what it amounts to, Isa. xl. 15. 'The nations are as 'the drop in the bucket, and are counted as the small dust 'of the balance before him.' Now let an accusing conscience bring forth its strong reasons, and Satan his rhetoric. Let things be laid in the balance. If all nations, compared with him, are but as the small dust that does not at all affect the balance, then, must not the sins of the elect, who are but a small part of all nations, be sufficiently expiated, and their life be effectually redeemed, when the ransom is the life, the blood of God? The temptations then of a troubled soul concerning this subject are a great dishonour to the eternal godhead of Christ; and it appears, that unbelief is, because the light of the glorious gospel of Christ does not, with respect to this great subject, shine into the heart.

4. The fourth thing upon which the suitability of Christ's blood for purging the conscience is founded, is, the acceptableness of it to God the Father for that end, and for all the purposes of Divine justice, and the evidence the conscience has from the word of God thereof. With respect to the things already insisted on, and with respect to the substitution of Christ in the room of sinners, after all that has been said, conscience must have this question; will God the Father, will the supreme Governor of heaven and earth,

accept of this ransom, or of such substitution? It is therefore a very competent and suitable part of the man's question in Micah vi. 7. 'Will the Lord be pleased?' As if he had said, 'To me thousands of rams, ten thousands of rivers of oil, seem to be of immense value; but 'will the Lord be pleased with all this?' The conscience has the same question. I therefore think it may be of good use to insist, somewhat largely and particularly, on these various proofs that God the Father has given, both in word and in deed, of the acceptableness of Christ's blood to him as the price of our redemption and salvation.

I say, then, if the soul were in a believing frame, which is of great consequence in this matter, it might observe, at a distance, what might satisfy it about this point: for how has the world stood, and the everlasting gospel been sent to all the parts of it, and the report of it, and ordinances thereto belonging, been kept up till now, in a wonderful manner? How can even this be accounted for, if it be not that the Father, being fully satisfied with his Son's blood, as a propitiation for sin, will give it full course for the salvation of the elect seed?

But to look nearer into the matter, and into the evidence the word of God gives more clearly concerning it, I say the Father's full acquiescence in his Son's blood and death, for the ends of atonement and reconciliation, may appear by, and be most satisfyingly inferred from, these considerations:

1. It has been offered by virtue of the contrivance and appointment of his own infinite wisdom, council, and will. When the Lord chides with the Israelites, Jer. xxxii. 35. about causing their sons and their daughters pass through the fire to Molech, he says not, how insufficient must this be of itself for purification of the conscience? That he does not insist on; but says, 'Which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind.' It cannot be so said in this case, that the service and suffering Christ underwent came not into his mind. It was the eternal device of his own infinite wisdom,—it was a sacrifice he provided for himself. For this he allows his church to be designed, 'Jehovah Jireh, the Lord will provide,' Gen. xxii. 14. Christ acted and suffered all 'according to the will of God and the Father,' Gal. i. 4. This was his delight in his suffering, Psalm xl. 8. 'To do thy will I take delight.' Why did he take the frightful cup into his hand, all amazed, when his human nature shrank at it! when his human nature of itself

would have drawn back ! but upon this reason, ' Not my will, ' but thy will be done,' Matt. xxvi. 39.

2. There deserves here to be mentioned by itself, the solemn audible testimony given from heaven, first at his baptism, next on the holy mount. The circumstances attending it, on both occasions, show of what consequence it is; and the blessed apostle lays great stress upon it. The man in Micah says, ' Will the Lord be pleased?' The conscience sticks, and after all says, ' Will the Lord be pleased?' Consider then the honour and glory he received from the Father, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, ' This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,' 2 Pet i. 17.

3. Consider in testimony of the Father's well-pleas'dness, the support the Father gave him in all the hardest parts of his work and suffering. Was it without commission, that an angel, a faithful ministering Spirit, ' appeared to him,' Luke xxii. 43. ' from heaven; strengthening him?' ' Behold,' says the Lord, Isa. xlii. 1. ' My servant whom I uphold;' and verse 6. ' I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and ' will hold thine hand and keep thee.'

4. There is the most real demonstration of the Father's satisfaction by his Son's blood and death as the price of our redemption, in his raising him up from the dead, Acts ii. 24. ' Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of ' death.' Had death any more to require? Would justice have received him out of its hands? Would it have concurred with him in an unjust breaking of prison, without full and acceptable payment of the debt?

5. There is his ascension and reception into heaven. ' Whom the heavens must receive,' Acts iii. 21. Would he have been received into heaven, in the quality of our fore-runner, as a free man, to speak so, if his satisfaction had not been complete and fully acceptable for the purchase of such a privilege to us and to himself as our representative? This is that proof by which the Spirit convinceth of righteousness; of the completeness of Christ's righteousness, John xvi. 10. ' of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ' ye see me no more.'

6. There is the blessing of the Holy Ghost dispensed to the church. This is, as from Christ, so from the Father to him, and to the church on his account. There was at the beginning a wonderful effusion of the Holy Ghost in an extraordinary manner. The Spirit is still dispensed in the

church in an ordinary way. Have you ever felt, accompanying the word of God, any breath of the Holy Ghost, but of an awakening, quickening, or comforting tendency? Or, believe you that there is any such thing? Now, whence could there be any, the least breathing of the Spirit in the church? Do such things come in the way of devils, who are kept in chains? Have you ever, by seeing or hearing, been sensible of special gifts of the Holy Ghost, shining in the particular members or officers of the Church? How are these things to be accounted for? Thus, Acts ii. 33. 'Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth that which ye now see and hear.' Now, could he have received from the Father, in accomplishment, this promise; this great part of what the Father engaged for in the covenant of redemption, if he (the Son) had not performed his part, fully and acceptably, with respect to that blood and sacrifice by which he was to purchase it? Could this blessing of Abraham, as it is called, Gal. iii. 14. and which pre-supposed the removal of the curse, have taken place, unless by Christ's becoming a curse for them, his people were effectually redeemed from the curse? Has he thus 'received gifts for men, for the rebellious? This sure is in consequence of 'His leading captivity captive;' so that neither sin, nor the law, has any right to keep the believer or his conscience in captivity or bondage.

7. All the covenants, and all the exceeding great and precious promises of it, held forth to the people of God, as they lie throned in the scriptures, hold forth the same thing; the sure foundation that is laid in the blood of Christ. It is in Christ that the promises of God are all yea and amen. It is in him that the covenant is confirmed. It is his blood that is the blood of the covenant. Yea, in another view, the covenant and all the promises are Christ's own testament to his church, and receive force and validity only by the death of the testator. So far, then, as diffidence takes place, with respect to the absolute suitableness of Christ's blood to purge the conscience, so far is the covenant and all the promises called in question, the wisdom of God, in proposing them, made vain, and his faithfulness made of no account. This, then, is the foundation of all that Christ's blood, with respect to atonement, acceptableness, and purchase, extends as far as the covenant built on it; whereof this is the fundamental promise, (intended for the benefit of the conscience,) 'I will

‘forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more,’ Jer. xxxi. 34.

8. There is the ministry of reconciliation, which imports, 2 Cor. v. 19. that ‘God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself; has committed to us the ministry of reconciliation;’ and ‘has sent to preach peace to them that were far off, and to them that are nigh.’ This certainly is sufficient proof, that, in the account of God the Father, the blood of Christ answers all the purposes of justice and of the conscience; and that he sees good reason for it to be reconciled to sinners; and therefore, against all the powers of hell has maintained the ministry of reconciliation in the world till this day.

9. Consider the ancient saints who have gone to Heaven from the beginning of the world till now; ‘the elders, who through faith have obtained a good report,’ Heb xi. 2. Now upon what title did they obtain heaven for an eternal inheritance, but this, in the verse after the text, ‘that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance?’ Now has God not only received Christ our forerunner into heaven, his holy place, with his own blood, but likewise received the thousands of his ransomed ones thither on the same account? and, is he not most fully satisfied with that blood, as the price of redemption? and, should not the conscience be so too? What then would unbelief raging in a troubled conscience be at? Would you not only damn yourself, but damn all the saints of God, by distrusting the foundation of their salvation; by distrusting the sufficiency of that ladder, by which they, through faith, reached up to heaven?

To add a little yet to those particulars, I say there is most evident reason, why the Father should acquiesce in the obedience and satisfaction of his Son Christ. For though our reason of itself be a faculty the conscience has little cause to trust to, and though any evidence it would of itself produce could have but little force in a matter of this kind, yet the reasons I add have likewise their foundation in the word of God.

1. Then, it was the obedience and the blood of his only Son. A man has more intense pleasure in the good service of an only son, than in the same or greater service of a stranger. The eternal and infinite love which God bore to his own Son must produce an infinite complacency in his obedience.

2. Such obedience, among men, was most singular ; therefore the more valuable. If a great king had one province, ever and without exception mutinous, disaffected, and rebellious, how would he value the firm, zealous, and steady adherence of a faithful subject to his interests, among such a crew ? Mankind make one great province of God's dominion, ever in rebellion ; not one faithful subject naturally since the fall of Adam. But among this race, the God-man Christ ; how firm, steady, zealous for God, for his interest, dominion, and holiness, amidst and against the powers of hell and of the world ! ' To do thy will I take delight,' Psal. xl. 8. ; ' The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up,' Psal. lxi. 9. Such an instance among men ! What may not heaven yield to the behoof of his vile countrymen, kinsmen, and brethren, for the sake of so loyal a friend and subject ! This to be found among men ! The obedience of angels was nothing to this ! It is said ' there is more joy in heaven for one sinner ' recovered, than for ninety-nine just persons that went not ' astray,' Luke xv. 7. In like manner, there is more pleasure to heaven by the obedience of Christ among men, than by the obedience of all the angels in heaven.

3. The law could be glorified in no way so much as by Christ. That the Son of God should be made under the law, was greatly to the glory of the law. A man of ordinary rank would account it a huge honour, that a prince should hold of him, was it but a small part of his estate ; that he should have a prince so far bound to any acts of vassalage or obedience to him : so is it great honour to the law to have the Son of God, with respect to his human nature, bound to its obedience. But further, as to its sanction, the law might avenge itself eternally on sinners for disobedience, but could never be magnified and made honourable by a complete, accomplished, and finished obedience and satisfaction, any otherwise than by Christ. There is therefore good reason on all accounts to believe that the Father and his infinite justice is therewith fully satisfied ; that his honour is repaired ; that there is sufficient foundation laid for reconciliation and peace. There is through Christ good reason for both parts of the angels' song, Luke ii. 14. ' Glory to God in the highest ; and ' on earth, peace, good will towards men.'

Now what would the conscience require ? It hath indeed a loud cry of vengeance ; but the vengeance is the Lord's. ' Vengeance,' says he, ' is mine,' Rom. xii. 19. Hath it then any scruple that it cannot win through ; any difficulty of

which it cannot extricate itself, concerning the nature and quality of the sacrifice, the due manner of offering, the adequateness of the ransom, or its acceptableness to the justice of heaven? This may answer every scruple, solve every difficulty at once; the evidence the conscience hath, by word and deed, that God is fully satisfied, well-pleased in his Son. This completes and closes the evidence on this whole point, viz. the absolute suitableness of Christ's sacrifice and blood for the purposes of divine justice, and for purification of the conscience; so that there was reason for insisting the longer upon it.

III. The third thing to be considered relating to the general subject, is, the application of Christ's blood to the conscience, and by what means it is applied. The apostle's doctrine implies this application: for, how can it purge away uncleanness from the conscience, without being applied to it? In all the sacrifices and purifications of old, such application was represented, Heb. ix. 19. 'When Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people.' The ashes of the heifer in the water of purification behaved to be applied, by sprinkling the unclean, verse 13. By-the-bye, how shall we judge of their doctrine who hold, that men who never heard of Christ, by living up to the rules of their several religions, may be saved even through Christ? This is diminishing the special mercy of God to us, to whom Christ is preached; to lead those who hear of him to think that themselves have a wide gate to enter at, when Christ says it is narrow; it is to open, by the sovereignty of our charity, the gate to those on whom God hath shut it; it is giving the lie to the Spirit of God, who saith concerning all by whom the gospel is not both heard and received, that 'they are without God, without hope in the world,' Eph. ii. 12. Is the character and state of those who have not heard of Christ now better than what is represented, Eph. iv. 17, 18.? Our fond imagination may contrive charitable schemes of doctrine, in favours of them who are in ignorance of God's law, and of the way of salvation; but the Spirit of God has no other doctrine concerning them than this, Rom. ii. 12. 'As many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law;' and does he not prove that 'all have sinned,' chap. iii. 9, 23.? And from our text, we say, how can the consciences of such be purged by the blood

of Christ, to whose conscience he hath not subjectively, nor so much as objectively, been revealed? or, does God leave his own witness in their souls in such a case, as to be capable of doing no other warrantably than condemning of them whom yet himself would be supposed to justify? It is true, Rom. ii. 15. it is said, their conscience, as it accuses, so it excuses; but it is one thing for the conscience to excuse (with respect to particular instances of sin or duty,) another thing to report to a man the remission of his sins. Now, upon what ground can the conscience of them who know not Christ report or suggest the remission of sin? If it does so upon this ground, that a man has lived up sincerely to the rules of that religion he holds, and that he knows infinite mercy to be an attribute of God, (and it can pretend no other ground,) then, of necessity, either that man's conscience suggests a lie and is deluded, or the death of Christ was needless and vain. But further, we may from this judge of the vain peace and hope of many hardened and impenitent sinners within the church. They hope to be saved; but, upon what ground? By the mercy of God; for God is infinitely merciful. But this makes not a sufficient ground of hope. God would be infinitely merciful; and yet, in consistency with that mercy, have adjudged you and all the fallen race of Adam to eternal damnation; as he hath done the devils. But such a man pretends to have hope in Christ; Christ died and shed his blood for sinners of mankind. Such things a man has heard and his tongue reports; but does your conscience suggest so to you?—your conscience which the blood of Christ never reached, which never felt its influence, to which it never was applied?

Now the blood of Christ is applied to the sinner: 1. Judicially, by God imputing it to the believer's account, with respect to his person and state, in order to his justification. 2. There is an immediate and internal application of it to the conscience. The question concerning this is, By what means is it so applied? Here there are three things to be considered: 1. The word of God; 2. Faith; 3. The immediate operation of the Holy Ghost.

1. The word of God, 'the word of the everlasting gospel, of the ministry of reconciliation,' 2. Cor. v. 19. which he hath sent, Eph. ii. 17. 'to preach peace to them which were far off, and to them that were nigh: the word of faith,' Rom. x. 8. This is it that carries the report of Christ's blood to the ear and to the conscience; it is 'the

means careful that we do not contrive schemes concerning it, lay foundations, or offer warrants for it, that will be otherwise contrary to the analogy of faith, or form of sound words. In the meantime, I say,

3. That there is in the word of God and in the gospel a foundation and warrant for strong faith. To describe faith in such a maner as will only suit the weakest and smallest degrees of it, and to suppose that the manner of faith can be only by a progress from weak to strong faith, is, we suppose, not so just. However we may be at a loss in explaining some things that concern the warrants of faith, as we must likewise be at a loss in explaining many things concerning the production and acting of faith, Eccl. xi. 5. yet I think it should be acknowledged, that there is in the word of God and in the gospel a foundation and warrant for strong faith, in the most immediate and primary actings of it. Having premised these things, I shall be the more brief in the account to be given of the nature of faith.

I say then, that as faith, in the general, hath for its foundation the word of God, 'the faithful saying,' the report of it concerning Christ, and the offer of the gospel, and as the views and discoveries of it are beyond the reach of the natural understanding, and by another light than the natural understanding ever hath; so particularly,—

1. This faith contains in it a perception, a satisfying perception, of the glorious and absolute sufficiency of Christ's obedience, sacrifice, blood and death, for our ransom, our redemption; for procuring the remission of sin, and reconciliation; for our peace; for the purchase of all grace and salvation. This includes, 1. A satisfying view of the glorious method of divine wisdom and grace, with respect to the mediation of Christ, and the substitution of him for sinners. 2. Some just view of the glory of the person of Christ, whose name is, 'The wonderful; who is Immanuel, God with us; who is God manifest in the flesh, who through the Eternal Spirit offered himself.' Such view of this as does, with much wonder and astonishment, satisfyingly convince the soul of the singular and infinite dignity and preciousness of his oblation and blood. 3. A view of the holiness and justice of God (with which the conscience is principally concerned,) as being fully glorified in Christ, and by having full reparation from him. That faith contains such perception and views of such knowledge, is evident from those Scriptures that show the immediate effect of the gospel to be, Acts. xxvi.

18. 'opening men's eyes, and turning them from darkness 'to light;' that show unbelief to be, 2. Cor. iv. 4. by 'the blinding of men's eyes, lest the light of the glorious gospel 'of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them;' that show this unbelief and rejection of the gospel to be overcome, verse 6. 'by receiving the light of the glory of God in 'the face of Christ;' that declare, as John xvii. 3. 'This is 'life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus 'Christ whom thou hast sent.'

2. Faith contains a satisfying conviction and view of the most free and full offer of Christ in the gospel, and the particular direction of that offer to the sinner himself. By means of which, the sinner, distressed with a sense of condemnation and wrath, perceives Christ to be a city of refuge, the way to which is prepared and plain, not long or distant, Deut. xix. 3, 6.; perceives his blood to be (as Zech. xiii. 1.) 'a fountain opened for him to wash in, for sin and for uncleaness.'

3. Faith imports a confident acceptance of Christ, with the benefit and comfort of his blood. Here are two things to be considered. 1. Acceptation; 2. Confidence therein. 1. Acceptation. That faith imports this, appears, first, from 1 Tim. i. 15. where the apostle, recommending, as is evident, Christ to the faith of sinners, says, 'This is a saying worthy 'of all acceptance;' and from John i. 12. where faith is expressed by receiving; 'to them that received him, even to 'them that believe on his name.' 2. From these places that show the unbelief of sinners and express it, as Matth. xxiii. 37. 'how often would I have gathered your children, and 'ye would not?' and John v. 40. 'and ye will not come to 'me that ye might have life.' And this is such a full and hearty acceptance as may be supposed to flow from a thorough sense of a desperate condition, from such views of redemption by Christ as are mentioned; and from the agreeable, sweet, and overpowering influence of the Spirit of Christ. But further, there is confidence; for I called it a confident acceptance. That such a confidence suits the nature of faith, is evident from the nature of the thing; for how shall a distressed and humbled sinner, surprised with a discovery of the suitability and sufficiency of Christ, of the free and particular offer of him, and satisfyingly convinced of all this, be supposed to receive Christ but with confident acceptance? If it be said, that it is the soul's reflection upon its own acting, in way of acceptance and faith, that produces this confi-

'entry of this word' into the conscience, overclouded with the dark apprehension of wrath, 'that gives light,' Psal. cxix. 130. 'Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope,' Psal. cxix. 49.

Now, in the experience of souls, the word of God may convey this benefit of Christ's blood to the conscience in a different manner and with different circumstances. Sometimes the word may enter, in these parts of it which do more directly express the virtue of Christ's blood and its use for our redemption, and so procure a more explicit consent and faith in relation to the blood of Christ, with a more sensible effect upon the conscience. At another time a promise of God's word may come in the soul, that expresses some particular benefit and comfort of the covenant, suited to that which the soul is most particularly exercised about: however, it being in Christ only that the promises of God are yea and amen, the particular comfort is so conveyed into the soul, that the conscience, at the same time, though in a more implicit way, is fully satisfied about the ground thereof in Christ, and in his blood; which, as was hinted, by the removal of the curse, alone doth entitle to the blessings of Abraham, or of the covenant.

2. There is faith. By faith it is that Christ is received, John i. 12.: by it the soul feeds on the flesh and blood of the Son of man, John vi. 47, 48, 51.; the mouth it is of the soul, by which this blood entering, doth, as it were, fall down upon the conscience. In a word, 'God hath set forth Christ to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood,' Rom. iii. 25.

It may be proper, upon this occasion, to give some account, 1. Of the nature of this faith; 2. Of its office with respect to the blood of Christ, and the conscience. 1. Of the nature of faith. Upon this, to be the better understood, I premise these three things:

1. That the object of faith is various and extensive. Faith acts variously, suitably to the variety presented to it in the word of God; to all the length and breadth of which, with respect to every various and different matter, our faith ought to extend itself. Now the benefit of faith, with respect to our justifications and purging of the conscience, being from its object, and there being many objects presented to it from the word, which have not a proper immediate relation to our justification or the purging of the conscience, (for instance, Heb. vi. 3.) it follows, that there are many actings of true faith

that do not belong to our present subject and consideration ; and that it is justly that justifying faith, or the justifying act of faith, is distinguished from the other actings of true faith. If we decline this distinction, and say that faith, in relation to our justification, is to be considered in its most comprehensive view, I do not see but it must follow, that faith must justify by means of its own proper conditionality in the new covenant. To say, on this supposition, that its influence as to our justification is from its object, cannot be understood in this case, when many of the objects of its particular actings have no relation to our justification. When we propose, then, to consider the nature of faith as relating to our justification, or purging our conscience, it is plain we must mean those actings of it that relate to the priestly office of Christ, as he, Rom. iv. 25. ' was delivered for our offences, and raised again ' for our justification ;' and as he is in that view exhibited ' and offered in the gospel,' Rom. iii. 25.

2. That as the faith of the Lord's people does often, perhaps for most part, fall short of the large foundation afforded it in the gospel, our present inquiry is not, in what lowest degrees faith may subsist. We will perhaps find considerable inconvenience in such inquiry, both with respect to the use of it, and our want of light concerning it. When, in natural things, we view those seeds that are great and large, it is oft-times easy for us to say, such and such part being crushed or broken off will do no great harm ; but if such another part is damaged, or broken off, it will destroy the seed, and hinder its vegetation : but, when we consider the very small and minute food of other plants, it is not so easy for us to tell which part being broken off does no harm, or which part being damaged will effectually destroy the vegetative power of the seed. In like manner, if we consider faith under the view and notion of a very small and weak seed, it is the more difficult for us to judge about it. The more small we suppose it, the more it is below our observation, and out of the reach of being measured by many of the rules we would lay down concerning it. In this case, however, it were fit for us not to be rash in determining ; to be tender of absolutely discouraging such as may have this seed in the smallest degree ; on the other hand, not to encourage those to sit down with an apprehension of some small and dubious attainments in faith, who ought to be provoked to believe in such a manner as would be most for their comfort, strength, and success in spiritual life and holiness. And, in exhorting to great faith, to be by all

enabled in his conscience to absolve himself, and to have abundant consolation and good hope through grace.

So much concerning the nature of faith, and its office with respect to the conscience in the application of Christ's blood to it. With respect to which, the third thing chiefly considerable is,

3. The special operation of the Holy Ghost. That the conscience does, in order to its peace, necessarily require the immediate operation of God's Spirit, appears by these reasons: 1. That the satisfying efficacy of Christ's blood in the conscience depends upon views that the natural man is not capable of, these things being hid to him; for, 1 Cor. ii. 14. 'the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them.' 2 Cor. iv. 4. 'The god of this world hath blinded his mind.' I mean chiefly a supernatural believing view, such as has been spoken about already, of the glory and eternal Godhead of Christ, by which he offered himself; without this the blood of Christ will be but like common blood. There may be good notions of his glory in the head and imagination, that will serve to cover or colour over a delusion; but this will have no real effect upon the conscience. To that it is needful that 'God who commanded light to shine out of darkness should shine into the heart,' 2 Cor. iv. 6. 2. The immediate instruction and powerful operation of the Spirit is further needful with respect to the conscience, because the method of grace is so far out of the road of the natural conscience and of the old covenant, the impressions whereof remain in it, directing strongly to a self-righteousness, that it cannot of itself, by any moral suasion, fall in with the method of grace by the imputed righteousness of another; therefore must it be effectually instructed and led right by the Spirit, who hath received of the things of Christ, to show them unto us, John xvi. 14.; by whom only, and not by the spirit of the world, we can know the things that are freely given us of God, 1 Cor. ii. 14. 3. The operation of the Spirit is needful by reason of the disease that is in the conscience. The demands of an awakened conscience are unexceptionably reasonable; but then, with this, through sin, it labours under a disease. What satisfies does not pacify. A physician may administer most suitable potions, and apply good medicines; but it is the immediate creating power of God that must heal the sick; so, Psal. cvii. speaking of people in distress by sickness of body, he says, verse 20. 'He sent forth his word,' the

creating word of his power, 'and healed them:' so in this case, conscience is so far satisfied that it cannot reclaim; yet it is the power of the Spirit of God that must cure its sickness, remove its disturbance, lay the wind and the waves that rise there; that must create its peace, Isa. lvii. 19. 'I create the fruit of the lips:' it is the fruit of the lips, the fruit of the word and gospel preached; yet, 'I create 'the fruit of the lips; peace, peace.' What great occasion have we then, after all the comfortable doctrine we have been offering to the conscience, to cry to God for this effectual instruction and powerful influence of his holy Spirit!

So much concerning the application of Christ's blood to the conscience, which was the third general head of discourse we proposed to speak upon.

IV. What are the effects of the application of Christ's blood to the conscience?

1. Peace. As the effect of the imputation of Christ's blood and righteousness to us in our justification is real peace with God; so the effect of this application of it to the conscience is sensible peace there. Then does the sinner understand that character of him, that 'He is our peace,' Eph. ii. 14. 'the Prince of peace,' Isa. ix. 6, 7. 'of the increase of 'whose government and peace there shall be no end.' Christ is a priest of a special order, that of Melchizedec, whose name, Heb. vii. 2. by interpretation is, first, 'king of righteousness;' and after that, also 'king of Salem, that is king 'of peace.' When the conscience receives the benefit of a Mediator's righteousness, then to it 'the work of righteousness 'is peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and 'assurance for ever,' Isa. xxxii. 17. When this sacrifice was offered to God, it was to him, Eph. v. ii. 'an offering and 'sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour.' He was well pleased, as it is said of Noah's sacrifice, that 'the Lord smelled of it a sweet savour,' or a savour of rest, Gen. viii. 21. 'and said, 'I will no more curse the ground:' so when this blood is applied to the conscience, it smells of it a savour of rest; the fiery sulphureous steams of the curse are dissipated, the thunders of the law cease: Cant. ii. 11, 12. 'For, lo, the 'winter is past; 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.' Now this is not man's peace, as many say, Deut. xxix. 19. 'I shall have peace, though I walk in 'the imagination of my heart;' Phil. iv. 7. it is 'the peace

dence, I acknowledge, that such reflection, under the direction of God's Spirit, is a mean of comfort and establishment ; but I add, that without reflection, Christ and the offer of him is sufficient, as before explained, to produce hearty and confident acceptance of the report concerning him ; so that the sinner, convinced of His excellency, and his own need of the free, particular, and sincere offer, shall receive him confidently, joyfully, &c. Such a confidence appears further to be suitable to faith in its full and distinct acting, likewise from the style of the Scripture, expressing it by trusting, assurance, resting, glorying in the Lord ; and from many other arguments that need not be insisted on.

I have considered faith chiefly as it acts upon those views of Christ that concern the conscience. In the meantime, we are to notice that faith, in its actual exercise, is not so restricted, but comprehends a full view of Christ, as of God made to us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption ; and is a glorying in him upon all this large and extensive ground.

2. After this much concerning the nature of faith, the next thing to be considered on this subject, is the use and office of faith with respect to the blood of Christ and the conscience. I shall speak a little, before I go farther, concerning our justification.

‘ Justification is God's pardoning of all our sins, and accepting us as righteous in his sight ; only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us and received by faith alone.’

As to our justification, faith is said to have the office of an instrument, and so to justify in virtue of its object, Christ our righteousness, apprehended, laid hold of, and pleaded by faith, as the instrument of the soul. In the meantime, I add, that faith hath not in itself any virtue, by which it can reach such an instrumentality with respect to our union with Christ or justification by him ; we must therefore further take in, in this matter, the consideration of God's institution, and his acting suitably to this institution, in being the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. And this consideration may serve, in some respect, to account for the manner of expression frequent with many divines, unexceptionably sound and orthodox, when they speak of faith as a condition. Others indeed mean the conditionality of faith, thus—That Christ having, by his death for all men, so far reconciled God as to make way for his entering into a new covenant, the condition of this covenant is faith, (by which some mean faith itself

precisely, others include all that subjection to Christ's yoke, or that obedience which faith engages to;) which faith, according to the tenor of the covenant, is that which of itself does immediately entitle the sinner to remission of sins, &c. The former, though they give faith the name of a condition, yet still hold that the immediate reason of justification is the imputation of Christ's righteousness; with respect to which, faith hath the office of an instrument, laying hold of it. The latter, though they hold the death of Christ and his blood to be the foundation of the new covenant, yet hold that the immediate reason of justification is, our faith itself being accounted to us, or imputed for righteousness. So they explain the word, Rom. iv. 3. Gen. xv. 6. And this (whether the word condition is used or not used concerning faith,) I take to be the precise and proper state of this controversy; the importance of which I shall afterwards take notice of.

Now if we speak of the conscience, and say that faith is the condition of its peace, the word *condition* in this case must be inconsistent either with truth or with all propriety of speech. I see not what can be understood by it but this, that the sinner, finding himself to have believed, hath thereby peace, having performed the condition required. But this is no other than the Arminian doctrine above described, and is a sad misleading of the conscience. I acknowledge that the believer having attained to the knowledge of his own faith, it helps his understanding to form very solid rational conclusions concerning his state; but then I say, that the precise, the only and immediate cause of peace to the conscience is, its perception of Christ's blood and the expiation of sin by it. If we acknowledge this to be the benefit of faith to the conscience, and yet still call it a condition with respect to the peace of the conscience, it is just as we said, that the hand is the condition of handling or taking hold, that the eye is the condition of seeing, the ear of hearing, the understanding the condition of perceiving; in fine, the conscience the condition of self-condemnation. Now were not all this jargon, not to instruct, but to confound? This is surely what propriety of speech would require to say, that the eye is the organ by which we see, the understanding the faculty by which we perceive and judge, the conscience the faculty by which the sinner condemneth himself. In like manner, I say, faith is that instrument, or that faculty of the soul, created by the power of God, whereby the sinner perceives the virtue of Christ's blood, and so is

‘of God, which passeth all understanding.’ ‘I will extend peace to her like a river,’ Isa. lxxv. 12.

2. Liberty. You have heard of the bondage that belongs to an evil conscience. A bondage that affects a man’s state, so he is a lawful captive, affects his future prospect and hope ; so it produces fear ; affects him with respect to every duty, work, and suffering he is called to, and in all these makes him slavish. But by the blood of Christ upon the conscience, there is a turning back the soul’s captivity ; there is accomplished what the Lord Jesus received in charge, Isa. xlii. 7. ‘to bring out the prisoners from the prison.’ The soul is set at large, that was, as it were, crushed and breathless in a narrow room ; Psal. cxviii. 5. ‘I called on the Lord in distress ; the Lord answered, and set me in a large place.’

3. Sensible access to God, and confidence therein. Sin has separated between God and the sinner. A sense of sin and guiltiness in the conscience drives the sinner from God. When Adam sinned, he fled from God to hide himself. He was driven from paradise. An angel with a flaming sword guarded it against him. The unclean in Israel were debarred the camp and tabernacle. The people at Sinai were commanded distance. Even at the temple there was the court of the people ; they had not access to the temple itself. By so many different emblems did the Lord signify how sin had obstructed our access to God. The blood of Christ has again opened this access ; and that blood, being applied to the conscience, procures the soul’s sensible access and confidence therein. Heb. x. 19. ‘Having therefore, brethren, access with boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,’ and, Eph. iii. 12. ‘in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through the faith of him.’ If access belonged to any, it was in special manner to priests ; if boldness belongs to any, it is in special manner to kings. Now believers are a royal priesthood. You find in Heb. x. 19. that ‘believers have access unto the holiest ;’ this represents the most near and intimate access they have. When Uzziah, of old, though a king, ventured to enter but into the holy place to burn incense, the wrath of God came speedily against him ; but now a believer, without distinction of condition, has privilege to enter through the new and living way, unto the holiest, whither, of old, only the high priest entered ; and that but once a-year. But then if believers are priests, where is their temple ? No doubt it is a temple wherever his ordinances are dispensed. It is, no doubt, a temple wherever a

believer has special congress with God, meets with him. So Jacob says (though there was no outward temple, or place of worship,) 'this is none other than the house of God, and this 'is the gate of heaven; and he called the name of that place 'Bethel,' Gen. xxviii. 17. In the meantime, the temple, wherein believers, this royal priesthood, have especially access to God, is themselves, their own souls, 1 Cor. iii. 16.; 2 Cor. vi. 16.; Heb. iii. 6. In this house, this temple, God dwells, which is the distinguishing privilege of a temple. In this temple his priests draw near him, and offer incense and sacrifice; their spices, like incense flowing out, Song iii. 6. and iv. 16. and as Psal. cxli. 2. In this temple, God, as sitting on a mercy-seat, between the cherubim, as of old, in the holiest, answers his people by testimonies of his presence, and communications of his grace and love. In this temple have believers confidence (as the high-priest of old with the blood of others, so they with the blood of another, of Christ) to enter into his nearest presence. 4. From a conscience purged by the blood of Christ, ariseth love to God. The Psalmist says, Psal. cxvi. 1. 'I love the Lord.' What gives him occasion to begin with such warm and pathetic expressions of love? It was the sense of his former dismal case, and the wonderful deliverance he obtained. His former case he expresses in such language as will well suit the condition of an awakened conscience, verse 3. 'The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell got hold upon me: I found 'trouble and sorrow.' But the mercy of God wrought his deliverance; therefore, with a warm sense of this he begins the psalm, 'I love the Lord;' and throughout the psalm, what large and impetuous streams of praise and thanksgiving flow from the springs of this love! The blood of Christ upon the conscience hath an inexpressible savour and report of Christ's love. With what strong impression of this hath John that doxology, Rev. i. 5, 6. '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?' This proof of Christ's love, that the conscience, once purged, hath to report, has a sweet and unavoidable constraint, 2 Cor. v. 14. It determines the soul effectually and practically, with a return of love, to judge, as verse 15. 'that they which live,' who owe their life to his marvellous love, 'should not henceforth live to themselves, but unto him that died for them.' It appears, then, that it is by means of the fruit of free grace

to the conscience, that the law or commandment, which was weak of itself, Rom. viii. 3. doth reach its end ; for 1 Tim. i. 5. ' the end of the commandment,' or the design and scope of it ' is charity,' or love, ' out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.'

5. When the conscience is purged by the blood of Christ, that same faith that receives the conviction of righteousness for the benefit of the conscience, has room to extend itself upon the same ground ; and, by immediate and just consequence, to take a view of the soul's advantage against Satan : consequently against sin and the world, the instruments of his government. The same spirit and the same faith convince of judgment ; because ' the prince of this world is judged,' John xvi. 11. The dominion of Satan and of sin are founded upon the curse of the law. While the soul, by an evil conscience, finds itself under the curse of this law, it finds itself, at the same time, the prey of the mighty, Isa. xlix. 24. the lawful captive of that spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, Eph. ii. 2. : therefore, while the sinner is under the law, sin hath all manner of advantage, Rom. vii. 5. ; ' for when we were in the flesh, the motions of sin, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.' But the conscience being relieved from the curse, of consequence, hath this comfortable doctrine, Rom. vi. 14. ' Sin shall not have dominion over you ; for ye are not under the law, but under grace.' This is faith, the victory of the soul, in what concerns its sanctification, 1 John v. 4. ' This is the victory that overcometh the world ;' compare, chap. ii. 16. ' even our faith.' What is it that gives this special virtue to faith ? It is, verse 5. that it is ' a believing that Jesus is the Son of God.' But what does faith perceive in this glorious object to the purpose of overcoming and of holiness ? It is this, verse 6. that ' he came by water and blood :' and it is added, for caution, very suitably to our purpose, and to the concern of the conscience for its advantage with respect to sanctification, ' not by water only, but by water and blood.'

6. An effect of the conscience being purged by Christ's blood is hope. One of the effects of our peace with God, Rom. v. 1. that the apostle mentions, is this, verse 2. that ' we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.' That redemption of transgression, by means of Christ's death, which giveth peace to the conscience, has been contrived and executed for no lower purpose than this, Heb. ix. 15. that ' they which

‘ are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.’ We have observed from Rom. iv. 25. the respect that Christ’s resurrection hath to our justification. In this is there a sure foundation of hope ; insomuch, that the soul cannot be supposed to perceive the fruit of Christ’s resurrection for justification and peace of conscience without lively hope. Hence, 1 Pet. i. 3. ‘ which hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, ‘ by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.’ What follows, shows, 1. The object of this hope, verse 4. ‘ an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not ‘ away ;’ 2. The security of this inheritance to the believer, with respect to the certain reservation of it for him, and the certain preservation of him, through grace, for it, verses 4, 5. ‘ reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of ‘ God, through faith, unto salvation.’ We observed already, that the conscience, in receiving the influence of Christ’s blood, hath inconceivable proof of God’s love. Now, a sense of God’s love does naturally produce a certainty of hope ; by the apostle’s reasoning, Rom. v. 5. ‘ And hope maketh not ‘ ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our ‘ hearts.’

7. All these great effects of the conscience being purified require the Spirit. A good conscience cannot produce liberty, confidence, love, &c. but by the Spirit. Not that the purity of the conscience doth produce the grace of the Spirit ; but that the giving of the Holy Ghost is inseparably connected with the purging of the conscience, and is the privilege of it ; as ‘ Christ came by water and blood,’ 1 John v. 6. In order to be the better understood, I say these two things : 1. The faith that is instrumental in purging the conscience doth presuppose the Holy Ghost and his operation in the soul ; for faith is a fruit and evidence that a man is born of God, 1 John v. 1. ; so, John i. 12, 13. ‘ they which believe are ‘ they which were born, not of blood, but of God ;’ that is, as chap. iii. 5. ‘ born of the Spirit.’ I have likewise showed before, that the conscience is under a subjective incapacity of being purged by Christ’s blood any otherwise than through the operation of God’s Spirit upon it ; so it appears, that both faith and the purification of the conscience do presuppose the Holy Ghost operating in the soul. Nevertheless, 2. I say, that in another respect the Holy Ghost is a gift and privilege consequential to faith and to the purging of the conscience. What relation the purging of the conscience, and this attainment of the Spirit, hath to one another, we may

collect from Gal. iv. 5, 6. ; and what place faith hath in this matter is expressed, Gal. iii. 13, 14. ' Christ hath redeemed ' us from the curse of the law, that we might receive the ' promise of the Spirit through faith ;' and, Eph. i. 13. ' In ' whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that ' Holy Spirit of promise.' To understand this dispensation of the Spirit only of that extraordinary and miraculous dispensation that took place in the primitive church, were certainly a great error: for, 1. All believers in that time did not partake in that extraordinary dispensation ; whereas the apostle still speaks of the Spirit, in the view we have now under consideration, as belonging to all believers ; and introduces it on every occasion as a doctrine all believers were alike concerned in, and as a privilege they had a right to in common, without ever adding the least hint of caution or distinction that would serve the purpose of such an interpretation. 2. In Gal. iii. 14. the promise of the Spirit is mentioned as a great and most special part of the blessing of Abraham. Now the blessing of Abraham is no other than that with respect to which it was said to him, Gen. xii. 3. ' In thee ' shall all the families of the earth be blessed ;' and the extending of this blessing to the Gentiles, Gal. iii. 13. is no other than the extending the blessings of the covenant of grace to them ; and especially this blessing of the Spirit, to which all believers should have a right, in common with Abraham, who is, Rom. iv. 11. ' the father of all them that ' believe.' 3. The Holy Ghost, as received by faith, is said, Eph. i. 14. to be ' the earnest of our inheritance, until the ' redemption of the purchased possession ;' and, Eph. iv. 30. to be that wherewith believers ' are sealed unto the day of ' redemption ;' which is there used as a motive to enforce an exhortation, addressed to believers universally, to purity and holiness. Now the redemption of the purchased possession being the term or period mentioned, shows the blessing to belong to every intermediate time. All believers are alike concerned in the inheritance ; in the redemption of the purchased possession. Now, is it only the first believers that were to receive an earnest of the inheritance, or that needed to be distinguished and secured for it by God's seal? It is certain the extraordinary dispensation of the Holy Ghost was principally intended in subserviency to another purpose, viz. that of propagating the gospel, and setting up Christ's kingdom at that time. In the meantime, what the whole import of the sealing above mentioned is, I shall not now inquire :

but I say, a heart purged from an evil conscience, does (and that for measures, I suppose, in proportion to the degree of faith) receive the Spirit of God as the spirit of adoption ; for this, see Gal. iv. 5, 6. ; Rom. viii. 15. ; 2 Tim. i. 7. This Spirit dwells in believers as in his temples ; instructs them, shows them the things of Christ, glorifies him in them, directs their way, helps their infirmities, sanctifies and preserves them.

Such, then, are the effects of the purification of the conscience by the blood of Christ. I doubt not but some of the Lord's people may say, that such effects are so insensible and imperceptible with themselves, that the mention of them does effectually darken and disprove all the conclusions they have ever formed concerning their state. I would not wish such improvement to be carried too far. In the meantime, these things may, at least, suggest to us, what are these effects, by the purification of our conscience, that we should all have in view to attain to, in the best degree. And that therefore we should have at heart, above all things, to have our conscience purged in the most distinct and sensible manner, by means of the strong actings of faith, and the gracious influence of God's Spirit. Since the greater our faith in the blood of Christ is, and the more sensible the purification of our conscience, the more sensibly and plentifully will the blessings mentioned flow upon our souls, for their comfort, establishment, sanctification, and for their safety and security against the evils that surround them in the world.

All the above blessings and privileges, I suppose, the apostle includes in one word in our text, 'to serve the living God.' From what has been said, it may be perceived how natively every thing that pertains to the serving of him, to communion with him, and holiness, flows from the conscience being purged by the blood of Christ. As justification is the ground of all the saving privileges of a believer's state, so it appears that a purified conscience is a fruitful spring of actual sanctification. Such is the view that Zacharias expresses in his triumphant song, Luke i. especially verses 74, 75. 'That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.'

Having now gone through the explications I intended, I am come to the improvement of this subject ; and the field is so wide, that I have been much at a loss what things to mention or insist most upon.

1. It appears that the whole subject and doctrine of the gospel has been contrived and adapted for the most full and comfortable purification of the conscience, and the glory of Christ, and of free grace thereby. What immediately affects this subject is most fundamental with respect to the gospel, and the very life of religion; by which it appears that the doctrine of our text affords us a general key with respect to the various schemes of doctrine. From this I infer, on the one hand, that we are bound to have most charitable judgment concerning those men, societies of men, or churches (whatever unhappiness there may be with respect to terms of communion,) that do retain sound doctrine in what pertains to the purifying of the conscience; on the other hand, that such doctrine as tends to mislead the conscience from its proper remedy, to obscure the glory of it, or to weaken the force and efficacy of it upon the conscience, is of the utmost bad consequence, and ought not to be considered as mere matter of opinion, but as most pernicious to the souls of men. Therefore hath this been justly called the article upon which the standing or falling of the church depends.

2. I infer next, that there must be a preparation of the conscience, for perceiving the influence of Christ's blood. There hath been much question concerning these called the preparatory works of God's Spirit; how far necessary or not? I acknowledge that the Spirit works sovereignly, and in different degree and manner. I say further, if the question shall be concerning preparations of the heart for Christ by good dispositions, frames, and duties, from which we should take our encouragement to lay hold on Christ, and apply his comforts to ourselves, Rom. iv. 5. that such questions lead to delusion. But I think it follows, from what I have said concerning the office of the conscience, and the purging of it, that the conscience must, by the thorough conviction of sin, of condemnation and a desperate state, be prepared for perceiving, by the instruction of the word and Spirit of God, the sufficiency, efficacy, and comfort of Christ's blood.

Upon this a question will be suggested concerning the needful degree and measure of such conviction of sin. To which I answer,—1. Such conviction of sin is needful, and with such force, as will fix the sinner, and cause him make a stand. When men hunt a wild beast, and that an arrow or ball wounds him, yet so as not to affect the seat of life or organs of motion, he will but run the more furiously off; but if the arrow reaches the seat of life or the organs of motion, he

falls, and is caught. The Lord does, Jer. ii. 24. compare the sinner to the wild ass; 'Men will not weary themselves with a vain pursuit of her; but in her month, when she is heavy, she will be overtaken.' So, that measure of conviction of sin is needful that will make the sinner heavy; that will disable him from following out his course; that will fix him to the consideration of his conscience and state, and to the care of salvation above every concern. 2. I say, that measure of conviction of sin is needful, that will, in some respect, raise the conscience above the reach of delusions, with respect to our peace with God and our hope. A small wound is easily cured or skinned over, or at least easily borne, a deeper wound will hurry a man to his ordinary physicians; but if the wound is felt to be mortal (and every wound of the conscience is in itself so,) physicians will be given over, and the remedy that will then be of use, must have something above nature in it. 3. Such conviction of sin is needful as will determine the soul, under the instruction of God's word and Spirit, to hold Christ precious and worthy of all acceptation, for the benefit of his blood towards our reconciliation, and for all his grace; and if the soul doth truly so esteem Christ, or have received evident proofs of his love and grace, surely those are not to be called in question, upon account of a greater or lesser degree of former awakening and conviction.

3. We have, from the doctrine of the text, great occasion offered us of adoring the inconceivable love, the infinite wisdom, the free and rich grace of God, who hath laid such a foundation for reconciling of souls to himself; who hath provided such a purification for the conscience; who exhibits himself to it under its guiltiness, by the character of 'him that justifies the ungodly,' Rom. iv. 5. This is a subject upon which the thoughts and praises of ransomed ones will be extended eternally; and I choose rather to leave it to the meditation of them whom God hath wrought to the faith of it, than to multiply words that will rather darken than set it in a due light.

4. I have, in the meantime, the most weighty matter of exhortation, which I would especially address to them who are fully convinced of their need of this purification, and are careful about it.

The exhortation is this; that they open their condemning polluted conscience, and expose it to the influence of the blood of sprinkling, which alone can make it speak better things; for 'it speaketh better things than the blood of

'Abel;' that they allow not unbelief to withdraw their ear from the joyful sound; that they would bathe, as it were, and drench their conscience in this healthful blood, 'this fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness;' that they would betake themselves thereto, and confidently plead it with God; that they would fly for refuge to take hold of the hope set before them; in fine, that they would receive and give faith to our report.

For motives to enforce such exhortation, there would certainly be none other needful, did God set the things we have insisted on, in due light, before us; did we hear and learn these things of the Father, there would be no demur about coming to Christ, John vi. 45. Instead, therefore, of offering any other motives, I shall apply myself to consider a considerable objection that is used against the believing acceptation of the gospel offer. And it is this—

*Object.*—I would most willingly embrace Christ, and the offer of him and salvation through him, if I saw any cause to think that he was intended for me; but I most certainly know, that in the unchangeable council of God, this salvation is provided for some and not for others; and Christ's death intended for the redemption of some and not of others. How, then, can I have warrant for my faith? or what certain benefit can I have by any attempt to lay hold on the peace and salvation offered, while I have no evidence that the death of Christ, which is the foundation of that offer, is intended for me? I answer,—

1st, The council of God, concerning the extent of Christ's death, hath no relation at all to our warrant for laying hold of Christ by faith. They that will seek a foundation for the general offers of the gospel and for faith, in these councils of God, are in the way to unavoidable error and temptation. These are secrets which belong unto the Lord our God; and they are only the things that are revealed that belong to us, Deut. xxix. 29.

2d, Any man would reckon such objection and such conduct most absurd in any other matter. Suppose you stood before a piece of ordnance that were to be immediately discharged, and were desired to step aside, would you refuse, and stand till you were satisfied what were determined concerning your safety and escape in the council of God, which hath determined every thing concerning you, yea, concerning the sparrows? By no means, if in your right wits. Now, are not both cases exactly parallel in this respect? The artillery

of heaven, the wrath of God, is ready to be discharged upon you : there is a refuge set before you ; yet you will not fly to lay hold of it, till you may be satisfied what the purpose of God concerning you imports.

3d, God hath declared, in innumerable places of his word, to this purpose, that ‘ he that believeth shall be saved ;’ and that ‘ to them that receive Christ, he giveth power to become ‘ the sons of God.’ Now, do you believe the decrees of his eternal council to be unchangeable, and do you not likewise believe the faithfulness of his word to be unchangeable ? You need not be apprehensive that infinite wisdom hath left these things in danger of interfering. I say, heaven and earth may sooner pass away ; yea, I say, all the eternal decrees and purposes of heaven may perish, change, or come to nothing, as soon as this declaration and rule of grace, ‘ he that believeth shall be saved, and he that cometh unto me, will I in nowise ‘ cast off,’ fail, or come short in truth and accomplishment.

4th, Say, does the command to believe in Christ concern you ? Surely it does. Now, does he require you to believe ? Does he encourage you to it with the promises of salvation ? Does he threaten the rejection of his offers with an aggravated damnation ? Does he declare that they who believe do greatly honour him ? and have you then no warrant to believe ? Though you could not conceive it, are you not safe to trust God, that such believing is well warranted when he requires it ? You have perhaps believed a lie implicitly, upon the credit of a false teacher, or other deceiver ; you have perhaps done a wicked thing against God and your conscience, in obedience to some man having power over you ; but you will not rest and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, upon the authority of God, on the credit of his report and record concerning him !

5th, Consider the ministry of reconciliation committed to us : how we are ambassadors employed by God and by the Mediator, with full powers from his Father, for this very affair, to treat of and procure reconciliation. Now, say, have we warrant to offer Christ to all, and so to you ? Surely if there is a fault through want of due warrant to you to receive the offer, that fault will lie first at our door for making it ; yet I suppose you will not be rash to say so. The blessed apostle knew full well that the purpose of God concerning Christ was restricted and particular : he knew full well that none other would actually embrace his invitation and believe, but such as were ordained to life, Acts xiii. 48. ; yet does he

(and you may suppose upon good warrant) by no means restrict his invitation or offer, but calls all he writes to, and all to whom these should come, 'in the name of God and of Christ, to be reconciled to God,' 2 Cor. v. 20. There you have God and Christ and his ambassador all at once giving a general call to believe, to be reconciled to God; and that upon no more special or particular ground than that we still lay before you, verse 21, 'that he had made him to be sin for us, though he knew no sin.'

6th, You have the same foundation and warrant to believe and lay hold of Christ, that believers have generally had before you. It is true, we have read of some who were called and set apart by immediate and special revelation; but the whole cloud of saints generally had no other warrants for faith than are offered to you. Now, are all the Lord's people fools? Have all who have died in the faith upon these warrants, died as fools? Surely you may, with the utmost safety, trust to so sure, so well proven and tried a foundation.

I conclude, that the objection against your warrant to believe is vain; therefore, that there can be no reason for your coming short of the benefit offered you through Christ's blood but this, that obstinately you put it from you, and judge yourself unworthy of everlasting life, Acts xiii. 46.

5. I infer, that the sure way, the way of lasting benefit, in laying hold of the promises and benefits of the word of God, is to lay hold of them as they are through Christ,—as the purchase of his blood. This is a direction commonly given. Our present subject shows the importance of it. For this is it that engages the conscience on the side of our comforts. Many times the heart seems inclined to lay hold of the promise; yea, seems to have much present comfort by it; but the conscience is not right; its peace is not distinct; not being adverted to and provided for in way of believing; therefore it is not satisfied with these comforts, or the soul's interest in them. Hence arises much temptation, many exceptions, and innumerable scruples, that disturb the soul in the possession of the most valuable comforts. The conscience not being presently, distinctly satisfied with views of the blood of Christ, makes a great weakness in the foundation, that gives advantage to Satan, the accuser of the brethren, to batter down all the comforts we build upon the promise. Every thing in the promise and covenant has relation to the blood of Christ, which is the blood of the covenant; therefore

all the promises of the covenant are in him yea and amen. The Lord has laid a sure foundation in the blood of his Son. Upon this ground hath he engaged his word and oath, Heb. vi. 18. 'for strong consolation to them who have fled for refuge to take hold of the hope set before them.' Thus hath he fully provided for peace to the conscience, and comfort to the hearts of his people at once. And when both these are joined by a faith extending itself suitably to the large foundation, then will the soul have an established and solid comfort, that will not be exposed to that unresolvedness and doubting, that secretly hath its root in an evil conscience.

6. From the doctrine of the text, and what I have made evident in the explication of it, I further infer, that in order to his well-being, a believer stands in need of two things: 1. To have always a conscience awake; 2. To have an ordinary gracious presence of the Spirit of God.

1. To have always a conscience awake; and that not only to direct his walk, and to maintain by it that watchfulness and holy fear of sin, which Solomon says it is still his happiness to have, but particularly for the sake of his comfort by Christ. This awakenedness of conscience in a believer is not to be measured by what he may have formerly felt by the law. He may himself, perhaps, through mistake, measure too oft by this rule, and God may, in great displeasure, on some occasions punish him in this way; but, ordinarily, I reckon there is something that pertains to the privilege of a believer's state that makes an odds in this respect. In a child of God, whose heart is fully reconciled to his law, 'which a carnal mind is not subject to, neither indeed can be,' reconciled to Christ's yoke, and whose sharpest and most humbling convictions are under the direction of a spirit of adoption, there must be a great difference betwixt the state of his conscience, and that of the unconverted under the law. But still I say, that the blood of Christ is a remedy provided for the sicknesses, wounds, and pollutions of the conscience; and therefore, in order to the believer's having the ordinary sensible benefit of this remedy, it is needful for him to have always a conscience awake, heedful, tender, and lively. I say he needs,

2. An ordinary gracious presence of the Spirit of God. I shall not repeat what I have said to this purpose, speaking of the first application of Christ's blood to the conscience; only I add, that this gracious influence of the Spirit is not only

then needful, but ever after ; and that without it the believer will, of himself, be at a loss about the believing improvement of Christ's blood as much as ever.

I shall carry this matter a little farther, and for a foundation to what I add, I lay down this principle—That a child of God, who would wish to have the ordinary and uninterrupted benefit of a good conscience by the blood of Christ, must not only have at heart to be led right with respect to the peace of his conscience objectively, but likewise has it for him to see the subjective soundness and health of the conscience itself.

From this I infer,—That it is not enough for a Christian, in relation to his peace, that he endeavour to maintain clear views and just impressions in his soul of free grace, justifying through Christ ; but that he be likewise most tenderly careful of his conscience with respect to holiness of heart and life ; for this concerns the subjective soundness and health of the conscience itself ; without which, it will be incapacitated and indisposed to perform a comfortable office.

If a man will, by any unwatchful, fearless, and stumbling walk, by indulging the lust of his heart, and by the practice of sin in his life, hurt, wound, and sicken his conscience, it is vain for him to think that his conscience will or can be a vessel for his soul to retain the comforts of Christ's blood for him : it hath received these comforts for other purposes, and when sickness is brought upon it, will heave them up.

I take this occasion further to observe the noxious tendency of two very opposite schemes of doctrine to the conscience, with respect to what concerns it objectively and subjectively—I mean Arminianism, with respect to our justification and peace, and Antinomianism, with respect to our sanctification. Both do, upon very opposite extremes, offer what is detrimental to the believer's enjoyment of full and solid comfort by the blood of Christ.

1. Arminianism. This imports, so far as concerns our present subject, that according to the new covenant, it is the faith and sincere obedience of the Christian to the precepts of the gospel that is the condition, the performance of which doth, by the tenor of that covenant, immediately entitle him to the peace and favour of God and to life. These, it is true, do hold that it is the blood of Christ which alone hath expiated sin,—that it alone is the foundation upon which God hath entered into a new covenant, upon terms suited to our

present state,—that to this blood we owe it, that God, who hath still right to insist on perfect obedience, yet doth accept of our faith and sincere obedience to the gospel, and imputeth it to us for righteousness and justification,—that to this blood we owe the grace that assisteth our free will, much hurt by sin, in performing that faith and obedience. Upon the whole, they declare, that in general we are indebted to the free grace of God through Christ for our salvation.

All this amounts to the Pharisee's 'God, I thank thee,' Luke xviii. 11. If there is any use of the true remedy offered to the conscience, it is but like applying the leather side of the plaister to the wound; if it can have any influence, it must be very remote, weak, and dubious.

In the meantime, the soul doth immediately feed upon its own faith and obedience for its life, and not upon the flesh and blood of the Son of man, who hath said, John vi. 57. 'He that eateth me, even he shall live by me.' Yea, faith is, in this case, represented to feed upon itself; while the just is, by his faith, to live upon Christ.

The word of reconciliation committed to us to preach is this, 2 Cor. v. 19. 'That God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing to them their trespasses.' Now the declaration here is not, that God is, upon the terms of a new and easier covenant, reconciling the world; but that he is so immediately and directly in Christ, 'whom he made,' verse 21. 'to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God,' not in ourselves, but 'in him.' Upon this immediate ground, and that condition only, doth he call sinners believingly to fall in with the treaty of reconciliation, and to accept of his peace.

Further, Christ himself is said to be our peace, Eph. ii. 14. Isa. ix. 6. Now, in what respect is he our peace, any otherwise than the peace of Mahometans and heathens, for whom he is supposed to have shed his peace-speaking blood as much as for any others? Only they through misimproving the sufficient grace, the natural revelation afforded them (which is all the new covenant Christ's blood has obtained for them,) do fall short of God's further condescension: whereas we improve things to better account, and by coming up to the terms of our covenant, procure right to the blessings of it: one of which is the remission of our sins and peace with God. Thus Christ, for being called our peace and the Prince of Peace, has done for us only what he has done for the repro-

bate ; and the immediate objective ground of our peace is in ourselves.

I conclude, that this doctrine is contrived for robbing Christ of his glory, in the matter of reconciliation, impropriated to him ; and for misleading the consciences of wretched sinners from their peace in him.

2. There are, on the other hand, Antinomians. These do offer prejudice to the comforts of believers by the blood of Christ, while they hold things that tend to hurt the conscience, with respect to its own subjective soundness and well-being. This they do when they hold things detrimental to the principles and interests of holiness.

Against this it is said in defence, that there is no design against the interests of holiness, but only to forward it by such principles as are supposed to be most effectual.

For answer : The question is not concerning the intention, which may have been good in general, as to many. As to practice, as it is possible that true faith in the heart may, though with great disadvantage, operate savingly, notwithstanding of some wrong principles in the head concerning justification ; so we question not but the grace of God in the heart may operate effectually towards sanctification, notwithstanding of some principles in men's heads detrimental to it.

I do likewise acknowledge, that the principles naturally in the conscience, cannot of themselves produce holiness of heart, in any part. Surely, in this respect, ' the law is weak ' through the flesh,' Rom. viii. 3. It is only the principles and doctrine of free grace taking root and place in the heart, that will make the principles of the conscience of effectual use to holiness. In the meantime, we are to conceive and inculcate the principles of grace in such a manner as shall not tend to obscure, hurt, or eradicate the principles which the sovereign Lawgiver himself hath implanted in the conscience ; without which its health and soundness cannot subsist : such are the impressions of the authority of God, and of the unchangeable and eternal obligation of his law. There may be motives, from the love and grace of God, offered to allure the heart to duty ; and for certain it must be effectually allured and excited by such motives ; but if the principles above mentioned are overlooked, or operate not, the conscience is deprived of its most special interest and office, in relation to duty and sanctification. What will follow is, that the conscience being put out of order and sickened, betwixt its

own native principles, and principles destructive of them, will come under a subjective indisposition for the offices of peace and comfort through Christ.

It will be objected, that a fearful apprehension of the wrath of God, and acting from that principle, is natural to the conscience; whereas it is contrary to the filial disposition and obedience of a child of God.

For answer: It is true that sin hath produced several things in the conscience, that do not originally belong to it, that grace must cure or remove. In the meantime, as to an apprehension of the wrath of God, as the just and proper wages of sin, that is a principle necessarily belonging to the conscience; and though the influence of it in a slavish way of obedience be not warrantable nor suitable to a child-like disposition, yet the consideration of it, in a right manner, hath its own place as a motive of duty, very consistently with the sweetest and most alluring motives of grace. With respect to the believer's peace and comfort, this principle and impression in the conscience imposes no greater hardship upon him than what the Lord imposed upon the man-slayer, when he should have fled to the city of refuge; viz. that he should abide and remain in it, and not come without the borders of the city of his refuge, Num. xxxv. 25, &c. If he did otherwise, a kind Providence might overrule matters so, that the avenger of blood should not meet with him; yet while he wandered carelessly or contemptuously from the city of his refuge, he had good reason for most awful apprehensions. So, I say, whatever unhappy fits of sin and unbelief may seize a child of God, a well ordered and sure covenant has secured that the avenger shall not actually meet with him; yet while through unbelief he wandereth from his refuge, the principle above mentioned in his conscience hath, with great consistency, very awful things to suggest to him: nor should we for fear of this endeavour to knock it absolutely out of the soul: the existence of it in the soul is of use to drive the soul back to its refuge; and the only inference is, that 'the just shall live by his faith.' In this way of living, the principles of his conscience have nothing contrary to the greatest establishment of his peace and comfort. The man-slayer, confining himself within the city of his refuge, had as uninterrupted peace and liberty in doing his work and affairs as the most innocent inhabitant. This was no prejudice to the law that confined him there.

Upon the whole, the soundness and health of the conscience

itself being needful, in order to the believer's enjoying peace in it through Christ's blood, the principles that do originally belong to the conscience ought to be maintained: it is by these, under the saving instruction of God's Spirit, that the soul will always be disposed to hold Christ precious for his blood taking away its guiltiness, for the power of his grace against corruption, and for fitting and establishing in every good word and work: in fine, that the believer, with respect to conformity and benefit, will be brought up to that of the blessed apostle, 1 John i. 7. '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.'

7. To conclude all that we intended to offer concerning the improvement of this most important subject—the most great and awful view of the Lord's-supper—is, that it imports a solemn and near approach to God, 'to our God, who is a 'consuming fire,' Heb. xii. 29. The great duty in every duty, is to approach to God: it is so particularly as to this ordinance. We have endeavoured to lay open the sure foundation of confidence in every such approach. We have need to look upwards for the Spirit of faith. The exhortation I give in the words of the apostle, Heb. x. 19—21. 'Having 'therefore, brethren, 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 vail, that is to say, his 'flesh; and having an High-Priest over the house of God,' (what follows, verse 22. I would not have the Lord's people to take as the matter of a discouraging charge, but rather as importing the most evangelical comfort, and inexpressible encouragement,) 'let us draw near with a true heart, in full 'assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil 'conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.'

## SERMON II.

JAMES i. 22.

*'But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your  
ourselves.'*

THERE is naturally in the minds of men a source of endless error and delusion. The strong general bias of men thereto appears in this, that no sooner does the force of the light and the evidence of the truth drive men from one error, than they run to the opposite error; so difficult a thing it is to cause men settle upon that sure and solid truth that lies in the midst, between the extremes of delusion.

The general purpose and occasion of this epistle, brings into our view a very remarkable instance of this kind. It prevailed much among men, that a man is to be justified in the sight of God by his own righteousness, and to be entitled to his favour by his own good works. There is no error more deep in human nature. Indeed, this was the first covenant of life, and men's reason suggests no other; though a little attention to reason, or rather to the light which the word of God suggests to men's reason, might easily convince men, that this is a way for justification and acceptance that is absolutely and eternally out of the reach of the sinner. The blessed apostle Paul labours greatly against this innate delusion. He asserts, Rom. iii. 25, 26. that 'God hath set forth his Son Jesus Christ to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.' His doctrine is, that 'to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness,' Rom. iv. 5.

Indeed, the necessity of holiness, and the effectual influence of Divine grace towards sanctification, shines brightly in all the epistles of Paul. However, men were no sooner put from that delusion of trusting to their own works and righteousness, than they run to the opposite and no less dangerous extreme of thinking, since they expected to be justified otherwise than by their works, that there was no necessity whatsoever of good works; no danger by ungodly living and unholy practice. It would seem that with many this did

not remain in mere speculation, but that these sentiments had too free course in practice. The sharpness of this apostle's reproofs, and the awfulness of his denunciations, give some reason to think so.

It is then the chief design of this epistle of the apostle James, to show the wickedness and danger of unholy practice, and to assert the necessity of good works. The necessity of them is especially asserted in the second chapter; but in this first chapter, he makes his way to that subject by suggesting divers things that make much to that general purpose.

I shall look no farther back in this context than the 18th verse; there the apostle acquaints us with a great effect of Divine grace by means of the word of God: 'Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth.' From this he exhorts, as verse 19. 'Wherefore, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.' Some loved to set out their knowledge in the talkative way; and wrathful contentions and disputations abounded. The exhortation imports, as if he had said, since so great good hath been done us by means of the word of the gospel, as that God hath thereby begotten us; since so great and so important good to our souls is to be further had by it, through the influence of Divine grace, let us be diligent and careful in attending to the word, with a view to the good it may do our souls, and to the blessings which Divine grace may communicate to us thereby. Let it not be our way, as it is with too many, to be for ever taking occasion, from what we hear, to amuse others with our own speculations, or to disturb and hurt them by our wrathful disputings. Instead of dealing with others concerning what we hear, in that manner, let us be anxious to get good to our own souls.

One might say against this—Why, shall we have no concern about others, no zeal for God's interests, or for seducing our brethren from the errors of their sentiments or practice? The apostle says nothing against that. In the meantime, wrath is not the proper mean. It is but a carnal weapon, and none of those that will be mighty through God, 2 Cor. x. 4. to glorify God, or do good to men. The wrath of man may suit a man's own spirit and interests; but, says the apostle, verse 20. 'the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.'

How, then, shall we hear the word of God, and be conversant about the gospel? An answer to this question we have,

verse 21. 'Wherefore, lay apart all filthiness, and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save your souls.' Here the word, in order to do us good, must be ingrafted. Our business with it is not merely to lay up in our heads the stores of a talkative profession, or of angry disputes; it must be ingrafted in our hearts, although its being so should require the piercing or cutting of them.

That it may be thus ingrafted, the word must be received with meekness. With that meekness that subjects the whole soul to the authority of God speaking by it; with that meekness that is opposite to the evil disposition and temper towards men which he had mentioned.

In order that this gracious temper may have place in the heart, there is certain vile trash to be thrown out, viz. 'all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness.' What are we especially to understand by these expressions? I here observe, that the apostle Peter appears evidently to have a discourse and exhortation to the same purpose and scope with that of my context; 1 Pet. i. he observes that the Christians he writes to, 'were born again by the word of God,' verse 23.; even as he says, verse 25. 'by the word of the gospel which was preached unto them.' In order to their further profiting thereby, he adds, as immediately follows, chap. ii. 1, 2. 'Wherefore, laying aside all malice, and all guile, as new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.' This discourse of Peter's is so precisely to the same purpose in every part with that of the context under our consideration, that we may reasonably explain the one by the other; and so suppose that the apostle James does, by filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, especially mean what Peter expresses more distinctly and particularly, viz. malice, guile, hypocrisies, envies, evil speakings, and such like unholy passions and practices.

When, laying apart these, Christians do with meekness receive the ingrafted word, the apostle says, it is able to save their souls. As it was the mean by which Divine grace did beget them, by which God did begin a good work in them; so shall it be the mean by which he will advance that good work, until he perform and finish it against the day of Christ, Phil. i. 6.

On this occasion, a serious Christian might say, I endeavour to have my heart free from every disposition and passion that would obstruct my profiting by the word, or

that would grieve the Holy Spirit of God, who is the proper Author of my profiting ; there is nothing I have so much in view as the real good of my own soul in hearing ; I wish, by the blessing of God on the word I hear, to increase my light, to advance in my knowledge of the glorious mystery of the new covenant, and of the love and grace of God through Jesus Christ, to reach a spiritual and holy frame of heart ; to attain to an establishment of comfort and hope, and to a victory over my own unbelief, and the temptations which Satan suggests against my peace.

To such, I say, all this is well. The sincerity of such views and dispositions is certainly from above, and will not be altogether without suitable influences from above, answering to such views ; yet there is one thing further to be adverted to, that must necessarily be brought along ; that is, doing of the word. The apostle has a ' but,' a mark of caution to that purpose, ' but be ye doers of the word, not ' hearers only, ' deceiving your own selves.'

We come now, after so long an introduction concerning the right manner of hearing the word, to what concerns the practising thereof ; the enjoining of which is the scope of my text. In it I observe three things—

- I. A general obnoxiousness of men to self-deceiving,—' deceiving your own selves.'
- II. The particular matter of self-deceiving here cautioned against ; and that is, men's satisfying themselves with being hearers only of the word.
- III. The character and conduct required and recommended in opposition to this ; that is, to be doers of the word.

I. The general obnoxiousness of men to self-deceiving.—For any man to be a deceiver of others, is one of the vilest of characters, and one of the strongest, most special resemblances that any can bear of the old serpent, that grand deceiver. But that any should deceive himself, is very strange ; it is for a man to be the devil against himself. Shall we say that any man could deceive himself ? or is it possible for any man to design it ? But, however the case be as to designing, there is certainly an inclination and tendency in human nature to self-deceiving, that works as effectually as the most resolved and most explicit intention.

It is true, it is but a particular case of self-deceiving that the text mentions, which may not to some appear sufficient

to found any general observation; but let us consider it a little. For a man to please himself with being a hearer only, and not a doer of the word, can any thing in the world be more absurd, or more evidently so? Can any thing be imagined more contrary to the clearest light of the word itself; any thing that is in greater contradiction to the light that is in every man's own conscience, or to the professed sentiments of all the world? Can any conduct be of more acknowledged, dangerous, and fearful consequence? Surely, if a man can deceive himself in so very clear a case, he may be supposed capable of deceiving himself in any thing else. That a man should be capable to deceive himself in so very clear and important a case, does clearly imply and demonstrate a general obnoxiousness and tendency, in the hearts of men, to self-deceiving.—Upon this head, I shall,

1. Inquire into the causes of this obnoxiousness to self-deceiving.
2. Offer some directions against it.

1. I am to inquire into the causes of this obnoxiousness to self-deceiving.

Ist, The first I name is, men's blindness and ignorance of God. There is nothing more certain and acknowledged by the conscience than the glorious sovereignty and power of God; yet the heart doth not effectually perceive it. There is something in the carnal mind, which is not subject to the law of God, that suggests, 'Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice?' Exod. v. 2.; and, 'What is the Almighty that we should serve him?' There is nothing that will be less contradicted by men's profession, than God's omniscience; yet their hearts perceive it not, nor receive the impression of it. They say, 'God hath forgotten; he hideth his face, he will never see it,' Psal. x. 11.; and, 'the Lord shall not see, neither the God of Jacob regard it,' Psal. xciv.

7. Yea, holy and righteous as God is, yet the wicked is charged with thinking thus—'Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself,' Psal. l. 21. Yea, what has been men's ignorance of God, who would represent him by 'an image made like unto corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts?' Rom. i. 23. Men's ignorance of God makes them capable of any delusions concerning him; and men's delusions concerning God make them capable of every delusion and self-deceiving besides. God is an all-seeing, in-

finitely holy, righteous, and powerful being. Did men, in coming to God, truly believe that he (*i.e.* a being of these attributes, and not an idol of their own heart) exists, that faith would certainly produce other sort of temper and works than what men commonly please themselves in. If God's omniscience, holiness, and righteousness did appear to men's hearts in a true light and with suitable impressions, they could not possibly deceive themselves as they do.

2d, A second cause of it is, our ignorance of ourselves. We are, if I may speak so, very near ourselves. What have we better access to know than ourselves? Yet there are many folds in our heart. There is a depth in it. The inward thought, (if I may allude to that expression of the Psalmist) and the heart is deep, Psal. lxxiv. 6. 'The heart 'is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who 'can know it?' Under the direction of a complication of wicked lusts, men can fight against Christ himself, the Lord of glory; as he said, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' They can kill the saints and servants of the Most High. Here is desperate wickedness; who would not perceive it? Yet 'the heart is deceitful above all things;' and so it is, as John xvi. 2. Jehu was keen in shedding the blood of Jezreel, (which was afterwards avenged on his house, Hos. i. 4.) yet the word was, 'Come with me, and see my zeal for 'Jehovah,' 2 Kings x. 16.; and perhaps in the present fit, the thing appeared under that colour to himself, though the acquisition of a kingdom was at bottom. Saul rebelled against God in the case of the Amalekites, yet his story is, 'the people spared of the best to sacrifice unto the Lord thy 'God,' 1 Sam. xv. 15. The heart, in all its various forms of wickedness, gives itself such colourings as keep men very commonly in an entire ignorance of themselves, of their true disposition, and of the real springs of their actions; and so keeps them in the way of perpetual self-deceiving.

3d, Every particular lust in the heart partakes of the general nature of the heart, as to deceitfulness; and so every particular lust becomes, in so far as it prevails, a strong principle of self-deceiving. We have, Eph. iv. 22. this character of them all, 'the deceitful lusts.' When we hear of the deceitfulness of sin, the deceitfulness is in the inward lust. When we hear of the deceitfulness of riches, that deceitfulness is not in the object, riches; the matter of riches is the good creatures of God: it is the lust of riches that is deceitful. Every lust paints its object to its own

mind, and so deceive us. Excess of strong drink speaks very ingeniously, and of itself promises nothing but sorrow, contention, babblings, wounds without cause, redness of eyes, sickness, vomiting, disgrace, and ruin of affairs; uncleanness promises no other than wasting of person and substance, and the various effects of divine judgments that occur to common observation: yet many wanton songs show in what an amiable light these sorts of wickedness do appear to self-deceiving hearts. That is one instruction to be learned from many lewd performances of wit. This oftentimes sets out wicked revenges as a brave sort of heroism. Lust promises pleasure,—those pleasures of sin that are for a season; and men, under the power of their lusts, are lovers of these pleasures more than lovers of God. Sin deceived me, said one who knew well the deceiving influence of sin, though he was first and last restrained from the practice of it beyond the generality of men. But what is this deceiving of sin? It is no other than men, under the influence of their lusts, deceiving their own selves.

The children of God are secured against the final, fatal effects of delusion suggested from without or from within: the Lord has represented that as impossible, Matt. xxiv. 24. Yet as they have in them a remainder of sin, and of the lusts thereof, in so far there remain in them the principles of self-deceiving. They are represented as ‘having escaped the ‘pollution that is in the world through lust,’ 2 Pet. i. 4.; as disengaged from the grossly unholy practice of the world; yet they are not to consider themselves as altogether above the danger of self-deceiving even in respect to these practices. They need the guard of watchfulness and fear, and of divine grace on that side.

But, besides, they are to remember that there are filthinesses of the spirit, as well as of the flesh, which are no less dangerous; and as there are filthinesses of the spirit, they are capable of more spiritual colourings, and so of being the more effectual means of self-deceiving. After all, they belong to the general root and principle of the flesh; and are put together in that one class of the works of the flesh, Gal. v. 19—21. ‘adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, ‘wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings;’ and all of them come under that one general sentence, that ‘they which do such things shall not ‘inherit the kingdom of God.’ One might wonder, at first

sight, what might be the occasion of this discourse of the apostle to the Galatians concerning the works of the flesh, and living after the flesh. Were such things as adulteries, fornications, drunkenness, become the remarkable special stain of that people? I do not observe any thing that imports that special charge against them. The charge against them respected dangerous doctrines and religious contentions. By looking to the discourse preceding the 16th verse of this 5th chapter, it will appear, that it is on occasion of these matters that he introduces his discourse concerning the works of the flesh; among which he reckons seditions, heresies; and it is likely that it was concerning these matters that their hatred, emulations, wrath, strifes, were employed; and he classes them all, as works of the flesh, with adultery, fornication, &c. Certainly the Galatians did, in the light of their own lusts, see these things in a quite different view. They apprehended, that in these things they were doing for God. Thus, as Satan transforms himself into an angel of light, lusts transform themselves into graces, vile passions set themselves out for fruits of the Spirit, and wickedness for holiness; and men become confident of being very acceptable to God in serving the devil. Such subtle self-deceiving are men capable of through their lusts.

So far I have considered the lusts of men's hearts, as being universally and singly the principles and causes of self-deceiving. All men's lusts are of that nature; and every lust singly works deceit in its own province and sphere. But,

4th, There are some lusts that are of a more general and extensive influence in the matter of self-deceiving. Here I name together, men's pride, their inordinate carnal self-love and sloth. There is a carnal, unwise self-love that does, with great force, and upon any the most delusive grounds, maintain a favourable opinion in what concerns our state and hope. Our pride inclines us, however contrary to light and truth, to maintain a good esteem of ourselves, our dispositions, abilities, condition, and course. Men's pride shuts out the conviction of what is vile and sinful in their heart and way; resists every view and impression that tends to humble them. Their self-love shuts out every thing that would give them apprehensions or dread concerning their state and prospect; and their sloth resists every impression that would tend to excite them to activity and fervency in the concerns of their souls and in matters of religion. All these, combining in

their influence on a carnal and hard heart, do make a strong interest in favours of every thing by which men, otherwise under the power of their lusts, may deceive their own selves.

5th, Errors in matters of opinion and doctrinal principles of religion, such as abound in the world, have no small part in this matter, and do not a little forward this mischief of self-deceiving. I need not specify these very particularly. God hath given the light of his word to obviate and overcome all these delusions which have prevailed among the blind and dark world ; but the interest of delusion hath put some upon setting up human reason in a place of authority, above that of God speaking in his word. On this ground, these mysteries of faith have been rejected, which God, in his great grace, hath revealed and proposed for the solid ground of his people's consolation ; and men have declined to believe the report of a faithful God, any further than their poor understandings can comprehend how these things can be so. The word of God sets out, in a strong light, men's great guiltiness, spiritual importance, the depth and desperateness of their misery and lost condition, that they may be made to prize, and excited to lay hold of, his rich and free grace through Jesus Christ. But some have laboured to lessen men's opinion and impressions of their miseries and plagues ; to exalt the good qualities, dispositions, and abilities of human nature, in order to bring it within their reach to be justified by their works, and sanctified by their own strength and the determination of their own hearts. And, if they cannot bring themselves up to the just and original condition of works, many bring down works, by an imaginary abatement of that sort of condition of life, to their own rate. And if they cannot bring up their abilities to true holiness, they give notions of holiness that tend to bring it down to the measure of their abilities ; and will make both meet, by means of certain external assistances (so they may be called) of grace, that leave room to men to glory in themselves and have confidence in the flesh. Many, that cannot be reconciled to true holiness, do readily vent or entertain high opinions concerning the rites of superstition that tend to substitute them in the place of it. Many, who will not part with their lusts in this world and in this life, are fond of the notion of purgations after this life, by however painful means, that they may enjoy their lusts here, with the prospect of reaching heaven some time or other.

I need not go farther in this way. These hints and instances may suffice for examples. Such doctrinal errors are

maintained and supported in the world with great zeal, with much human learning and eloquence, and with great strength of party. The natural self-deceiving principles of men's hearts are the original source of them. They have not arisen from mere mistake or weakness of the understanding. They have had deeper sources in the hearts of men. And when, with all the advantages mentioned, they are advanced and propagated in the world, these productions of self-deceiving hearts do further strengthen self-deceiving in every heart into which they make their way. When they are, with artful mixture and cunning adulteration, insinuated together with some universally received principles of the gospel, and under the common language of the gospel, they are, like gilded pills, agreeably received, and enable men the more resolutely and advisedly, as it were, to be deceiving their own selves.

6th, In the last place, men are, in a special manner, obnoxious to deceiving, yea, to self-deceiving, by the cunning and influence of Satan. We need not take up or amuse ourselves with philosophical accounts of his operation and influence. What the scripture represents may satisfy us. By it we learn, that from the time we first listened to his deceitful suggestion, and, by that means, fell into the hands of our enemies, Satan doth, as the god of this world, rule over men in their natural state. 'He worketh (worketh effectually) 'in the children of disobedience.' As he worketh effectually, he worketh in the deceiving way; and he hath abundant means to work by, as we learn from that place, Eph. ii. 2, 3. such as, outwardly, the course of this world; inwardly, the lusts and desires of the flesh and of the mind there mentioned. The word of God marks out to us most fearful instances, more general and more particular, of his deceiving; as indeed his hand is in all the deceivings that are in the world. Of the kind last mentioned, we see what a miserable bargain Judas was influenced to make, for thirty pieces, when Satan had entered into him; and what a miserable cheat Ananias and Sapphira put upon themselves, for an interest of the same kind. There are seasons when he is, in a special sense, loosed, to go out and deceive the nations, Rev. xx. 7, 8.; otherwise, he goeth about, at all times, seeking whom he may devour in this way. Paul was not ignorant of his devices in the church and among Christians. We see how anxious he was for the Corinthians, 2 Cor. xi. 3. 'lest, as the serpent 'had beguiled Eve, their minds should be corrupted from the 'simplicity that is in Christ.' Deceiving in matters of faith,

and consequently of practice, is his constant aim and endeavour for the ruin of souls. But he works insensibly and imperceptibly; and men, influenced by this grand deceiver, yet acting by principles that are in their own hearts, do, in the meantime, deceive their own selves.

I go now to the next thing I proposed on this subject, and that was,—

II. To offer some directions against self-deceiving. If we would wish to escape it and be saved from it, it is needful and useful,

1st, That we should be upon our guard against it, by just views and a suitable impression of our danger by it. Other evils and dangers may perhaps attack us in a more open manner; and although their aspect and appearance may be more sensibly terrible, yet the hazard by them is not so really great; but deceiving, whether we consider it as coming from others, or as having its source in ourselves, the more sensibly it operates, it is the more really dangerous and often fatal in its consequences. Delusion and self-deceiving works in a hidden manner. It undermines our souls, and at length does, all at once, blow them up with an unforeseen, sudden, and most terrible ruin. Satan takes incomparably more fortresses in this way than by open assault and storming. The case requires all along the utmost skill and good instruction to discover these mines, and to prevent their effect. But, in the first place, it is especially needful that we should be apprised of our hazard. It requires all proper means, and generally something beyond the power of all means, to awaken us sufficiently to the attention and care that is needful for us against self-deceiving.

For this end, let us consider the danger we are in by the consequences of self-deceiving; the danger we are in to be self-deceived; and the great difficulty there is in being disengaged and delivered from the power of delusion, when once it has prevailed.

The consequence of self-deceiving, the natural consequence of it in religion, is, to forego the great salvation, to incur inexpressible and everlasting misery and ruin. Men who are not extremely addicted to worldly things, are nevertheless sensible that to cheat themselves, through the inattention or delusion of their minds, unto loss in small matters, is extremely vexatious; but how will it add to the tortures of hell, to think that after all the counsel God has offered, men

have plunged themselves into unquenchable flames by deceiving their own selves!

Yet how liable are we to self-deceiving! Our ignorance of God and of ourselves has made a woful darkness within us, in which it is easy for us to stray; the various errors that are in the world make false lights to mislead us; the various lusts of our hearts do importunately pretend to the guiding of us, and will never guide us right; and Satan has the utmost artifice and diligence to improve these occasions and instruments of self-deceiving against us. When we consider the concurrence of such powerful causes, might we not readily cry out, Who then can be saved from delusion and self-deceiving?

Further, let us consider the power of delusion when it prevails, and how difficult it is to be delivered from it. Look to that place, Isa. xlv. 20. 'A deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?' He is speaking of the idolater, whose sentiments and practice are absurd to the last degree,—to worship an image, and a stock or a stone, as a god! it is something far beyond brutality. Could not a little common sense and reflection deliver him from it? could he not readily suggest to himself and say, as in the preceding verse, 'I have burnt part of it in the fire? shall I make the residue thereof an abomination?'—a god? 'Shall I fall down to the stock of a tree?'—is not such a god a mere vanity and a lie? 'But a deceitful heart hath turned him aside.' His delusive and self-deceiving heart hath so powerfully perverted him, that, clear as the case appears, yet he cannot deliver himself from this most absurd delusion, or say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?

The light of the gospel did once banish this gross idolatry out of the Christian world. It was then exposed in so strong a light, that one might think it would never return again. But let us look to Popery and Papists, who seem to go beyond all the world for all the various forms of gross idolatry. Let us consider their greatest solemnity. The priest, the maker of his god, as their bold and stupid blasphemy expresses it; he mumbles some words in a strange language, with certain gestures and actions of legerdemain, and forthwith wine becomes real blood; and a wafer, remaining to all appearance as it was, becomes (so they believe) the very real body of Christ that hung on the cross; and is thereupon worshipped with the highest adoration. Have these

men no knowledge, no reason at all, no common sense? None exceeds many of them in these. Could not then a little reflection or common sense deliver them from such gross deceiving?

Could not a man say with himself,—When I apply to this object all my senses which God hath given me, as the proper means of judging concerning all material objects that come within their reach, as the natural means of evidence concerning them, I am obliged to judge, and cannot but judge, that this is bread, and not the crucified body of Christ. Has God, the Author of my nature, given means and organs of perception of material objects that cannot in such case but deceive all the world by their testimony?

Might it not easily occur to a man, Why, at the first institution of this ordinance, Christ himself was in his body sound, entire, and living at the head of the table. Is it possible that the broken pieces of bread, which he gave out of his hands to his disciples, were at the same time that very body in which he was presently speaking to them? It is said of Christ, Acts iii. 21. ‘that the heavens must receive him until the ‘times of the restitution of all things.’ Might not one easily suggest to himself,—Is it not surely impossible that his body, now glorified, should be going corporally into the mouths of thousands upon earth; yea, should, in the form of a wafer, be subject to all these indignities that may accidentally happen to it?

These absurdities may to us appear so evident and palpable, that many will be ready to think, that surely these things are indeed believed by none. But they who think so, know not, or advert not to, the power of delusion, how great it is. Men may be wise and rational in every thing else, and may be foolish and brutal in religion. They are things that are in fact very consistent, for men, exceeding acute and ingenious in other matters, to fall under delusion and deceive their own selves in the things of God, to the highest degree.

We may perhaps be ready to trust to the strength of our own understandings, and the means of light we enjoy, as sufficient to secure us against such great delusions, as we hear to prevail abroad in the world; but we had need to look to ourselves, lest as great delusions prevail among us, for all the means of light we enjoy, as among others. Here is one instance. For a secure, Christless, graceless, and unholy soul to be confident of the favour of God now and hereafter, is certainly as great, and absurd, and ruining a delu-

sion as any thing in paganism or popery. To worship God under the form of an image, is indeed extremely opposite to the spirituality and immensity of his nature ; but a man who lives in his sins, and is confident of the present favour of God, and of eternal life hereafter, makes to himself a representation of God as contrary to what he is, and as truly dishonourable to him, as he who represents him by a stock, or a stone, or a wafer. And yet, alas ! after all the light that shines about us, how many are there among us who do in this way deceive their ownelves ! If then we are so obnoxious to self-deceiving,—if the difficulty is so great of extricating ourselves from it, and if the final consequence of it be so dismal,—we have abundant reason to be awakened, to fear it, and guard against it. This is the first direction.

2d, For securing us against self-deceiving and all delusion, let us carefully improve the word of God. This is the light with which God hath blessed us, in order to guide us safe amidst the delusions that abound. It is that more sure word of prophecy, to which we shall do well to take heed, as to a light that shineth in a dark place.

If we wish to know God, ‘ 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. It is only Christ, speaking by his Spirit in his prophets and apostles, who gives true instruction concerning God, the perfections and mysteries of his nature. The councils of God are these deep things of him which our understanding and reason could never penetrate unto : ‘ What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man which is in him ? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God,’ 1 Cor. ii. 11. It is he who in the word hath revealed them. It is good counsel here, not to lean to our own understandings. We should come to the word of God to learn these deep things of God, with an impression of the weakness of our minds, of their obnoxiousness to delusion ; and our impression of this should be heightened with the view of the miserable delusions in the matters of God, which the vain imaginations of men, even of men ‘ professing themselves to be wise,’ Rom. i. 22. have filled the world with. If we have good judgment and critical learning, there is use enough for them, in discovering what the Holy Ghost doth truly express in his word, although we should not subject the truth of what he says to be tried by the rule of our preconceived notions, or reject these deep things of God, because they exceed our compre-

hension : for, What is there in God, or even in the works of his hands, that doth not so? In matters in which God hath condescended to give us revelation, it would become us to yield, that the authority of it should cast down imaginations and every high thing in us which exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bring unto captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. We should pray to God for his grace to bring us to this dutiful disposition, so becoming them who would learn from God; and to bring down that pride of understanding in us that doth so readily betray us unto self-deceiving in the matters of God.

Again, if we wish to know our duty, and the way wherein we ought to walk, 'it is the word of God that will be a lamp 'unto our feet and a light unto our path,' Psal. cxix. 105: it is by means of its instructions that 'we may be filled with 'the knowledge of the will of God, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that we may walk worthy of the Lord 'unto all pleasing,' Col. i. 9, 10. But if we want to be directed by this light in our duty, we should not come with the previous biases and determinations of our own hearts concerning our way, as if we wanted rather to employ our art in making the word of God speak to our mind, than, in simplicity and humility, to receive our direction from it. This is the way of too many, who are therefore, in the righteous judgment of God, given up to deceive their own selves; and to return with responses, as from these divine oracles, according to the idols of their own hearts. Simplicity and godly sincerity are the proper characters of them who wish to be taught of God.

We should not only search the scriptures for direction in the more remarkable cases of duty, but we ought to have such extensive knowledge of the word, as that we should have of it a store laid up in our hearts, for all the occasions of duty and temptation. We should have the word of Christ dwelling in us richly. Alas! in how small measure doth it dwell even in many sincere Christians? But it should dwell in us richly, in all wisdom; not as some who have it to produce in plenty, but in all folly: or, as many others, who have it plentifully, with much perverseness and wickedness.

One thing further we ought especially to advert to, and that is, that we let our consciences and hearts lie open to the word of God for the conviction and reproof of the errors of our sentiments, dispositions, and practice, otherwise our own self-deceiving will prevail. We should be in dread of screen-

ing it from the conviction and reproof of the all-seeing God speaking by his word, thereby finding us out, and for that end bringing it as a candle through our hearts. 'Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful,' Prov. xxvii. 6. One who hath the health and safety of his soul at heart will be sensible that he who rebuketh him doth him greater friendship than he that flattereth with the tongue, Prov. xxviii. 23. If we decline the reproofs of God and his word, it is but just that he should give us up to the self-flattery by which we shall deceive our ourselves.

Thus ought we to improve the light of God's word, to save us from deceiving our ourselves, either in faith or practice.

III. It is a direction of the utmost importance to us against the danger of self-deceiving, that we be doers of the word. To exhort us to be so, is the chief design of my text. I have it to consider more directly and fully hereafter. Here I consider it in this particular view, as it is an useful and effectual antidote against the plague of delusion and self-deceiving. The text gives one instance (a very comprehensive one indeed) of self-deceiving; and requires, in opposition to it, to be doers of the word. But, if we consider it, it is a needful mean, and of universal use against all self-deceiving. Let us consider the matter on both sides, as not doing of the word exposes men to the danger of delusion; and as to be doers of the word tends to men's safety against all delusion.

I say, that to be not doers of the word, exposes men to the danger of delusion and of deceiving their ourselves. This is set out in a strong light, and by tremendous examples in the word of God. 'My people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me. So I gave them up unto their own heart's lust; and they walked in their own counsels. O that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways!' Psal. lxxxi. 11—13. Here, because Israel hearkened not to the Lord's voice, because they walked not in his way, he gave them up to their hearts' lusts, 'the deceitful lusts,' to walk in their own counsels. Surely these were deluding counsels, by which they deceived their ourselves. This is an instance from the Old Testament church and dispensation.

Here is an instance in the New Testament church: 'Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they

‘ all might be damned, who believed not the truth, but had ‘ pleasure in unrighteousness,’ 2 Thess. ii. 10—12. Here we see, in the character of the people here represented, that they believed not the truth. It might have been thought, at first sight of the words, ver. 10. that, though they had not received the love of the truth, they had received the truth itself; that there was no failure in that part; that though they had not love, they had faith,—a naked faith, without works and without its proper fruits. But their case was indeed, that ‘ they believed not the truth.’ So it may always be justly concluded concerning them who have not the proper fruit of the truth. There is no such thing as a naked true faith without good fruits.

Faith always worketh by love. The one and the other they had not; particularly, for this is first mentioned, ‘ they ‘ received not the love of the truth.’ That love, which is the fulfilling of the law, which is the end of the commandment; that love, these works and fruits, which the truth requires, ‘ they received it not;’ it did not relish with them; their hearts refused to submit to it. The truth itself they professed to receive, and were satisfied with being hearers of the word only; but ‘ the love of the truth,’ the love which it doth dictate and require, this they could not digest, and did not receive; but, in opposition to it, ‘ they had pleasure in ‘ unrighteousness,’ ver. 12.

Now the judgment of God against them for this is, ‘ that ‘ God sent them strong delusion, that they should believe a ‘ lie.’ This context gives us, in awful terms, a prophecy concerning the apostacy of Christians unto Popery. They must, belike, have considerable prejudice in its favours, that can satisfy themselves with any other interpretation of it. Popery is called, ver. 7. ‘ the mystery of iniquity.’ There is a great deal of that sort of mystery in it. But there is one thing concerning it that might be a great mystery, and that is, considering that vein of glaring absurdity that runs through it all, and its clear and universal contradiction to the word of God, how Christians, enjoying so bright a light of divine revelation, having the scriptures of truth in their hands, professing the gospel with so great zeal and with so great fruit, for a season, in the primitive times,—how they could at length have fallen into such horrible delusion, and have submitted to be rid upon with such dismal usurpation over their persons and consciences.

But this mystery is, in this most remarkable prophecy,

laid open and accounted for; churches soon fell from their first love and first works, Rev. ii. 4, 5.; and at length, 'not receiving the love of the truth, but having pleasure in unrighteousness, God did,' in most righteous and fearful judgment, 'send them strong delusions, that they might believe a lie.' We may readily think that we in this land have so much light, and so full a view of that same delusion of Popery, that it has been so much generally cried out against, and that men's conviction is generally so strong against it, that we should be in no great danger of its prevailing much, or gaining ground among us, even though it should have that authority and power on its side which it lately aspired to: but men can easily deceive their own selves with an imaginary security against delusion, even when they have these things in their heart and way that give the greatest advantage to delusion. If men's 'not receiving the love of the truth, but having pleasure in unrighteousness,' paves the way for delusion, surely a great many are prepared for being a ready prey to the deceitful arts of Popery, who think themselves very remote from it. A considerable party have already fallen in with some of its special principles, rules, and usages, although they have not prevailed to bring their idol to the place in this island they wished for him, (the Lord be thanked!) yet his attraction hath prevailed to bring them a considerable part of the way to Rome where he is; and if the object were fixed nearer them, it is but too likely that this sort of attraction would operate with full power and efficacy.

Thus we have seen, in the apostle's prophecy, the special liableness of those to delusion who are not doers of the word. It had not been just to have named the righteous judgment of God as one of the proper causes of delusion; but we have shown various powerful causes in men themselves, that will certainly operate with great force when they have, by not obeying his word, provoked God to give them up to their full and unrestrained influence.

Let us now consider the matter on the other side, and see what prospect the word of God gives to them, who are the doers of it, of their being kept safe from delusion and self-deceiving.

As to this, we are not to imagine that they are still free of all error. The most upright men, while they are in this world, will have their degree of ignorance, and their mistakes and misconceptions concerning some truths of the word of God. And we would judge much amiss, if we took every

error in sentiment as a proof that men are not doers of the word ; although people's temper hath often too great a tendency to this way of judging their brother. The Lord permits it, that the most sincere of his people (as to these general characters) should have their different and wrong apprehensions in diverse matters of opinion and behaviour, and these sometimes of no small importance. He hath thus permitted, that men may have to humble them and make them wary and diligent in their searches after truth and duty. Here we know but imperfectly and in part. Upright Christians, doers of the word, will be preserved from all fatal delusions ; but they shall be perfectly free of all errors and mistakes, only where they shall be perfect doers. Perfect light and perfect holiness are the privileges of one and the same place. Here, as there shall still be imperfection of light, and mistakes, so there shall still be need of forbearance. They who will not use forbearance towards other Christians, and even churches, are not fit for the society of the church upon earth (which commonly they do not sufficiently value ; ) and had need to try themselves well, lest their zeal, which doth so much outrun the course and way of a holy, gracious, and forbearing God, have not something in its company and at its root that will exclude them from the society of the church above. This it is more fit for them to inquire and examine themselves, than for others to judge about.

But mistakes the doers of the word may have ; only, I say, they shall be kept safe from pernicious and fatal self-deceiving and delusion. This is clear from our Lord's words, Matth. xxiv. 24. for I suppose it will be agreed, that the elect there mentioned are the doers of the word. And the Lord, speaking of the greatest means and occasions imaginable of delusion, says, ' Insomuch that (if it were possible) ' they shall deceive the very elect ; ' clearly intimating that this cannot happen.

It is the wise man's maxim, Prov. xi. 3. ' The integrity of ' the upright shall guide them ; ' and, verse 5. ' the righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way.' We heard before of some whom a deceived heart hath so turned aside, that they cannot deliver themselves from the absurd delusions there represented. They are, perhaps, otherwise wiser in their generation than many of the children of the light ; but if such should not have great skill of their own to deliver them, yet ' the righteousness of the perfect shall deliver them.' No doubt but an upright, sincere aim and in-

tention is, in itself, of great use against delusion; but we must not ascribe it altogether to that, but especially to the good guiding of a gracious God, 'whose countenance doth,' favourably, 'behold the upright,' Psal. xi. 7. 'The meek,' as Psal. xxv. 9. 'will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way.' Many a time it hath happened that a serious humble Christian hath come 'under strong impressions of the arguments and spirit of those who went in deceiving dangerous courses, and hath sustained a great shock thereby; and yet hath escaped the snare, to his great comfort afterwards; which he hath found cause to ascribe, not so much to the clearness of his own light or acuteness of judgment, as to the gracious guidance of God, 'who bringeth the blind by a way that they knew not; who maketh darkness light before them, and crooked things straight,' Isa. xlii. 16. They who have it at heart, by being doers of the word, not to stray from the Lord's way, are most likely to be under that influence of his mercy that will preserve them from the self-deceivings and delusions that would bring them aside from it.

Agreeably to this is what our Lord says, John vii. 17. 'If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.' The Jews had said, verse 15. 'How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?' They had not prejudice in his favours; so they suspected there was something more than human in it, even that Satan instructed and sent him out on the business of deceiving. Christ answers, verse 16. 'My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.' There was indeed something more than human in it. He had never learned in their schools. He had received his doctrine and instructions (he speaks of his Father's messenger and prophet) from him that sent him, from God. Well pretended to, might some have said; but how shall we know if your doctrine is from him, or that you are an impostor? How shall we escape the danger of deceiving ourselves on this important point, and of being deceived by you? His answer is as if he had said, True, the danger of deceiving 'is what men cannot be too much on their guard against; the wise, and prudent, and learned may be deceived: and though I have many arguments, testimonies, and proofs, to show of my being sent of God, and that my doctrine is from him, yet I would not have you altogether to trust to your own capacity of judging of such proofs; but look sincerely to God to direct your

minds and hearts to judge aright of my doctrine, and the proofs of its being from God. And in respect to this, take it for a direction of the utmost importance—‘ If any man do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.’

Of such great consequence is it against the danger of deceiving our ownelves of imposture and delusion of every kind, that we should be doers of the will and word of God.

IV. Against the danger of deceiving ourselves, or being deceived, it is especially of consequence to us to pray earnestly to God for the instruction and guidance of his Holy Spirit. There is the spirit of truth and the spirit of error, 1 John iv. 6. The apostle John shows us the effectual benefit of having this spirit of truth against delusions, 1 John ii. 26. he says, ‘ These things have I written to you concerning them that seduce you.’ His encouragement concerning them he writes to against these seductions, is this, verse 27. ‘ But the anointing ye have received of him abideth in you.’ And, chap. iv. speaking of the delusions and deceivers that were abroad in the world, and infesting the church, he says, verse 5. ‘ They are of the world ; therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.’ What had secured true Christians against these deceivers? This he had told, verse 4. ‘ Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them ; because greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.’ All our care and prudence, with the best directions that can be suggested to us, cannot enable us to overcome the deceivers that are in the world, or the principles of deceiving that are in ourselves, without this ; therefore, to all our care, watchfulness, and endeavours, let us add, to pray for the promised Spirit of truth to lead us unto all truth ; which promise, not only apostles had right to, but also all the Lord’s people, who shall be all taught of God.

I come now to the point which I proposed to discourse of from this text, and that is,

II. The particular matter of self-deceiving, against which the apostle doth here warn Christians ; and that is, satisfying themselves with being hearers of the word only.

A particular matter I have called it, though, indeed, if we consider it justly, it is exceeding general and comprehensive. For there is no essential matter in faith or in religion, about which men come into delusion and deceive their ownelves, but it affects the weighty affair of doing the word ; and throws men out of the class of doers into that of hearers only, according to the apostle’s comprehensive view in this division

of characters of professed Christians. And so, if being hearers only, and not doers, doth include and imply, according to its practical tendency, all the self-deceivings which professed Christians are commonly liable to, we have had the more full and just occasion to speak so largely concerning self-deceiving in the general, as a proper subject of my text.

But now, as to this second point, I observe in the general from that part of the words, that it is the common duty of all Christians to be hearers of the word of God. The apostle Paul says, that 'faith cometh by hearing,' Rom. x. 17., even by hearing of a preacher; as he says there, 'How shall they hear without a preacher?' Some are fond of the designations of priests and priesthood; and of these many are pleased to follow the hint, and must needs, as priests, have somewhat to offer, as priests were heretofore ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices. Hence we hear with some now-a-days, (good Protestants, no doubt) of the oblation of bread and wine, yea, of the proper propitiatory sacrifice to be offered by these priests for the quick and the dead. The Lord hath indeed, in the blessed ordinance we have been celebrating, appointed his people to show the Lord's death till he come. But propitiatory oblation and sacrifice, commemorative or otherwise, he hath not required; neither did it come into his mind; 'for by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.' He hath, in this blessed ordinance, offered to his people the food which their souls should feed on; but he is far from requiring them to offer propitiatory sacrifice of any kind, as altar entertainment to him. The Lord preserve us from delusions so strongly contradicting the gospel and the doctrine of our salvation! Such may, in disparagement of their mission and ministerial character, give others the designations of teachers or of preachers; but they have no cause to decline these names. Priests we hear of none in the scriptures to be in the gospel church, besides the people of God in common, who are all a holy priesthood, under the great High Priest of our profession; nor sacrifices, but those spiritual sacrifices which they all offer in common. But teachers and preachers are proper and scriptural names of the ministers of the gospel, Eph. iv. 11. Christ hath given some to his church in the quality of pastors and teachers; and the character and work of those that are sent, Rom. x. 15. is to be preachers. They will do well to satisfy themselves and others concerning their mission and the warrants thereof from the word of God. One thing I am sure of, that

the New Testament warrants the mission of teachers and preachers, but doth nowhere warrant priests, or priestly service, under the gospel, besides what is common, as I said before, to all the Lord's people.

A great and chief part then of the work of ministers of the gospel is to preach the word of God; that word of the kingdom, as it is called, by which chiefly the kingdom of our Redeemer is advanced here upon earth; to sow that seed, from which all the crop is to arise which the Lord expects from his field in this world.

Under the Old Testament, anciently, the faith of God's people was entertained, in great part, with the dumb show of solemn ceremonial services; though it is true that he provided, in every period, for the instruction of his people, in some measure, out of his word, and by his servants ordinary and extraordinary. As light increased under the Old Testament, at length the reading of the word, with some explication and exhortation, became the stated exercise of the Lord's people in their synagogues through the land; but now that the Lord hath removed all ceremonies from the ordinary worship of his people (except the few very simple ones we have in the sacraments,) that evangelical light hath come to its height in the church below; those types and shadows are vanished, and Christ, the body and substance of them all, clearly and directly exhibited; the preaching of Christ and his word hath a chief place among God's ordinances in the common solemnities of his people.

Since, then, the Lord hath prescribed it, as a chief work to his servants, to be preachers, it follows, that it is one chief part of his people's duty to be hearers. This the expression of my text implied; for when it cautions men not to be hearers only, it clearly implies that they are to be hearers; therefore doth the apostle so anxiously, in the context, give direction about hearing; desiring Christians to be 'swift to hear, and to receive with meekness the ingrafted word;' even that word by which 'God hath of his own will begotten us,' by which 'we are born again;' even the word (as the apostle Peter speaks) which, 'by the gospel, is preached unto us.'

Without doubt, there is great profit to be had by reading the word of God, and those good compositions that are calculated to assist in the understanding and improving of it; but still the hearing of the word preached is to be regarded, not only as a mean, in its own nature, adapted to our profit,

but as an ordinance of God, as a part of our obedience to the gospel, and as a mean of grace, having its part in all these promises of God that do encourage the faith of his people with respect to all his institutions.

But to come closer to the matter now before us, what are we to understand by hearers of the word only? Many entertain a good opinion of themselves, as if all were well with them, as if they did every thing well, and were free of the bad marks and characters in the word of God which do truly belong to them, merely because they unreasonably narrow and restrict the expressions of the scripture, and thereby only enable themselves to judge favourably of their case and way, so deceiving their own selves. If therefore we would wish not to deceive ourselves in being truly hearers of the word only, one thing we should carefully advert to is, that we do not deceive ourselves in our notions concerning the meaning of this character of hearers of the word only. To give it therefore its true extent of meaning, according to the apostle's view, we have reason to think that he means to divide all those who hear the preaching of the gospel (as all who have a full profession of Christianity do) unto these two classes, as comprehending all of them upon the one side or the other; viz. doers of the word, and them who are hearers only. Men may, besides simple hearing, have various good-like dispositions, inward feelings and attainments in knowledge and practice, and yet not to be entitled to the general good character of being doers of the word. These all fall into the other class, as the Holy Ghost doth not here give us any other class in which to place them. In this view of the matter, we shall find many in the class of hearers only, who commonly think of themselves that they have a great deal more; yet as they have not what would give them right to be placed among the true and proper doers, they do but deceive themselves in their favourable opinion of themselves. I shall name several sorts of them, according to their different degrees.

1. Some come to be bodily present where the word is preached, without giving it so much as common attention. They are present for one reason or other, or perhaps with little consideration of any reason at all, but that some way or other they have been introduced to the custom of it. Their hardened hearts are entirely indifferent about the subject. Their own carnal minds, their eyes, and vain imaginations, find entertainment for them; or they sleep out the

sermon. They have those dreams, when awake, that keep them easy in an absolute neglect of their souls and of religion. And being wholly at ease concerning these subjects, they choose to abandon themselves to sleep and proper dreaming, rather than give any attention to the message and instructions which God directs to them. I own it is with some impropriety that these can be called hearers of the word at all ; but that they are so called, and pretend to be so, and that they are a sort not to be quite overlooked on this occasion, since, alas ! there are so many of whom we have little reason to have a better opinion.

But, will God be mocked ? Doth God's call directed to you import no more than, as in some letters of common style, the favour or the honour of your presence ? Do you want nothing for your own concern and interest ? Or think you only that it avails to God that you should externally give him your countenance, and honour his service with your presence ? He will some time give you bitter conviction of the contrary.

Yet such miserable souls will be ready to say, they are waiting at the pool of ordinances, (with an ignorant and senseless allusion to the man at the pool of Bethesda,) waiting until the angel come down and stir these waters. But they will have other sort of feeling of their misery and plagues, and concern about their cure ; or else, what they call their waiting, will issue in the stirring of unquenchable flames for them.

2. There are somewhat more rational hearers. They have some sort of conviction that it is the word of God, and find themselves obliged to hear with some regard and decency, as under the inspection of their own consciences, besides the observation of others ; yet their hearts have no effectual sense of duty with respect to the word, nor concern about their interest in the subject of it. However, they give exact attention to the word in the hearing ; they are inclined to take that opportunity of increasing their knowledge of the matters of the word and the doctrines of the gospel ; they are content to observe how the man handles his subject, and to be in condition to give some judicious opinion concerning him and it ; and are more employed commonly in doing so, than in forming a just opinion of themselves, their condition, and way. These have, however, somewhat more rational in their way than the former sort. The former sort might be called a brutal kind of hearers, who have the bodily organs

of hearing, but employ their understanding in no way about it. This sort of hearers do hear in some degree like men; yet they are far from hearing as Christians. And if the word in the hearing make any degree of impression, yet doth it not truly enter into the hardness of their hearts. It is but like the seeds which fall by the way-side; the fowls come and devour them up: the wicked one cometh, and catcheth away that which was sown in the heart.

3. Some, in hearing the word, have considerable concern about the condition of their souls; an awakened conscience sets their sins in order before them; and perhaps the terror of the righteous judgment of God deprives them of all peace; it may be that diverse distressing and awakening providences strike home the impression with still greater force. These are not unconcerned hearers. The interest of their inward peace makes them serious and attentive to the means by which any peace or comfort may be had. To these the news in the word, of a Saviour delivering us from the wrath to come, may be of good relish; they may hear the word, and anon with joy receive it; they may have some taste of the good word of God, with some elevated devotional frame; and from the good tidings they hear, and the goodlike dispositions they feel, they may have peace and good opinion of their state. Having escaped the gross pollutions of the world, and being adorned with the gifts perhaps of knowledge and utterance, their profession of religion may have a promising appearance; and their own good opinion of themselves may be easily confirmed by the good opinion of others.

All these things may be, and yet they fall short of the character of doers of the word. Trials because of the word, or the duty it requires, (and what times are so good but integrity will be tried?) will wither all: or, because these things have no true root, they may in time fade of themselves, or, at best, settle in a barren unfruitful formality. But however it happen as to external appearance and character, yet persons may have the feelings, dispositions, and gifts I have mentioned, and yet have had no true sense of the evil of sin; have never had Christ for the object of their faith, as he is made unto us sanctification: consequently, they have never known the life of faith in true kind, or, in its proper extent. Their plagues have been hid from them by their spiritual attainments, not cured by the power of grace. Their hearts have never been separated from their lusts, or thoroughly engaged in the way of true holiness. These are

not doers, but hearers only of the word, deceiving their own selves.

4. Some hearers, with less spiritual attainment perhaps than the former, but with some conviction and relish of the truth and goodness of the word of God, and with considerable force of conscience, do seem to set out in religion, in a manner more solid, and that promises more lasting fruitfulness, and make considerable progress in that way; but worldly lusts, rather covered than subdued, rather pruned and dressed than eradicated, do in reality retain the rule in their hearts and way. These do secretly obstruct their integrity, and at length their influence prevails over all their conversation, and chokes the good seed, in its most promising appearance of fruitfulness (like thorns growing, as from a strong root in ground) in hearts still under the curse of original corruption, unrenewed. By this it appears that their natures were never truly sanctified; that they never became thoroughly and properly doers of the word. I shall not mention more particulars on this head. I observed before, that all who come short of the character of doers of the word, do fall into this class of hearers only, taking it in its full extent. When therefore we come to the next general head, the explication of the character of doers of the word will exclude several who pretend to it; and so will serve for further explication of the character of hearers only.

From what has been said, we may observe, how great a number of the hearers of the gospel are likely to be taken up by the several classes of hearers only. Such have need to reflect and consider,—What have they by the gospel, and by being hearers thereof? Some of them come to some sort of considerable attainment by means of it, and do many things in conformity to it; but as their minds and hearts have not been made thoroughly subject to the word, they will, in the last day, be found among them who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. All their promising attainments and gifts will not answer the charge of the word against them. Though they should say to their Judge, ‘Have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?’ yet, as they have not been really doers of good works, they shall have judgment awarded to them as they that work iniquity, Matth. vii. 12, 13. All their light, gifts, and seeming attainments, will but concur with their more real unbelief, hypocrisy, and unholiness, in more plentifully treasuring up to them wrath

against the day of wrath ; so that it shall come out in the issue, that it had been better for them not to have known the way to righteousness at all.

Of how unspeakably great consequence, then, is it to us that we should attain to that by the word, and by the grace of God conveyed with it to our hearts, that would bring us up to the true character of doers of the word !—That is to be the subject of the next discourse.

## SERMON III.

JAMES i. 22.

*'But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your  
ourselves.'*

HAVING spoken at good length concerning men's general obnoxiousness to self-deceiving, and concerning the comprehensive matter in which all the delusions and self-deceivings of professed Christians terminate, viz. their satisfying themselves with being hearers of the word only, I come now to the main subject of the text—

III. The character and conduct required and recommended in opposition to this self-deceiving; viz. to be doers of the word. Upon this I shall,

- I. Offer some general observations, tending to open up and explain the subject, founded chiefly upon the expression of the text.
- II. I shall suggest some arguments and motives to enforce this exhortation.
- III. Propose some proper directions and cautions; and,
- IV. Some marks by which we may be satisfied if we are truly doers of the word.

I. I shall offer some general observations that tend to explain and open up the subject, founded chiefly upon the expression of the text. As,

1. The doing required is, doing of the word of God. The apostle knew of no other doing, required or accepted in religion, but doing of the word. How few are indeed doers of the word! The doing of the word is too large and extensive a compass of doing for the aim and intention of many in religion; yet, as if it were too narrow, men will not be confined within that compass. These parts of their religion, which themselves oft-times practise with greatest heat of zeal, and which they obtrude on others with the greatest urgency, to the oppressing of them, and many a time to the shedding of their blood, are these parts of it that are beyond the line and

compass of the word. The religion warranted and prescribed by the word is God's religion. The other is their own religion, and they are the fonder of it. They oftentimes act as if they meant to leave it to God to avenge the neglect of his religion, as he will certainly do (for people can generally live easy enough with that sort of men in neglecting of it,) but as if they thought that it fell especially to men's share to avenge the neglect of human religion.

But what is the aim of all practice in religion, if it is not to please God, and be accepted of him in it? and what imaginable ground can be shown us for expecting acceptance with him, in doing a service which he hath not required, and which is not doing of his word? When the Lord is, Jer. xix. 5. reproving men for burning their sons with fire for burnt-offerings unto Baal, his pleading is thus,—‘Which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind.’ Might not the Lord have offered other strong and affecting arguments, taken from the nature of the thing itself, against the offering of their sons for burnt-offerings? It is easy to see he might. But, then, if men should be obliged always to state the argument on the nature of things, the reasonableness or unreasonableness, the decency or indecency of things, in their own nature, conscientious and godly persons might often be put to a bay by their more ingenious adversaries, especially in cases not so clearly unreasonable in their own nature as was that horrible practice. But, then, as that is not the proper state of the argument upon the main, so the Lord suggests and insists only on an argument clear, easy, sufficient, and withal within the reach of every one of his people. Here they stand secure and upon the proper ground, with respect to every religious practice; not to be moved or affected with all the plausible things that human rhetoric can produce to set out human device, until it can be shown them that it is a thing that came into the Lord's mind, which he spake, which he commanded. The consciences of the Lord's people are not obliged to any doing but the doing of his word.

It is well known how the public worship of God hath been burdened and defaced with other doing than the doing of the word. The church hath long and often groaned under it. But this is a mischief that hath spread farther in men's practice. When men are satisfied about a good end, purpose, and interest, respecting religion, which they are to pursue or support, and are perhaps confident about the sincerity of their own end and aim in so doing, it too often happens that

they are not duly careful about the temper, method, and means they use; that these should likewise be agreeable to the word, and that in these they should be doers of the word. As the word directs us to the ends and interests we should intend, so ought we to take our directions from it as to all proper methods and means. But men often act as if they thought that the particular good interest they had at heart did sanctify and warrant all means whatsoever, by which they think it may be advanced. Men's unbelief will not trust to God in the use of such means as he hath prescribed, and of the conduct to which he hath confined them; and their passions will not be subject to his authority, or restricted by it. The abominable absurdity of supererogation in religion hath been exploded by the word of God wherever its light hath reached; yet men would, in some kinds of practice, be still at supererogating, and act as if they meant to be holier than God. But when men do thus outrun the word of God, if they were well tried, they would be found to have too many and considerable defects and exceptions in their characters as doers of the word. Let this then be a fixed point with us, that I have made my first general observation on this head, that no doing is required or accepted in religion, but doing of the word.

2. Every part of the word, in some respect or other, requires doing, otherwise it might have been answered to the apostle, Why require doing, in such absolute terms, of the word, when there is so much of the word that does not require any doing? Is it not enough with respect to such parts of it that we be hearers only? What else do they require? But he speaks absolutely; and there is no part of the word but his exhortation hath a respect to. There is no part of the word but by some relation, connexion, or consequence, in some way or other, requires doing.

The manifestations therein made of the divine nature and councils, the declarations therein made of the mercy and grace of God by his promises, or by the doctrine of his word otherwise, to which may be added the histories of the word that tend to confirm these, all require a certain activity of mind and heart, in way of faith and the fear of God.

The threatenings of the word with all the doctrines and declarations of it that are of that import, and these histories that tend to illustrate or confirm God's threatenings, do by no means admit of indolent hearing. It is a mark by which the Lord himself distinguishes his people, that they tremble

at his word. His works may make the most stout-hearted sinner to tremble ; but his people tremble at his word. We should, like the prudent man using these parts of the word as a prospective glass, foresee the evil and go to hide ourselves.

As the commandments of the word do more directly respect doing, so those of them that are conceived in negative form have nevertheless their positive side, and mark out somewhat to be done. So, there is no part of the word of which we are to be hearers only, or that is calculated for mere information or speculation only ; every part of it, in some view or other, requires doing.

3. To be doers of the word imports and requires to be doers of the whole word. As the whole word, and every part thereof, requires doing, (so I just now observed) ; so there is no degree of doing, nor no consideration whatsoever, for which we can dispense with ourselves, as to any part of the word, that we should not be the doers thereof. The expression of the Holy Ghost in my text is strictly general, universal, and comprehensive, to be doers of the word.

Is there any part of the word of which we have it not at heart to be the doers, and do deliberately and habitually indulge ourselves therein ? Why, with respect to that part, we are hearers of the word only. This may appear to us of small account, because we are, in every other respect, doers of the word ; so we may easily flatter ourselves : but our willing failure in that part will give us our denomination, and fix our character, 'hearers of the word only.' He whose proper character is a doer of the word, is a hearer only of no part of it. He who heareth all the prohibitions and denunciations of the word against drunkenness, and continueth a drunkard, is, in point of character, a hearer of the word only, not a doer, if he had a thousand practices of devotion and good works to show for him ; so, he that hears the prohibitions and denunciations of the word against adultery, yet in practice is an adulterer, his character is a hearer only, not a doer, if he had a thousand good works otherwise to boast of. Some of these sorts of men whom I did before class among hearers only, when explaining that subject, are men who may have many good works of diverse kinds ; yet for the reason I am now insisting on, could be classed only among hearers only, not doers.

It is said of Herod, that when he heard John Baptist, he did many things, not a few good works ; yet he was by no

means a doer of the word, but a hearer only ; as the word itself admits of no middle class. Let us go ever so far in the practice of righteousness ; yet if we make deliberate, habitual exceptions in the matters of the word, we shall be but of Herod's class,—that we did many things which exhaust and comprehend our whole character : it will not be absolutely that of doers of the word.

This same apostle James says, chap. ii. 10. ' Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.' This is a large supposition, of keeping the whole law, ' yet if he offend in one point,' that is, as I take the principal intention of it, if there is one point of the law and holy commandment of God, which he stumbles at, of which he will not submit to be the doer, he is guilty of all. Just as if one should pretend to exercise a dispensing power with respect to one or two parts of the law, although he should not actually extend it to more instances, yet he would be reckoned to overturn the constitution and destroy the authority of the whole law. So our nation sometime ago judged in the case of a monarch noted in our history, and acted happily on that view. He who absolutely stumbleth at any one point of the law, and doth not practically submit thereto, is to be classed with them the apostle Peter mentions, 1 Eph. ii. 8. ' even them which stumble at the word, being disobedient ;' not with them who are the doers of the word.

It is true that, through ignorance, inadvertence, sloth, unbelief, strong lusts and passions, and weak graces, the Lord's people do come in fact greatly short, both as to the matter and manner of their duty. They will all join in saying with this apostle, chap. iii. 2. ' In many things we offend all.' Yet true doers of the word have no fixed exception in the matters of the word. Grace and a good conscience do determine them to have respect to all the commandments thereof. Their fixed aim is to be doers of the whole word. The scripture often expresses sincerity by being perfect, and the sincere is the perfect man ; and accordingly, imperfect as they are in every thing, their sincerity and integrity, as doers of the word, hath this of perfection in it, that it truly aims at the whole word, and truly presses forward to that mark.

4. To be doers of the word is to be inwardly so, as well as outwardly. This is a consequence of the former observation about being doers of the whole word. Nor shall I be more particular as to the matter or manner of our doing in this place.

The word, of which the text calls us to be the doers, is not the word of man. The word and authority of men doth not reach farther than the outward man. But this is the word of God, who trieth the heart, and hath pleasure in uprightness. It is he who knoweth our hearts who only can judge of our uprightness; and as it is his peculiar province to know and judge of our uprightness, so by the uprightness of his people he hath peculiar pleasure.

As our heart and inward man is exposed to his observation; so doth the light, authority, and command of his word reach the inward man. The word is indeed the mean by which the Lord doth commonly give men the strongest and most sensible proof and impression of his omniscience; according to 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25. 'If one who believeth not, or one unlearned,' come in to hear the word, 'he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.' So the word is, in a sort, an omniscient heart-searching thing, and God is in it of a truth. Therefore doth the apostle speak of the word in expressions, which, strictly speaking, do suit God only, Heb. iv. 12. 'The word of God is quick and powerful, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.'

The Lord says, Jer. xvii. 10. 'I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.' Without searching the heart, he could not judge men according to their ways and doings. Of every work of man, we may say that only the half is outward, and that perhaps the half of least account in God's sight; as indeed it is of no account at all, without the inward part of it be joined to make up its integrity: besides, that the word requires much inward doing that hath no immediate connexion with present outward works. To explain particularly that inward doing, and the inward principles and manner of all doing according to the word, does not suit the general view and design of these observations: only, let us consider the word as joining this demand, 'My son, give me thy heart,' to every matter in which we would attempt to be doers of the word.

5. To be a doer of the word imports to be so to the end. 'He that endureth to the end shall be saved. Be thou faithful unto the death, and I will give thee a crown of life.' The text speaks of doers of the word absolutely, not doers for

a season. It is the property of bad ground, Luke viii. 14. to bring no fruit to perfection. This imports the same sense as the expression, Matt. xiii. 22. 'he becometh unfruitful.' It is the good ground which alone represents the doers of the word, that brings forth fruit with patience, or perseverance, Luke viii. 15. with that patience which hath its perfect work. It only is accounted fruitful. The other ground, which brought forth the greatest length of any bad ground, is accounted unfruitful, that is, such are hearers only, not doers of the word.

Should we suppose a man to live long in the practice of righteousness, and in end to turn away from the holy commandment, from which period of life shall he be denominated a doer or not doer? From the longest or the last? The Lord himself determines this, Ezek. xxxiii. 13. 'If he trust to his own righteousness and commit iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it.' He is not a doer of the word. The precious consolation of the new covenant respecting this matter is not my present subject. I consider matters in the light of duty, and what brings a man properly under the character of a doer of the word. Let this therefore be an argument by which grace shall work on the heart of every doer of the word, that 'he only who endureth to the end shall be saved,' 2 John 8. 'Look to yourselves that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward,' Gal. vi. 9. 'And let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.' I come now to the second thing on this subject.

II. To suggest some arguments and motives to enforce this exhortation to be doers of the word.

The word which requires this regard is, the word of God: It is he who speaketh to us in it. And so, doing the word is our obedience to him, doing his will, and doing things pleasing to him. For which it becometh every one of his people to regard the following considerations.

1. Consider his various relations to you, the obligations these bring you under, and the right he thereby hath to your obedience. Consider his absolute sovereignty, which is founded in his own infinite excellency, and in that goodness and power by which he hath given us our being, and upholds it; which is a relation which nothing could put an end to but what would put an end to our existence.

How much should it recommend the word of this great Sovereign of the Universe to us, that he speaketh it to us by

his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things; that we have the law to receive from his mouth; for he is, in the most eminent degree, the messenger of the Lord of hosts; that it is committed to him to exercise the more immediate government and rule over his people, according to the holy laws of his eternal Father; while, at the sametime that he ruleth his people as his Father's great Vicegerent, 'he is our great high priest, to do for us in all things pertaining to God; so that, if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father.' Without this it might be said, ye cannot serve the Lord, for he is an holy God. Thus while Christ, the king of Zion, maketh the laws and word of God his Father effectual with his people, he, at the sametime, maketh their acceptance effectual and sure with God.

Consider the comfortable relations of grace unto which God hath brought his people. From being rebels, the objects of his wrath, he hath brought them to be his people, servants, and children; he hath become their Lord, their master, and father, through Jesus Christ: all the present privilege of these relations, all the hope of this calling, is of his infinite love and grace; and what astonishing works of love have appeared in the method of bringing all this about! It came not of us, as Christ said, John xv. 16. 'ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you;' so, Psal. c. 3. 'It is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people and the sheep of his pasture;' and, Deut. xxxii. 6. 'Is not he thy father that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee and established thee?'

Should they refuse the most absolute and unlimited subjection to his sovereignty, who owe so great things to the riches and sovereignty of his grace? Can you hear this infinitely exalted sovereign, this infinitely condescending Master and Father speak, and that by his own Son, whom he hath sent 'to redeem you by his blood;' and can you, with respect to any thing he speaketh, be hearers only? May it not then be said, as Deut. xxxii. 6. 'Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise!'

2. Consider the hazard of being hearers only, and not doing his word; how fearfully the consequence may come out between God and you. The most common case is not of a man's rejecting directly the whole word of God, or declining avowedly all regard to his authority: the defect in doing the word is more commonly in some particular matter, in which perhaps a right eye or a right hand, &c. causeth him to offend and stumble at the word. But even with respect to a parti-

cular work or instance of duty, that may be the subject of the deliberation of your mind and conscience, and about which deceitful lusts may suggest, as Lot said of Zoar, 'Is it not a little one?' How great things may it amount to between God and you? I shall give an awful instance from 1 Sam. xv. 2, 3. 'Thus saith the Lord of hosts' to Saul, 'Now go 'and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, 'and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant 'and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.' This was a judgment which the righteous Judge of all the earth had declared his intention about long ago. Now, after so long reprieve, he will have it executed. Accordingly, ver. 4. 'Saul 'gathered the people together, and numbered them in Telaim, 'two hundred thousand footmen, and ten thousand men of 'Judah.' Here was great preparation for being a doer of the word of God. Verses 7, 8. 'And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah until thou comest to Shur, that is over 'against Egypt. And he took Agag, the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the 'edge of the sword.' Here is a great deal actually done. But, ver. 9. 'Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best 'of the sheep and of the oxen,' &c. Who would think but so much doing might cover this much defect in doing? But the arrogance of thus far dispensing with the word and command of God marred all his doing; and the consequence to Saul we see, ver. 23. 'Because thou hast rejected the word 'of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king.' Had Saul imagined that the thing had amounted to this in the consequence, would he have spared Agag and a few cattle at so great a risk? It would become us to consider every trying case of doing the word (and we should judge every case that is the subject, as I said, of the deliberation of our mind and conscience to be such) in this view and light. If we venture to decline or limit our obedience in this instance, may not perhaps utter rejection be the consequence, as in the case of Saul?

Be it so, that the Lord hath by grace secured the state and hope of his people; that his mercy to them, (as he says to David, 2 Sam. vii. 15.) is not as his mercy to Saul, from whom he took his mercy, and whom he put away before him; but, that he hath made with them an everlasting covenant, as David comforts himself, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. 'that he hath 'made with them all an everlasting covenant, even the sure 'mercies of David,' as Isa. lv. 3. Yet still these sure mer-

cies, and that grace of the everlasting covenant take effect as by other means, so by this, of making all true doers of the word consider the fate of hypocrites, as a beacon to warn them not to split upon the same rock.

Yea, in great consistency with the security of that grace wherein the Lord's people do stand, (Rom. v. 2.) if some of them would understand and report the case as it has happened to them, it would appear that sometimes a particular instance, wherein they have failed in their integrity, in their purity, in their doing of the word, has brought a reverse upon their circumstances, both outward and inward, that they have never got the better of in this life. How great terror is there (though no doubt the consolation prevails) in that word, Psal. xcix. 8. 'Thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions.' Thus will he make his people to know and see 'that it is an evil thing and bitter to forsake the Lord their God, and that his fear should not be in them,' Jer. ii. 19.

We see, then, upon the whole, that not to be doers of the word may have fearful consequence between God and us, even in respect to particular instances of not doing the word.

3. Let all who are indebted to the saving grace of God consider, that the holiness, righteousness, and practice of good works, which is the doing of the word, and whereof the word is the rule while they are upon this earth, is the design and end of all the grace which God hath shown them.

Have the Lord's people been elected, or predestinated 'according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will?' Eph. i. 11. The Holy Ghost explains the end of this great grace, Eph. i. 4. 'He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love.'

This text acquaints us, that 'we are chosen in Christ Jesus.' The inheritance to which we are chosen or predestinated, ver. 11. could be reached only by his means. Heb. ix. 15. It is 'by means of his death, for the redemption of transgressions, that they which are called, according to his purpose,' Rom. viii. 28. 'do receive the promise of eternal inheritance.' Thus the purchase of Christ's death, for our benefit, is an eternal inheritance. At the same time, a great design of his death, for his glory and service, is represented, Titus ii. 14. 'who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.'

Agreeably to this view, a little before he underwent death for us, by which he was to merit all grace for his people, he prays to his Father thus,—‘Sanctify them through thy truth. ‘And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might ‘be sanctified through the truth,’ John xvii. 17. 19. The Son of God did sanctify, or devote himself to be a sacrifice, to bear our curse, that we might be sanctified. In like manner, it is said, Eph. v. 25, 26. that ‘Christ gave himself for his ‘church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the ‘washing of water by the word.’ He died that his people might be sanctified and cleansed by the word, through the effectual operation of the Holy Spirit (which is represented by the water in baptism) attending it. In short, for this end he died, and purchased the grace of the Holy Spirit for his people, that they might thereby be made doers of the word.

Further, ‘whom God hath predestinated, them he also called.’ Now, what is the nature and end of this calling of grace? It is holy in respect to both its nature and end; ‘who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling,’ 2 Tim. i. 9. ‘God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness,’ 1 Thess. iv. 7. Accordingly, the believers at Rome are said to be ‘called (to be) saints,’ that is, they were saints, or holy, by means of this holy calling; so that the calling of grace, by which Christians are called unto the fellowship of Jesus Christ our Lord, and to the fellowship of all the grace and glory which he hath purchased by his blood, that effectual calling which is given them by the word and grace of God, is in its nature a holy calling, and hath for its end to make them saints, or holy, that is, to make them doers of the word.

‘Whom he called, them he also justified.’ In this justification, sinners are reconciled to God; and, as the prophet Amos says, chap. iii. 3. ‘Can two walk together except they ‘be agreed?’ so when God and sinners are agreed, one end hereof is, that they should walk together; that sinners, formerly alienated in their minds by wicked works, should walk with God, according to his word. By justification sinners are brought under the protection, government, and banner of grace; and we see how the apostle argues from that, Rom. vi. 14. ‘Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are ‘not under the law, but under grace.’

If the Lord doth, in his great grace, give his Spirit to his people to dwell in them, what is one great end of that grace? Surely it is, that they may walk after the Spirit. By this doth

the apostle characterize believers, and upon this doth he suspend their comfort of a justified state. Rom. viii. 1. 'There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.' And thus doth he exhort the Galatians, whose carnal temper and walking was so offensive; Gal. v. 25. 'If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit;' as if he had said,—If we, being regenerated by him, have much peace and comfort (so I take this meaning) and joy in the Holy Ghost, and abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost, which is for sinners, who were lately 'dead in trespasses and sins, children of wrath, and heirs of damnation,' to live indeed. If we thus do live in the Spirit, by the renovation and consolation he hath given us, let us agree and submit to his directing of our walk also. Now, by what rule doth he direct our walk? Surely it is not by mere inward impulse; for we should not ordinarily distinguish between the impulse of the Spirit and of the flesh, if there was no other rule but impulse. But the whole word is given by inspiration of the Holy Ghost: every impulse or direction from within us, that is not agreeable to the word, is from the flesh and from a principle of self-deceiving; for to walk after the Spirit, and to walk after, or according to the word, is, as to the way itself and the matter of our walking, precisely the same thing. For this then, as for one great end, doth God give his Spirit, that we may be doers of the word. The hope of eternal blessedness, wherein all the grace of God to his people doth terminate, doth require the same thing. But this I am to consider separately hereafter.

This then is one great and special end for which God hath elected, redeemed, called, justified his people, and given them his Spirit to dwell in them; even that they should be holy, blameless, zealous of good works, doers of his word,—the only rule to us of all holiness and good works. If therefore there be any consolation or joy by electing and redeeming love, or by calling, justifying, sanctifying grace, can we expect to hold or enjoy it, and not be doers of the word? This introduceth another argument.

4. It is by being doers of the word that we shall prove to the world, and especially to ourselves, the truth of our grace and of our state of grace. This is an important point to be demonstrated to satisfaction. Our natural state is, to be in the flesh, under the law, that is, under the curse, and in a perishing condition. How important is it then to give

proof of a state of grace? and how can it be proven but by this, that grace appears to have that effect upon a man which I have been showing to be the end and design of grace in all the steps of it? Where that holiness and practice of good works, by which a man is a doer of the word, is wanting, shall we say electing, redeeming, justifying grace, have wholly come short of their end? that is the same as to say, that the counsel of God is frustrated, and that Christ hath died in vain: or is it not easier to say, and the only thing that it is just to say in this case, that the man is an entire stranger to all this grace, and hath no part in it? and how sad a thing is it when a man's conduct allows of no other conclusion concerning him? The apostle Peter doth thus exhort, 2 Pet. i. 10. 'Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for, if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.' Now, concerning this, it is clear that it is the calling of grace, by which God doth actually elect us out of the world, and separate us for himself, ('according to his purpose,' Rom. viii. 28.) that doth bring us into a state of grace. How shall we, according to him, prove and make sure this calling and state of grace? That is clear from his words, 'For if ye do these things, ye shall never fall;' your state is that sure state of grace, from which ye shall never fall. Now, what does he mean by these things in this 10th verse? The same that he meant by the same expression, verse 9. 'He that lacketh these things;' and there it means the same as verse 8. 'for, if these things be in you;' and in the words immediately preceding verse 8, we see very particularly what these things are: thus, verses 5, 6, 7. 'And, besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity.' All these things are included in this one expression, to be doers of the word. And it appears that it is by these things, even by being thus a doer of the word, that a Christian will make sure and prove that calling and state of grace from which he shall not fall.

It is true that the Holy Spirit doth testify our good state; but then it is certain he never will do it in the absence of that evidence and proof that will warrant the concurring testimony thereto of our spirit and conscience; that candle of the Lord that 'searched all the inward parts of the belly,' Prov. xx. 27. Now the word of God, by which the con-

science must be directed, doth warrant that testimony in favours of none but the doers of the word.

But of how great consequence is it to a Christian to prove and make sure that calling and state of grace? It opens a scene of comfort to him for eternity; as he is called thereby to inherit a blessing, and as God hath thereby called him unto his kingdom and glory. It openeth a scene, as it were, of great comfort to him, respecting his condition and way in this world, and respecting his dangers and temptations therein. And that as this calling of grace hath the faithfulness of God engaged thereto in many precious promises, in view to which the apostle doth so often encourage believers, thus is the Christian required to 'hold fast the profession of his faith without wavering,' as Heb. x. 23. It is a comfortable addition to the exhortation, 'For he is faithful that promised.' Should he, as 1 Thess. v. 23. be careful that 'his whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,' it is a happy encouragement that is added, verse 24. 'Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.' Is he required to be steady and firm unto the end, here is encouragement to that purpose, 1 Cor. i. 8, 9. 'Who also shall confirm you to the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful by whom ye are called.'

Thus, to be doers of the word proves our state and calling. The evidence of our calling brings unto view the most comfortable encouragements in doing of the word. These things have a happy reciprocal influence upon one another. If by being doers of the word, we prove that the call of the word hath become effectual in our hearts, this again will become a mean by which, in our doing, the Lord will strengthen us with strength in our soul, as Psal. cxxxviii. 3. and upon this ground we may sing and pray, confidently at once, as in the conclusion of the psalm,—'The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me; thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands.' So doing will give us the comfort of our calling; and the comfort of our calling, with all these promises of God that are connected therewith, will strengthen us in doing. How cogent an argument should this be with Christians to be doers of the word!

5. A Christian having evidence, in the manner just now explained, of his calling and state of grace, as that is a state of favour with God, he may comfortably look for the effects

of that divine favour in what concerns his condition and way in this world, if there is not something to obstruct the course of these effects of favour towards him. So it is, his sins may obstruct their course, and his unholy walking. How strong are these expressions of divine favour, love, and sympathy, Isa. lxiii. 9. '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!' The next words show the effect of sin and provocation, verse 10. 'But they rebelled, and vexed his Spirit; therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them.'

It is only in the way of holiness, obedience, and doing his word, that we can expect the fruits of divine favour to abound sensibly and comfortably to us. We will in this way be likely to find his favour and countenance to have comfortable effect to us in what concerns our condition in the world; to make it prosperous or comfortable to us. Or if there is need be, as the apostle Peter speaks, for our having trials and afflictions in the world, we will find, by the divine favour towards us, as doers of the word, a peace of God, which passeth understanding, to keep and fortify our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus, as well as a happy issue of our afflictions and difficulties. The good effect of being doers of the word, in what concerns our condition and the course and issue of our affairs on the earth, has been so clear, from observation and experience, that even the world has adopted that maxim of the Holy Ghost, 'He who walketh uprightly walketh surely.' I need to insist the less on this part.

They who by God's calling are in a state of grace, have precious fruits to expect from God's fellowship, favour, and the light of his countenance, inwardly, as to the increase of their consolation, joy, and strength, which are not to be looked for otherwise than as they are the doers of his word.

For this I adduce the testimony of the word itself, in these following passages: 1 John i. 6, 7. 'If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth; but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.' John. xiv. 21. 'He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.' Verse 23. '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.’

Much of our intercourse with God, while we are in this world, is by our prayer to him, and his favourable regard thereto. Now, as to this, the Psalmist’s doctrine was this, Psal. lxxvi. 18. ‘ If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord ‘ will not hear me.’ And this is the doctrine of the apostle John, 1 John iii. 22. ‘ And whatsoever we ask, we receive ‘ of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those ‘ things that are pleasing in his sight.’ By prayer we ask that the Lord would assist us, do us good, and, if I may so speak, that he would please us ; and, shall we expect that he should please us, while we have it not at heart to please him, by being doers of his word ? ‘ If our hearts condemn us not’ as to this, ‘ then have we confidence towards God,’ 1 John iii. 21. In this did the blessed apostle Paul labour, even in instructing people how they ought to walk, (1 Thess. iv. 1.) and to please God.

If there be any who have the Psalmist’s sense of things, Psal. iv. 6, 7. ‘ Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more ‘ than in the time that their corn and their wine increased’ —surely, to such, what I have been just now representing, must make a very forcible argument for their being doers of the word.

6. It is by being doers of the word that Christians can glorify God. This is the supreme end of all the works and counsels of God, and ought to have the same supreme place with his creatures. Christians are under special obligation as to this. God hath ordained for them salvation with eternal glory ; ‘ even an exceeding and eternal weight of ‘ glory.’ They can add no glory to him ; but to show forth his glory, is a care and work becoming the objects of his so great grace. The glorifying of all the attributes of God, is the duty of all his creatures ; but grace is an attribute of God displayed, in all its glory and excellency, to his people ; and which therefore they are under particular obligation to glorify. Shall the enemies of God have occasion to say or think in their hearts, that divine grace hath undergone great dishonour by being so much exerted in favour of such objects, as it hath produced no suitable or worthy effect or fruit in them ? This would reflect dishonour indeed upon God and upon his grace ; but we might say of it to Christians, as the

apostle doth in another particular case, 'This is unprofitable for you.'

The Lord's people are, by his grace, 'a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people,' 1 Pet. ii. 9. for this end, 'that they might show forth the praises (or virtues) of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light.' And his praises they do show forth most effectually by their good works, and by being doers of the word. Matt. v. 16. 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.'

7. Let us, in the last place, consider the doing of the word, with respect to the possession of enjoyment of the eternal inheritance and blessedness of which the word gives the sure hope through Jesus Christ.

As it hath pleased God that the promised inheritance should be at some distance, there must needs be a way in which the heirs thereof shall walk and make their way to it. This cannot be the broad way in which the many walk; it leadeth to destruction. There is a way, a narrow way, which leadeth to life.

When the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they were not left to choose their own way. The Lord did lead them; he went before them in a pillar of cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night. The Lord continueth to lead his people still; and the light by which he leadeth them is the light of his word; and to be the doers of his word is their way through this wilderness to the possession of the promised inheritance.

They have the truth of God's promises in the new covenant for their souls to rest on, in the hope of heaven. This is likewise the truth of God, proposed to believers to enforce an exhortation to holy practice. Rom. viii. 13. 'If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die;' and that, Heb. xii. 14. 'Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.'

There are in the word certain promises expressed in conditional form, with a respect to certain gracious qualifications with which the Lord doth connect particular blessings; such as Matt. v. 6, 7. 'Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy.' Shall they who are unmerciful expect that God shall deal mercifully with them? Shall they expect to be filled, who never hungered

after righteousness; to be comforted, who never mourned? and shall they look for heaven, which comprehends all blessings and the fulfilment of all promises, who are destitute of these gracious qualifications by which the heirs of heaven are marked out in the word? Surely this were not suitable to the doctrine of the word.

The right of God's people to heaven is originally by the gift of God, Rom. vi. 23. 'The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.' The particular method of grace in respect to this gift, is to entitle them thereto by a free and gracious adoption through Jesus Christ. They become 'the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus,' Gal. iii. 26. 'And if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ,' Rom. viii. 17. By being the children of God, they have, by the privilege of their state, a right to the inheritance of his children.

At the sametime, the promise of the inheritance, and of the blessedness to be awarded at the second coming of Christ, is represented in the word as containing the reward (altogether by grace) of their works. For this, see Matth. xvi. 27. Col. iii. 24. Heb. xi. 26. Upon this ground doth the apostle Paul encourage the good works of the Corinthians, 1 Cor. xv. 58. 'Therefore my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.' And how not in vain? By reason of the reward at the resurrection, of which he had been speaking. It is upon the same view that he directs the Hebrews to continue their diligence in good works, as the proper means to establish and assure their hope of this reward, Heb. vi. 10, 11. 'For God is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed towards his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end.' What is this same diligence, which he recommends for the assuring of their hope? It is very clear it is the same diligence he had commended them for in the work and labour of love, which is that same particular sort of work that shall be commended in the great day, when the King shall say, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered and ye gave me meat.' Here, all their glory flows originally to them from their being blessed of the Father, 'who hath

‘blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ,’ Eph. i. 3. : and the kingdom is prepared for them from the foundation of the world, by the sovereign good pleasure of the Father, as it is said, Luke xii. 32. ‘Fear not little flock ; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.’ So the apostle says, Eph. i. 11. ‘In whom,’ viz. Jesus Christ, ‘also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.’ Yet at awarding this inheritance, in the great day, works shall have their praise and their reward : ‘Inherit the kingdom ; for I was an hungered and ye gave me meat.’

How doth it relieve the doers of the word of a burden greater than they could bear ? and with how great peace and comfort may the believers in Christ Jesus labour in good works, that they have not their heaven to purchase thereby ? At the same time, what an inconceivable encouragement is it to them, in their good works, that heaven will reward all their works, without omitting the least in making the account, even a cup of cold water rightly bestowed. Upon good grounds did the Lord say, Matt. xi. 30. ‘My yoke is easy.’ In the view of what I have observed (besides a great deal more) his people will say, as 1 John v. 3. ‘his commandments are not grievous.’

There is one scripture yet of strong expression to this purpose, Rev. xxii. 14. ‘Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. That they may have right,’ some understand it, that they may appear to have right (and no doubt such kind of expressions in scripture are often to be so understood) ; yet still it is clear, that men’s right to the tree of life, and to enter in by the gates into the city, must be made evident by their doing God’s commandments, by their being doers of his word.

To these particular arguments I shall add the general commendation given by our blessed Lord to the doers of the word, Matth. xii. 50. ‘For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.’ Shall any then pretend that he hath special relation to Christ, who is not a doer of the word ? Again, John xiii. 17. ‘If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.’ Not happy by knowing or hearing only ; both are needful ; but the word is, ‘happy are ye if ye do them.’

‘our Saviour towards men appeared.’ But what reason on our part moved God to this kindness? or was there any such? The words, verse 5, imply there was not; ‘Not by works of righteousness which we have done.’ This might be easily believed from the account he had given, verse 3. Works of righteousness, acceptable to God, were not likely productions of hearts, foolish, disobedient. How then happened it? The apostle tells: ‘But according to his mercy he saved us;’ viz. from that miserable condition of heart and nature he had described. He did so according to his sovereign mercy, by which ‘he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy; and whom he will he hardneth,’—leaveth to the natural course of their hearts.

But by what means did he save us from that most miserable condition of our natures? It was not merely by the force of such light as he set before us, or by means of mere persuasion; nor is there any mention here of the word, the great mean of light and persuasion.

But ‘he saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.’ Some, by the washing of regeneration, incline to understand the sacrament of baptism, which receives efficacy by the renewing grace of the Holy Ghost. It matters not much as to my present purpose, yet there seems to be this good reason for not understanding it so. This discourse is particularly adapted to the case of Paul and Titus, as well as other believers. Now they were thus actually saved by regeneration itself, before they came to that eternal laver. No adult persons, such as they were, were admitted to baptism, but upon profession of faith in Jesus Christ; which, in Paul and Titus, was certainly sincere. Now, none have that faith but they who are actually regenerated, or born again; as we see by John i. 12, 13. ‘Even to them who 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; even of him who of his own will begat us,’ James i. 18.; so that it seems the apostle doth, as is very common in language, just mean the very same thing by two sorts of expression, the one more figurative, the other more proper, when he says, ‘He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.’ It was the great and first lesson of religion which the Lord taught that ruler of the Jews, John iii. 3. ‘Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,’—‘born,’ as he says afterwards, ‘of water and of the Spirit.’ And his next words,

verse 6. give the reason of the necessity of this new birth, 'that which is born of the flesh is flesh:' and surely, by the scripture notion of the flesh, it cannot enable a man to be a doer of the word of God. He adds, verse 8. 'The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.' These words do express a mystery to be in the case, and something that exceeds the reach of our understanding to account particularly for. This cannot be the case with respect to the word and Providence, and all concurring external means, or with respect to their natural or moral effect upon men's understandings or passions. There is no mystery in that; but the immediate operation of the Spirit upon men's hearts is mysterious. The effects thereof, indeed, are evident and sensible upon these whom it maketh the doers of the word, otherwise the operation of the Spirit in itself cannot be particularly explained. And as the wind bloweth where it listeth, without any cause within the reach of our knowledge to determine its motion, so it is without any cause on our part that the grace of the Holy Spirit falleth upon one beyond another, by his sovereign mercy, 'who will have mercy upon whom he will have mercy: and who of his own will begat us,' as in the connexion of my text.

But besides these general authorities and reasons to prove the necessity of regeneration, in order to our being doers of the word, the same thing will appear by more particular considerations.

It is the scripture doctrine, that true faith must be the principle of that doing of the word that will be acceptable to God. But to be capable of true faith, in particular, requires to be born of God, John i. 12, 13.; 1 John v. 1. The natural, unrenewed soul cannot have true faith. The character of such a soul is, Eph. iv. 18. to have 'the understanding darkened; to be alienated from the life of God.' A darkened understanding is contrary to the light of faith, and that light in the mind which true faith imparts. A heart alienated from the life of God is contrary to cheerful, fixed, habitual trusting in God, which faith imports. To recommend trusting in God is the evident scope of that context, Psalm xxxvii. 3—7.; one form in which it is required is, verse 4. 'delight thyself in God.' It is certain that God will not be the object of a sinner's fixed, habitual, cheerful, and comfortable trust, any further than he and his blessed attributes are de-

How strong are these arguments, taken together or singly, to enforce men's doing of the word? I am very confident they are all consistent with that doctrine of grace, respecting our justification and sanctification, and our whole salvation, upon which the true and solid comfort of God's people is founded. And the case being so, I may justly conclude, that the doctrine of grace is exceeding consistent with good works; as it is indeed the doctrine of grace alone that furnisheth the best arguments for them, and such as the proper doers of the word will be most affected with, and by which they will be most effectually excited and encouraged in that way. I proceed,

III. To propose some directions and cautions, proper to be considered by them who wish to be successful doers of the word.

1. Before we can be doers of the word, the word, or rather, God by his word, hath a work to do upon us. This our context represents, verse 18. 'Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth.' It was, no doubt, of his own will that he sent to some the word of truth, and not to others; but all who had the word of truth, were not thereby begotten. But it was of the sovereign will and purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, who hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, that they were begotten of the word of truth, and not others.

The condition of men's nature, and the effect of grace upon their natures we see, Col. iii. 13. 'And you, being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.' This 'being dead,' cannot be restricted to the sentence of the law against transgressors, as we say a criminal is dead in law. Men are dead naturally in the uncircumcision of their flesh.

This respects the condition of men's nature, not their state merely in the eye of the law, as might be easily shown by the several places of scripture where circumcision and uncircumcision occur in the figurative use and in the spiritual meaning. Now, to be dead implies an incapacity of all sensation, enjoyment, and action; and, as it is to be here understood in the spiritual sense, it must import that men, in their natural condition, are incapable of spiritual sense and understanding, and of all spiritual enjoyment, and of doing that which is spiritually good and acceptable to God. Men are thus, as dead, incapable of what is spiritual, by means of the

power of the opposite carnal principle of sin and the lusts thereof. That to be dead in the uncircumcision of the flesh is to be thus understood of the power of sin in men's natures, making a spiritual incapacity, is particularly clear from verse 11. 'In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh.'

Their recovery from this spiritual death, he expresses in these words, verse 13. 'You, being dead, hath he quickened together with him' (Christ.) This is Christians being planted in the likeness of his resurrection, Rom. vi. 5. which certainly respects newness of life; as there, verse 13. 'So God hath quickened his people together with Christ, having forgiven them all trespasses.' By this forgiveness, being delivered from the curse, they are made capable of the blessing of grace, for the quickening of their heart and nature spiritually; and in both these are they made to know the power of Christ's resurrection with respect to their state and nature.

There is also a strong description of the natural corruption of men's heart and the efficacy of regenerating grace, Tit. iii. 3, 4, 5. 'We ourselves were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another,' &c. This is a description, not of persons only who were quite profligate and abandoned in the eyes of the world, for we see the apostle Paul classes himself under that description, whose outward deportment never was profligate or wicked,—yea, we see how he gives it as a reason why Christians should be gentle, verse 2. 'showing all meekness unto all men.' Why? 'for we ourselves also were,' as above described from verse 3.; as if he had said, 'we should show meekness to all,' even the most wicked, for whatever additions there may have been as to external appearance, yet, as to the true condition of our natures, dispositions of our hearts, and true principles of acting, we ourselves were sometime foolish. Shall we say that persons, whose hearts are under the power of such principles and dispositions, are truly capable of being doers of the word? Surely not.

But by what means were they cured of these plagues of their natures? was it by their own reason, understanding, or experience? or did they owe it to other men? By no means. He ascribes it wholly to the kindness and love of God, verse 4. 'But after that the kindness and love of God

the word will find acceptance with him. This is the first and main thing whereby a sinner glorifies God. It is said of Abraham, Rom. iv. 20. that 'he was strong in faith, giving glory to God.' And in this respect, particularly, it is the will of God, as John v. 23. 'that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.' Accordingly, Christ says, John xiv. 1. 'Ye believe in God, believe also in me.' As this is the matter of God's command to sinners, it is the first and chief thing wherein he wants his authority to be regarded. As it is the matter of his report in his word, it is the great matter in which he wants his faithfulness to be regarded, 1 John v. 10. 'He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.' This of true faith in Jesus Christ, is the first and main point as to our pleasing of God, and the main point upon which all our salvation turns; for, as Acts iv. 12. 'there is not salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.' But I introduced this subject in way of direction to us as doers of the word, and with a view to the influence and importance of faith in Christ, with respect to all our doing and works besides.

To consider the matter in that light, the great view in all our doing of the word is, therein to please God. But surely no sinner can safely venture to sound his hope of pleasing God upon his own doing, or his own works. The voice from heaven said, Matt. iii. 17. 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' It is the subject of the gospel message and report, that 'God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself.' Our interest in this view is to be looked to, previously to our being successful and acceptable doers of the word. We do not become acceptable to God for our works; but in order to the acceptance of our works, we must ourselves be accepted in the beloved, Eph. i. 6. The true order of these things is as in the case of Abel, Gen. iv. 4. 'and the Lord had respect to Abel' first, 'and to his offering' next. It is needful that we be, as the expression is, 2 Cor. v. 21. 'the righteousness of God in him,' (in Christ Jesus) before our practice of righteousness be accepted with God. If they deceive their own selves who are hearers of the word only, they will, in the end, be found in the way of miserable self-deceiving who pretend to be doers of the word, with any other view of acceptance.

Our acceptance with God in the course of doing his word, and in every good work, must be by faith in Christ Jesus. All our good doings are our spiritual sacrifices, and these the apostle Peter represents, 1 John ii. 5. as acceptable to God only by Jesus Christ. No works are more likely to be acceptable to God than the prayers of the saints; yet it is Christ's intercession alone that procures acceptance to these. He is represented, Rev. viii. 3. as having much incense, 'that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints.' Incense is used against unpleasant smells. These prayers would be of unpleasant, unacceptable savour with a holy God, if it was not for the mediation of Jesus Christ. And if it be so as to men's prayers, yea, the prayers of saints, even of all saints, the most eminent and most holy, shall men look for acceptance to any work besides, otherwise than by faith in Christ Jesus, that one Mediator between God and man?

Again, the necessary principle of all acceptable doing is love. This is the sum of the whole law; and the apostle Paul calls it, Rom. xiii. 10. 'the fulfilling of the law.' It is so with respect to both tables of it. Our most eminent good works, without charity or love, will profit us nothing, as 1 Cor. xiii. 3.

Now, it is faith that worketh by love. The flesh, or natural principles may set us a-working, and a-doing of the word, without love: it is only faith that worketh by love. The apostle Paul acquaints us that the end of all the word of God is not hearing only, but doing; 1 Tim. i. 5. His word for it is charity, or love, that great sum and principle of all doing, as I observed just now; and he says, 'The end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.' So we see he represents love, as having unfeigned faith for its source in the soul. It is that faith, by which we apprehend the love of God in Christ Jesus, that alone introduces love into the heart of a sinner.

I add, to this purpose, another scripture quoted before, 1 John iii. 23. After speaking of our keeping the commandments of God, he says there, 'And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.' He seems here to have in view both the tables of the law, respecting the love of God and the love of man. And the sum of the second table he gives in much the same form as Moses doth, 'that we love one another.' But, instead of mention-

lighted in a carnal soul that is enmity against God, an enemy in his mind through wicked works, as it is incapable of delighting in God, is incapable of true faith ; and for the same reason, and by the same cause, is incapable of the true love of God ; and there is no doing of the word acceptable to God, which proceedeth not from both these principles.

It has been an old objection, that a man cannot be obliged to do any work or duty for which he hath not sufficient strength or ability. This objection comes ill from sinners who have the revelation and offer of a Saviour made to them ; and at any rate comes ill from any sinner.

Let us suppose a sinner to argue the case with God upon this argument, his pleading must import to this purpose. Lord, thy condition, which is holy, just, and good, and must be acknowledged to be so, doth require me to set about doing what it was originally my duty to do, in obedience to thee : but now I plead to be excused from all such doing, because I am become unable to do any thing in the manner acceptable to thee. And to acknowledge frankly the truth of the case, my inability to do what is truly good is by the wickedness of my nature. I not only do what is evil, but I am in my very heart and nature wicked, an enemy to thee, and to thy sovereignty and holiness ; to such degree, as, like the devil who hath infused his poison into me, to be incapable of every thing that is truly good and holy ; therefore, excuse me for declining to do thy will, and charge not guiltiness against me on that account.

How horribly would be the sound of such arguing ? and yet there is nothing in it but what the objection above-mentioned imports. Surely it would be liker the pleading of one to be accounted a vessel of wrath, fitted to destruction, than any thing else. But it becometh us, in other manner, to humble ourselves before God. If his word hath affected our consciences, if our hearts are awakened to a concern about being doers of the word, let us, from the doctrine of the word, and our experience in any serious attempts to be doers of it, learn the great wretchedness and plague of our nature, and cry earnestly to the God of all grace concerning the case, looking to Jesus Christ, who became a sacrifice for sin, for the condemning of sin in the flesh ; and who rose from the dead to be the author of new life to sinners. Let us attend seriously and earnestly on the means of grace, particularly the word which, by the gospel, is preached unto us ; by which, as of incorruptible seed, sinners are born again, through the bless-

ing of God. Let us attend indeed, seriously and carefully, at that pool, waiting for the moving of the water, or for the Lord's looking upon us in his great compassion, and saying, Wilt thou be healed? and his sending forth his great power to cure us of our spiritual lameness, as when he said to the lame man, 'Rise and walk.'

I have insisted the longer in this direction, as the renovation of our natures by divine grace is of such fundamental and essential consequence to our being doers of the word. It is great pity that some who seem to wish not to deceive themselves by neglecting to be doers of the word, do yet deceive themselves by their pretensions to be doers of it; while they are insensible what an operation and influence of grace they need, to put God's law into their mind, and write them in their hearts, in order to make them capable of being truly (and not in the self-deceiving way) doers of the word.

2. In doing of the word, let us especially believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us not pretend to be doers of the word, and neglect this. There is indeed a self-deceiving principle in men's hearts that inclines them to be confident of their own good condition at any rate, and to entertain good hope; and there is no doubt but the same principle will incline men to flatter themselves with the opinion of an interest in every thing that is comfortable in Christ, and with pretensions to have faith in him. But they are the fewest, who, from a true and just sense of their own condition, do, by faith, truly betake themselves to Christ, as he is of God made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; or who have due concern about it.

It is not to be accounted for (in the light of spiritual wisdom and duty) that men should set out with pretensions to good works, and neglect this chief work. When the Jews asked Christ, John vi. 28. 'What shall we do that we might work the works of God?' his answer is, verse 29. 'This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.' The apostle John does, 1st epist. iii. 22, 23. speak of our keeping his commandments, and doing those things that are pleasing in his sight; then adds, 'And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ.' This is the first and great commandment of the word, as it is directed to sinners. If it was not for what it implies, God would have directed no other part of his word to sinners. And if the report of the word concerning Christ find not due acceptation with us, no part of our obedience to

ing the love of God for the sum of the first table, he has, that we should 'believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ.' He seems to design to give out the commandment in a manner adapted to sinners. To say, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,' might be successfully, for the practice of it, addressed to creatures in a state of perfection and innocence; but the case of sinners is different. God cannot become the object of their love otherwise, first, than as his glory shineth in the face of Christ, and is beheld by faith; therefore to procure the love of sinners to God, he directs them to the view of Christ. The first and great commandment to sinners is, 'to believe on the name of the Son of God, Jesus Christ.' This will bring along the love of God.

Further, faith in Christ Jesus is necessary for us as doers of the word, as he is the source of all our strength and fruitfulness. Our doing of the word is our fruitfulness. Now Christ is the true vine, and we can bring forth no good fruit otherwise than as branches in that vine. He expresses it strongly, John xv. 5. 'For without me ye can do nothing;' but a branch abideth in him bringing forth much fruit: so he says there. And the apostle Paul says, in no less strong expression, Phil. iv. 13. 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.' He had in view a particular matter about which he said in the preceding words, 'Every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.' It was a great matter, and of extreme difficulty, to bear and behave rightly with wealth or want. Few are so well instructed as his word is. He might justly conclude that the strength that would suffice for both these conditions might bear him out in any thing; so that the general conclusion comes seasonably, 'I can do all things through Christ.'

Upon the whole, if by Christ alone we have the acceptance of all our works, if in him we find the chief and most special reason to love God, if he is the source of all our strength and fruitfulness, faith in him must necessarily go as a line through all our works, as doers of the word. The blessed apostle said, Gal. ii. 20. 'The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.' Was it not a life of holiness and righteousness? Indeed it was so, very eminently, as to the practice of life; but as to the cause and means of his spiritual life, and to consider the matter in that view, his whole life, not only with respect to his peace with God and hope, but as

a doer of the word, was by the faith of the Son of God ; and they will miserably deceive their own selves, who will pretend to the life of doers of the word from any other principle and source.

3. If we wish to be doers of the word, let us live and walk heedfully. If men will walk in the negligent and careless way, their general practice cannot be pleasing to God ; they must fall unawares into snares, and fail of their duty in the most important cases that occur. The Psalmist puts a question, Psal. cxix. 9. ' Wherewith shall a young man cleanse ' his way ? ' and answers it thus, ' By taking heed thereto according to thy word.' Here are two objects of heedfulness. He is to take heed to his way, or to the matter of his walking and conversation. He is, at the sametime, to take heed to the rule of his conversation, the word of God, ' according ' to thy word.'

It is particularly needful that he take heed to the word, as the light and rule by which he is to direct his way : otherwise he may take heed to his way according to the views of human prudence and worldly wisdom ; but, in order to please God, he must take heed thereto according to the word ; as, to be a doer of the word is the subject of the exhortation in my text.

It is for this end needful that we labour for an extensive knowledge and understanding of the word, and besides the use of all common means, that we pray earnestly to God for his instruction and the assistance of his grace in the matter. This is the Psalmist's view in that prayer, Psal. cxix. 19. ' I am a stranger in the earth ; hide not thy commandments ' from me.' This prayer was exceedingly proper for a stranger, who is in such hazard to lose his way. How anxious is he to receive in his heart, as in store, this mean of safe walking ? verse 11. ' Thy word have I hid in mine ' heart, that I might not sin against thee.'

The apostle does, 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. recommend the inspired scripture as profitable ' for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God,' particularly so denominated, and consequently, every Christian, ' may be perfect, though ' roughly furnished unto all good works.' There he hath all the light needful to direct his way ; all the encouragements and consolations needful to strengthen his heart in it ; and every consideration proper to deter him from sin. Having said so much concerning the scripture, in way of direction

against the danger of self-deceiving, I will say no more about that point here.

But by the Psalmist's advice, a man is also to take heed to his way ; to the matter of his actions and walk ; to the principles by which, and the manner in which he acts ; to the seasons of duty ; to all the circumstances of these seasons ; to the circumstances and various relations of his actions ; to all the temptations, hinderances, and discouragements that may be unfavourable to his duty ; to all the occasions and temptations by which he may be in danger of sin. Here is abundant matter for heedfulness and watchfulness, and no small matter of godly fear.

This expression, 'take heed,' is common in scripture exhortations. I observe that it is commonly used in important cases, in which we are in special hazard through negligence and carelessness. I shall mention some particular instances, by which we may learn some of the general cases in which it is especially proper for us to take heed to our way.

Deut. iv. 15, 16. 'Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves, lest ye corrupt yourselves and make you a graven image.' And, chap. xii. 30. 'Take heed to thyself, that thou be not snared by following them,' the nations whom they succeeded, 'and that thou inquire not after their gods.' All the nations of the world were now and had been of long time idolaters. The Israelites were prone to idolatry likewise, from the same principles of delusion that prevailed in the practice of the world.

The general matter of heedfulness that this suggests to us is, that we take heed to ourselves, lest the common, yea universal practice of the world, of numerous powerful parties of vain-glorious denominations, influenced by the natural principles of men's hearts, and supported with human learning and wisdom, and pretensions to antiquity, do not prevail on us to lead us aside from God's way. If we walk with God, we must be separate from the world ; and if we mean to be doers of the word, that must be our supreme rule. We cannot act by different contrary rules, more than we can serve two masters.

Isa. vii. 4. Isaiah is ordered to say to Ahaz, and to God's people with him, 'Take heed and be quiet ; fear not, neither be faint-hearted for the two tails of these smoking fire-brands, for the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and of the son of Ramaliah.' The general lesson of heedfulness that this instance suggests, is, that we take heed lest circum-

stances of special distress and danger do surprise us into a diffidence of God, of his promises and power. It requires great heedfulness, in such an appearance of things, to maintain quietness and composure of spirit in waiting upon God.

The Psalmist says, Psal. xxxix. 1. 'I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue.' The general lesson is, that in watching over our own ways, our tongue and speech afford no small business for heedfulness and keeping good guard. 'That I sin not' said he, 'with my tongue.' How few are duly heedful against sinning with their tongue! It is a great matter not to offend in word. 'If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man,' said the apostle James, chap. iii. 2. Words oft times go heedlessly from us, as the levity of our minds or the passions of our hearts throw them out. But it may be often said, as there, verse 5. 'Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth!'

The Lord says, Matth. vi. 1. 'Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them.' The general lesson here is against ostentation in good works; and that we do them from good conscience towards God. Indeed our light should shine before men; but how easily doth the lust of ostentation steal in upon men's hearts, to mar their sincerity? We have great occasion for heedfulness against this. The Lord says, Matth. xvi. 6. 'Take heed, and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.' These last were boldly prophane, and lived much in contempt of religion: the Pharisees perverted and disgraced it with a vain-glorious and malicious zeal, chiefly about the lesser matters of the law; and, in great part, about things that were not warranted by the word of God at all. The opposite plagues of profaneness and hypocrisy prevail much; and this suggests an important and necessary lesson of heedfulness to the true doers of the word, lest the bold profaneness of the enemies of religion, on one hand, or the silly foppery of a venomous zealotism, pretending high on the side of religion, upon the other hand, do infect our sentiments or conversation. In some times and occasions especially, it is not easy to be heedful enough against these extremes.

2 Chron. xix. 6, 7. King Jehoshaphat delivered a very solemn charge to the judges thus—'Take heed what ye do; for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgment. Wherefore now let the fear of God be upon you; take heed and do it: for there is no iniquity

‘with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts.’

They are, comparatively, but a small number of Christians who are directly concerned in this charge; but Christians generally have an interest in the subject of it. When frail men are placed, as the deputies of the Almighty, the Judge of all the earth, in the throne of judgment, how great occasion have they to take heed, lest, through inattention, slothfulness in thinking and study, or through weakness of understanding, or through biasses arising from interests of public faction or of private concern, or by means of their passions otherwise, they conceive and give out wrong judgment? Conscientious doers of the word, placed in the seat of judgment, will be very sensible that this matter requires a very constant and anxious heedfulness. And if they, who are called to the seat of judgment, have occasion for this heedfulness, all others of us should take good heed that we commit not two evils at once, to usurp God’s throne of judgment, and then pass iniquitous judgment upon others, the servants of another master. Many are not so heedful in this as they ought to be.

The apostle says, 1 Cor. viii. 9. ‘But take heed, lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak.’ It were good that this were more heeded among the doers of the word. It is true that many, in their weakness, seem to usurp a sort of rule over the consciences and liberty of others in right of this principle, that offence should not be given them. The rights of conscience and of liberty ought to be, in tender and heedful manner, asserted against this sort of important usurpation. It is also true that some do mistake the meaning of offences and stumbling-blocks, as if these words signified only to cross their sentiments or passions; whereas it were oftentimes giving them occasion of offence and proper stumbling, not to cross both, in doing steadily every thing that imports doing of the word. But still, in every thing that is properly within the line of our liberty, there is great occasion of heedfulness, that we use not our liberty in the manner that would disturb the comfort, or endanger the consciences of others. There is, to this purpose, a weighty lesson of heedfulness which our Lord Jesus Christ gives, in the discourse concerning offences, that begins at Matth. xviii. 6.: he says, verse 10. ‘Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones,’ viz. as to the offending of them.

The Lord saith, Luke xi. 35. 'Take heed, therefore, that the light that is in thee be not darkness.' He had, verse 34. commended the single eye; that is, as I understand it, an eye not squinting, as when a man seems to look one way, truly looks another way. The thing may be more easily understood from Matt. vi. 22. where he speaks in the same manner concerning the single eye, and that which is evil: after recommending to his hearers not to lay up treasures upon earth, but to lay up treasure in heaven, and just before telling, verse 24. that 'no man can serve two masters, God and mammon;' so that the evil eye, filling the body with darkness, seems to import, as it were, a squinting eye, seeming to look towards heaven, truly looking towards the earth; seeming to serve God, truly serving mammon. Here is a most important lesson to us of heedfulness against the doubleness and corruption of our hearts, that will make us all darkness, when we seem to be children of the light. Great reason we have to take heed with respect to this squinting of our heart and mind, lest, when we seem to be spiritual, we be truly carnal; lest, when we seem to be looking towards heaven, our hearts be truly on the earth; lest, when we seem and profess to be serving God, we be truly serving our lusts. What great need have we of heedfulness to our hearts, that they be single and sincere; and that through this deceitful squinting, the light that is in us be not darkness!

The apostle says, 1 Cor. x. 12, 'Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.' Here heedfulness is recommended to such indeed as very commonly are most unheedful, 'him that thinketh he standeth.' When a man is truly in a comfortable and prosperous condition in religion, he is in danger of falling; but when he becomes conceited of his good condition, thinketh he standeth, then the danger of falling is near. If this is a condition in which we are likely to be most unheedful, it is the more truly dangerous; and we have it for us the more to be on our guard to take heed to ourselves.

One instance yet of this sort of warning, to take heed: the Lord says, Luke xxi. 34. 'and take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.' Here is an important lesson of heedfulness, that the day of the Lord's coming, that death and judgment do not surprise us, and find us off our guard.

We should be especially heedful against these things, by which we shall be in greatest danger of this, even against our own lusts, and the consequences of them in different circumstances. We should be heedful, lest in opulent circumstances, our lusts glut, and surfeit, and intoxicate us with the good things of the earth; lest, in disadvantageous circumstances, they distract our hearts by the cares of this life; lest, by the one or the other we be put or kept in a condition unsafe for us against that day of the Lord, which we should be always looking for with the utmost heedfulness.

Here are so many instances of solemn warning in this form, viz. to take heed, that do suggest general cases in which heedfulness is especially necessary for all who would be doers of the word. Indeed, constant fear, watchfulness, and heedfulness are necessary. Without these, how great advantage will Satan be likely to have against us from our own lusts; from the infection of others; from seasons and circumstances unfavourable to duty; from occasions and circumstances favourable to sin; from the various arts of his cunning and temptations, to bring us aside from doing of the word and to ensnare us unto sin? What time of our life, what part of our way shall we be safe in, as to our purity and integrity, except we use the utmost heedfulness, according to the Psalmist's advice, 'taking heed to our way according 'to the word?'

4. It is a proper caution and direction to the doers of the word, that they carefully regard God's positive institutions therein enjoined to us. Some, who pretend greatly to doing well, proceed wholly upon the directions of their natural lights, and these notices of moral good and evil, which their natural consciences give them. As the precious faith, revealed in the word, hath truly no place in their hearts, they regard little the clearer and better light which the word gives concerning true morality and holiness, and have great contempt of God's positive institutions and ordinances. As they have not consciences regardful of God's authority in these, their hearts do not duly regard or value the spiritual blessings which they convey to the souls of God's people.

But the profession of Christians is to be doers of the word. Others may be doing with the dictates of natural religion, with the improvement of some borrowed lights from God's word, and with the issue it shall bring their matters to. We have cause to bless God for his word, that more sure word of prophecy. There we have divers positive institutions for

the tests of our obedience, and the means of our profiting. If we will be doers of the word, let us be doers of it in that part.

The matter of other precepts and conditions may have much in the common light of reason and conscience to recommend them. These institutions are founded merely on the authority of God in his word; therefore doers of the word should have special regard to them; as we find that the Lord is especially jealous of his authority with respect to that sort of precepts and rules, and doth punish the disregard of them with special strictness and severity. We see what a fearful general ruin came upon this lower world for the transgression of a positive institution and ordinance; we see the danger even Moses was in of his life for the neglect of such an ordinance. The effect of God's anger was very terrible against Korah and his company for opposition to God's positive institution concerning the priesthood; as it was even against Nadab and Abihu, priests, for deviating from the rule of the institution. Uzzah lost his life suddenly for touching the ark, even in his zeal for its safety; as this was not agreeable to the rule of the institution for him, who was but a Levite, not a priest, to do; and by this the Lord, at the sametime, signified his displeasure against the whole congregation, for having the ark carried in a cart, though a new one, contrary to the institution. And we know what judgment and disgrace came upon Uzziah, a king, for encroaching upon the rule of God's positive institutions. These things should serve us for examples.

I did not design to mention particular matters of doing; but that there were the particular reasons, already hinted at, for giving particular caution for matters of this sort. Besides the regard due to these institutions and ordinances for the special concern of the authority of God in them, his people have this further special reason for carefully regarding of them, that, upon the view of being doers of the word, they learn by its light so much concerning themselves, and the work which they have to do, as convinces them that they greatly need all the light, comfort, grace, and strength which the Lord conveys to his people by these institutions. If we will therefore be doers of the word, as we would regard the Lord's commandments otherwise, let us likewise, in the most conscientious manner, regard these his ordinances; as it makes the complete practical character of these two eminent doers of the word, Zacharias and Elisabeth, Luke i. 6. that

‘they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.’

5. It is a direction of great consequence, in order to our being successful doers of the word, that we should be ordinarily and earnestly employed in mortifying the lusts and passions of our hearts. These do commonly so much oppose our duty, that in any weighty cases in which they give us no occasion of conflict, we have reason either to suspect the matter itself which we take for our duty, and for which perhaps our passions are greatly engaged, or to suspect our own hearts; lest, by their unperceived influence there, they may be undermining our sincerity, as to our manner and ends in doing what it is our duty to do.

The psalmist was anxiously apprehensive of secret faults, by means of hidden deceitful principles of evil in him; so he prays, Psal. xix. 12. ‘Cleanse thou me from secret faults.’

We should always have a watchful eye of reflection turned inwards; and we should earnestly pray to the Searcher of hearts to help us to know ourselves. The most comfortable way for Omniscience to search us, in order to find out our secret evils, is when prevailing and self-denying sincerity doth earnestly apply thereto for that end. If secret lusts are hid, through our negligence or treacherous bias in their favours, the Lord will find them out; and expose them and us in a strong light, and with bitter and humbling consequence, Rev. ii. 23. It is best that, from a sense of the hazard, we give divine mercy the searching work to do; so David did, Psal. cxxxix. 23, 24. ‘Search me, O Lord, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.’ He was sensible there might be in him, unperceived, some wicked way, not only in outward walk, but also in his heart and thoughts, that might have hurtful influence upon him, with respect to what he calls the way everlasting, and with respect to his course as a doer of the word; and that his heart was so dark a place that he needed Omniscience to bring his candle into it, to show him all its recesses.

Indeed, to see the evils and strong deceitful principles of our hearts in a proper light, is a great mean to save us from their influence; yet the case requires more. If we find what is to us like a right eye or a right hand that offends us, *i.e.* causeth us to stumble at any part of our duty, or to stumble at the word in any part, the word is, ‘pluck it out, cut it off.’

The case requires self-denial ; but it is a self-denial without which we cannot be disciples and followers of Christ : and it will be needful for us, in such case, to apply to our hearts, towards awakening of them to a due sense of the matter, the awful words, Matth. xviii. 9. ‘ It is better for thee to enter ‘ into life with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into ‘ hell fire.’

The apostle Paul says, Rom. viii. 13. ‘ If ye, through the. ‘ Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.’ He speaks of the Spirit, as at command with us in this weighty part of duty. It is the encouragement of believers that, if they have the mortifying of their corrupt lusts and affections at heart, they shall not want the assistance of the Holy Spirit, which, he says in that context, verse 9. dwelleth in them. Indeed the Spirit in true Christians doth, of himself, still direct his force against that corrupt principle in them ; and will continue to do it with great power and success, if they do not grieve him, and treacherously and wilfully oppose his operation and influence : for if the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, the Spirit doth so against the flesh, as Gal. v. 17.

Upon the whole, ‘ the carnal mind is enmity against God ;’ so is every thing of the carnal mind that remaineth in a Christian ; ‘ it is not subject to the law of God, neither in- ‘ deed can be ; therefore, the discovery and mortifying of every carnal thing in him must be a great part of the ordinary Christian exercise of every one who hath at heart to be a doer of the word.

6. In order to be successful in the practice of religion, it will be most useful that our hearts be acquainted with the comforts of religion ; or, in other words, that our hearts feel the consolations of the word through faith, is most useful for us, in view to our being doers of the word. It is by this means especially, that wisdom’s ways will be to us ways of pleasantness ; and it is not likely that our hearts will be thoroughly engaged in them any farther than they are so.

There is an inconceivable consolation by the sense of the love of God through Jesus Christ. The blessed apostle found the powerful influence of it, (constraining, he calls it,) 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. without respect to practical life, to cause men to live, not unto themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again.

There is indeed a peace, and a joyful peace, which a doer of the word may have, by the testimony of his own conscience, of his godly sincerity. The apostle represents it, 2 Cor. i.

12. 'for our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience.' But there is something more attainable and useful to a doer of the word, even the comfort of the promises and hope of the gospel, which doth not arise merely from the testimony of the conscience, but comes by faith and the influence of Divine grace. The same apostle speaks, Rom. xv. 13. of the God of hope (this respects the influence of grace) filling Christians with all joy and peace in believing, (here is the faith of the word of God,) that they may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost. Elsewhere he speaks in divers places of joy in the Holy Ghost, recommends rejoicing in the Lord and in hope of the glory of God.

There needs little pains to demonstrate the influence of these consolations of the word on men, as doers of the word. The apostle gives a description of religion thus, Rom. xiv. 17. 'For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;' that is, as I understand the meaning, true religion doth not consist in such ceremonial or superstitious observances as he mentions, but in the practice of righteousness, in the peace arising from it, and in that joy of spiritual blessings and hope which the Holy Ghost giveth: and he giveth it through the faith of the word of God. We see how he expresses a Christian's perseverance, Heb. iii. 6. to be 'holding fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.'

A renewed heart hath the love of holiness itself; yet we may reasonably think that it is chiefly for these comforts of the word that the psalmist says, Psalm cxix. 103. 'How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth.' And, in that same psalm, wherein he appears in so strong a light a doer of the word, we need not doubt but he hath in great part in his view the influence of these consolations, when he speaks so often of quickening him; particularly verse 88. 'Quicken me after thy loving kindness; so shall I keep the testimonies of thy mouth.'

Indeed, while the way is plain and easy, men make a shift to uphold themselves in it, and to walk in it, under the common influence of their consciences; but, when trying cases occur, they are the special comforts of the word of God that are needful for their strength and maintaining their integrity. And trying cases and matters in the course of doing the word are more ordinary and common than perhaps people advert to. What from without doth most try and endanger the

doers of the word are the good and the evil things of the world.

The good things of the world are all vanity ; yet, if the lust, enjoyment, and care of them do not altogether choke the good seed of the word, to make it unfruitful, how do they deaden and make men heavy in their way ? The sense of this made the psalmist pray, Psal. cxix. 37. ‘ Turn away ‘ mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken thou me in ‘ thy way.’ In cases in which worldly interests have a particular interference with duty, it often appears what a fatal influence they have upon men’s integrity in walking with God. And when this is not remarkably the case, as to the particular instances of duty, yet the affections of the heart towards the good things of the world, how do they deaden men in the life of godliness ? It is the setting of our affections on the things that are above, that will effectually withdraw them from things on the earth, and that will effectually controul the hurtful influence which earthly affections have on men, in respect to doing the word. It is the force of such affections towards things above, and the comfort of that hope, Col. iii. 4. that ‘ when Christ who is our life shall appear, ‘ then shall we also appear with him in glory,’ that will have the greatest force against earthly affections ; therefore it is in a very proper place, after setting before them the comfort of that hope, that the apostle, verse 5. enjoins the Colossians, ‘ Mortify therefore your members which are upon the ‘ earth.’ The young man of whom the story is from Matth. xix. 16. seemed even to have eternal life at heart, and went a considerable length in external doing of the word, when he could report of himself concerning the commandments mentioned to him, ‘ All these things have I kept from my youth ‘ up ;’ but, when his perfectness or integrity came to be further tried, he chose to part with Christ rather than with his estate. But the faith and consolation of unseen things caused Moses esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.

Then as to the evil things of this world, these the Lord’s people who are the doers of the word may lay their account with, partly from the world for the sake of their duty, partly from the immediate hand of God for chastisement or trial. But how weak shall they be in their course as doers of the word, if the faith and consolation of unseen things do not give strength to their hearts ? The hearers compared to stony ground, did, when the sun became hot, wither away,

and there was an end of their fruitfulness. Demas forsook the gospel, and so do thousands in particular trying cases of duty, for the love of the present world. But though the cross of Christ seems a heavy burden upon the doers of the word, yet the comforts of the word will make, as Christ says, his burden light: so the apostle Paul testifies, 2 Cor. iv. 17.; 'Our light affliction, which is but for a moment,' he calls it. Trials by present tribulation are very shaking and weakening things; but it appears by the apostle's discourse, 1 Cor. xv. at the end, that they are the comforts of religion that can make a doer of the word 'stedfast, immoveable, always 'abounding in the work of the Lord:' therefore will it be good for them, towards making them more vigorous and fruitful doers of the word, to have 'the eyes of their understanding enlightened (more and more,) that they may 'know what is the hope of God's calling, and what is the 'riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.'

7. It will be exceeding useful that we improve spiritual intimacy with them who are the doers of the word, in order to our own having comfort and success in that course.

We may know how hurtful and infectious the fellowship is of them who are worldly and profane. The psalmist understood so. He does, Psalm xxvi. 3. profess thus, 'I have 'walked in thy truth;' as if he had said, I have been a doer of thy word. With this he connects verses 4, 5. 'I have 'not sat with vain persons; neither will I go in with dis- 'semblers. I have hated the congregation of evil doers; 'and will not sit with the wicked.' If he had sat with vain persons, &c. he had not been so likely to have walked in God's truth, as he said before; or, as he says next downwards, 'to 'wash his hands in innocency.' Persons may, from the society a man follows, oftentimes guess at a man's present disposition, and what is likely to be his fate, as to his future walk and works.

The society and spiritual intimacy of them that fear God will have the contrary tendency and effect from what I have been just now observing. 'As iron sharpeneth iron, so a man 'sharpeneth the countenance of his friend,' Prov. xxvii. 17. so will doers of the word to one another in that course of life.

It is a native consequence of the doers of the word their being influenced by the same views and principles, that they should relish and regard one another's society. This appears in the psalmist, Psal. cxix. 79. 'Let those that fear thee

‘turn unto me, and those that have known thy testimonies.’ So he had said, verse 63. ‘I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.’ I was saying before, that the consolations of religion are exceeding useful to men as doers of the word; but when the comforts of a man’s own heart are low, how much may he be helped by those of another, who may say, as Psalm lxvi. 16. ‘Come and hear, all ye that fear God, I will declare what he hath done for my soul.’

The observations and reproofs of a friend may be of the utmost usefulness; and all true doers of the word know what is the benefit of mutual excitement. When the apostle saw, in the circumstance of the Hebrews, what gave him particular occasion to exhort thus, Heb. x. 23. ‘Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering;’ the first useful mean to that end that he next exhorts them to, is, verse 24. ‘And let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good words.’ And it is in view to the usefulness they might be of to one another, as steady professors and doers of the word, that he says, chap. iii. 12. ‘Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God:’ and, verse 13. ‘But exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.’

8. The last direction I offer is, to be given to prayer. They who have at heart to be doers of the word will find that in themselves and in their work that will make them sensible what occasion they have for this: and that, if they take the rule of their work from God and from his word, they do no less need his assistance in their work. The prophet says, Jer. x. 23. ‘O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.’ It is a proper consequence of this to advise, as Prov. iii. 5, 6. ‘Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.’

It is an important advertisement that is given, Rom. xi. 20. ‘Thou standest by faith; be not high-minded, but fear.’ To be high-minded for our own understanding, or integrity, or strength, is a dangerous prognostic to the doers of the word. And if we have cause of fear on our own part, we have no security for our standing but in God and in his grace; and this the apostle signifies by saying, ‘thou standest by faith.’ Now, a chief way in which faith exerts itself is

prayer. So we find the psalmist, that great doer of the word, practising, on innumerable occasions, particularly Psal. cxliii. 8. 'Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee.' And, verse 10. 'Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God: thy Spirit is good, lead me into the land of uprightness.'

We need understanding and light concerning our duty; for although the word be a most perfect light in itself, we are subject to much imperfection, weakness of understanding, and dangerous bias in our searches after light; therefore the psalmist prayed, Psal. cxix. 33, 34. 'Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes: give me understanding, and I will keep thy law.'

There may be various difficulties and obstructions in the way itself and work of doing the word, and that from Satan, from the world, and the sovereign dispensation of Providence concerning us, that will make our way very rough, which may give us occasion to betake us to God, as Psal. v. 8. 'Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness, because of mine enemies; make thy way straight before my face.' And as Psal. xxvii. 11. 'Teach me thy way, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.'

As we need assistance and influence of grace at all times, so there are special times of need; as the times of prosperity, the times of adversity and affliction, when we are called to special work, or when special temptations occur. The sincere doers of the word will not find themselves equal to the adoers and difficulties of such times. There will be occasion to betake them, as Heb. iv. 16. 'to the throne of grace, that they may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.' There was an answer to such prayer given, once for all, for the encouragement of all true doers of the word, in all the greatest difficulties of their way, 2 Cor. xii. 9. 'And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness.' As prayer, then, is so needful, not only as a part of the work itself, that is meant by doing of the word, but likewise as a mean of great benefit with respect to all our doing of the word besides, there is one most necessary caution; and that is, when we profess to depend on divine grace and pray for it, that we be careful not to resist that grace, by following in our practice, wilfully, the dictates of our own hearts; and when we profess to depend on God for guidance, that our hearts do not predetermine us, according to their own bias. In that story which is recorded, Jer.

xlii. 3. the people seemed to be very well disposed to ask and take counsel from the Lord by the prophet ; but after the Lord had condescended to give them counsel by his servant, they took their own way, and that to their ruin. It is a caution to be heeded in all cases, but especially when we betake us to the throne of grace, for guidance and strength, that we have, Psal. lxvi. 18. ' If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me : ' and if by this means our application to the throne of grace be unsuccessful, we will be in danger to come from it with hearts filled with their own delusion. Some other directions may be learned from what shall be suggested in the next and last head of discourse on this subject. We come, then,

III. To give some distinguishing marks of the true doers of the word.

This may to some appear, at first sight, not so reasonable an inquiry. If we inquired concerning marks of true faith and the sincerity of grace in our hearts, this were to be proven by men's works, and by their being doers of the word : but as to our being doers of the word, it might be thought that this proves itself ; and that to inquire for further marks of that again were to make self-examination endless.

But, upon considering the matter a little more closely, we shall see cause to judge otherwise. Had not that young man, of whom we have the story, Matt. xix. 6. great pretensions as a doer of the word ? yet it appeared, that his character was not a doer of the word ; for when the Lord, who tries the heart, did take trial of his perfection or integrity by a special command, he came out to be a hearer only, and resolutely, though sorrowfully, went away such.

Paul, before his conversion, was, touching the external righteousness which is in the law, blameless ; but what had become of him if he had not afterwards obtained mercy ? Can we doubt but that many pharisaical, self-righteous souls, esteemed greatly by themselves and others as doers of the word, shall in the end have this fearful sentence—' I never knew you ; depart from me, ye that work iniquity ! ' Surely, then, they were not true doers of the word.

It is of the last consequence that we do not deceive our ownelves by being hearers only. And it is of no less consequence that we do not, still more miserably, deceive ourselves with the opinion of being doers of the word, when truly we are not so.

It is clear, then, that the distinguishing marks of the true

doers of the word make the subject of a most important and necessary inquiry.

Divers things, useful to give light in this inquiry, may be gathered from the arguments and directions I have suggested, so that I may leave them for that use, to the judgment and reflection of every one for himself, without mentioning them again. Yet some of them I must mention yet, but shall be the more brief on these, as I shall be upon the whole of this part.

1. First, then, the true doers of the word are of spiritual mind and affection. The word is the Spirit's rule; and if the doers of the word do take the rule of their life and work from the Spirit, the same Spirit doth certainly rule their mind and affections, to make them mind, relish, and desire the things of the Spirit, even these things which the natural man doth not receive, and cannot know, but accounts them foolishness.

To explain the matter a little, the things of the Spirit are no other than the things of Christ; the proper things of the gospel, respecting the Christian's ground of confidence, the matters of present enjoyment through faith, and of his hope. They are called the things of the Spirit, because 'God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit,' 1 Cor. ii. 10, 12; because the knowledge of them is effectually taught, and the reality of them imparted by the Holy Spirit of God, as John xvi. 14. 'He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.'

The true doer, whose doing is according to the rule of the Spirit and the word, is led by the Spirit, and taught in what concerns the ground of his confidence before God; he hath the faith and good relish of the doctrine of the free and efficacious grace of God through Jesus Christ; 'the true circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, they do rejoice in Jesus Christ, and have no confidence in the flesh,' as Phil. iii. 3.

They are spiritual in what concerns present spiritual enjoyment, as Psal. iv. 6. 'There be many that say, Who will show us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.'

They are spiritual in what concerns their hope, 'hoping for the grace that is to be brought unto them at the revelation of Jesus Christ,' 1 Pet. i. 13. Their present groaning, (Rom. viii. 23.) under outward and inward spiritual miseries, do prove that their desires and hopes do truly terminate in

the glorious adoption that shall appear at the redemption of the body.

Shall we think that men can be doers of the word, and walk according to the rule of the word truly, which is the same as to the matter of the work as to walk after the Spirit, and not be taught, led, and influenced by the Spirit, to the knowledge, faith, and affection of the things of the Spirit, as above represented? Certainly it is by these spiritual views and affections that they are engaged so fully and thoroughly to be doers of the word, and to the practice of righteousness, that their righteousness doth greatly exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees. Others who, having only the spirit of the world, do not know the things of the free grace of God, are carnal in their confidence, having confidence in the flesh; they truly and habitually mind earthly things, and are carnal, hypocritical, and partial in their doing, not genuine doers of the word. The great day of the Lord will class them among those that work iniquity.

2. The true doers of the word have habitually a quick and bitter sense of their sins, and of their continual sinfulness. Others who pretend to good doing have perhaps heretofore had their troubles of mind by the charge of their consciences for sin; but if, somehow or other, they have come to peace, their wound is healed, the bitterness of death is past, and their sorrow for sin is past with it. If they have sometime beheld the natural face of their souls (I allude to the similitude following my text) in the glass of God's word, or if that glass hath, whether they would or not, been presented to their consciences, to show them their guiltiness, yet how soon they have got any inward peace, they go their way and forget what manner of men they were. And their present good doings please them too well for their hearts to conceive any great uneasiness or concern for the present sinfulness which they are somewhat sensible of. Yea, it is good if, like the festival entertainment of that woman's peace-offerings mentioned Prov. vii. their comforts concerning their good state and good condition, be not improved for deliberate and habitual criminal indulgences.

It will not be thus with a true doer of the word. If he have attained to inward peace by the abounding grace of him who saith, Isa. xliii. 25. 'I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins;' yet his sins are not forgotten with himself. Even such an one's sense of the peace of God will have the

effect mentioned Ezek. xvi. 63. 'That thou mayest remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee, for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord.' David's penitential psalms, which he appears to have composed when he had notable views of pardoning grace, afford great examples to us of this.

When the apostle Paul was a Pharisee, and a great good doer in his way, his sinfulness does not seem to have given him great uneasiness. He was then, in great part, 'without the law,' Rom. vii. 9. but afterwards, when the law was writ in his heart, and he became a genuine doer of the word, how bitter is his complaint of his present remaining sinfulness, as expressed downwards! 'I am,' says he, 'carnal, sold under sin; I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwell eth no good thing.' And at last, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!' The true doers of the word, even when they have the testimony of their consciences with respect to their sincerity, when they can, to their bitterest regret of their sinfulness, like the apostle's 'O wretched man,' join thanksgiving, as he doth there, Rom. vii. 25. 'I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord;' when they have much comfort through faith in Jesus Christ; yet their sense of their sinfulness and of the plagues of their hearts causes them eat the most delicious food of their souls as with bitter herbs.

It is but reasonable, from the nature of things, that the case should be as I have been representing it. Others take but a superficial view of the rule of their duty, and are the more easily satisfied about their own conformity to it; but the true doers of the word do look into the perfect law of liberty, as verse 25. downwards from my text. The word is the same which, 1 Pet. i. 12. is used concerning the mysteries of the gospel, and the angels' attentive looking in to them; it properly signifies to pry into; as when men stoop down to pry, or look into a thing in the most attentive manner. Looking thus attentively into the great rule of duty, a doer of the word, perceiving its spiritual nature and strict holiness, hath other views and impression of sinfulness in practice and nature than others have. And this law being writ in his heart, his escapes in practice do wound him; the remaining corruption of nature is his burden; and what he finds of it cleaving to his best doings, makes him join in that confession

which the church hath, Isa. lxiv. 6. 'We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.'

The most refined and adorned hypocrite, who pretends to the character of a doer of the word, hath never been truly sanctified by grace. A true doer of the word is one whose nature hath been truly sanctified and renewed; God hath put his laws in his mind, and hath writ them in his heart. By natural and necessary consequence, this latter must have a tender and quick sense of sin that the other hath not. In the former, a faint and low sense of sin, with a considerable opinion of his own goodness, is a consequence of his want of true grace and genuine holiness; in the latter a bitter sense of sinfulness, that prevails so far as to swallow up, in a manner, all the symptoms of grace he could discover in himself, is the consequence of the truth and power of grace in him. And so, these very things that bring him very properly under the character of a doer of the word, do make him quite ashamed to lay any claim to it. He apprehends he grows worse, and is going farther and farther backwards from his aim in doing; but, while a sharp observation and tender feeling of sinfulness grows with him, it truly demonstrates that the principles of holiness grow with him, and that he is making a proportional progress as a doer of the word.

3. The true doer of the word is distinguished by his humble and self-denying disposition in doing. This is a consequence of what I have been just now suggesting concerning his sense of his sinfulness. Indeed, as humility is a native fruit of grace, so it is necessary, in order to a man's being a doer of the word at all, Psal. x. 4. 'The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God;' nor will his pride allow him to submit his neck entirely to God's yoke. When Jeremiah brought the Jews counsel from God, Jer. xliii. 2. 'then spake Azariah and Johanan, and all the proud men, saying unto Jeremiah, 'Thou speakest falsely.' When Hezekiah's messengers called the people of the ten tribes to observe the solemnity of the passover at Jerusalem, there were many such proud men who laughed them to scorn, and mocked them, and despised God's ordinances: 'nevertheless divers of Asher humbled themselves,' to do their duty, 2 Chron. xxx. 11. When men are called to duties that are in disuse in the world, and cross to their own common sentiments and lusts, it is the powerful work of grace to humble them in such case to be doers of the word.

The humility and self-denial of a doer of the word appears especially in what concerns the end of his working, and the strength by which he worketh. As to the end of men's working, some do work and sweat at it, in order to establish their own righteousness, and many there are who do stumble at that stumbling-stone, Rom. ix. 32. But the views of a true doer of the word are very remote from that; he doth good works, because that is the way that God hath ordained for him, Eph. ii. 10. 'for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.' He is justified, not by works, but by grace; and what he doth in good works, is from the disposition and view expressed by the psalmist, Psal. cxvi. 12. 'What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?'

As to the strength by which men work, the hypocrite being, like Ishmael, born after the flesh, his good doings are the productions of the flesh and of nature; but true doers of the word are, like Isaac, the children of the promise. By 'the exceeding great and precious promises,' and the grace thereby conveyed, 'they have been made partakers of a divine nature,' 2 Pet. i. 4. 'God having of his own will begotten them with the word of truth.' Accordingly, afterwards, as they have the wisdom to count the cost of every good work, if the works appear great, their strength small, and the temptations frightful, they do all by the faith of God's promises and of the grace of his covenant: the strength by which they can do all things is by Christ strengthening them; and if there is any comfortable success in good works, their souls breathe, like the psalmist, Psal. cxv. 1. 'Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake.'

4. The true doers of the word do especially prize and relish that grace of God that justifieth freely, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ. Others attempt to be doers of the law and word of God, in view to be justified by their works. These know not the law, nor the work it requires, nor themselves. The doers truly of the word, being such as have looked well into it, they dare not deal with the law in that way; but the law, which is holy, just, and good, being truly writ in their hearts, there is nothing for which they prize the grace of God more than for enabling them to be doers of it. But when a man, who truly knows and loves the holiness of the law and word of God, doth truly apply it to

his heart, carefully studying and endeavouring conformity to it, what a disconformity doth he see! what unholiness! what sin! and that cleaving to his best doing. If ever formerly, when God was translating him from darkness to light, he valued free justifying grace, surely now he values it more: and after going far in his course as a doer of the word, he would not for the world venture his standing before God on his own doing. Never did any find more need and occasion to believe on him that justifieth the ungodly than the true doers of the word.

The apostle John requires and recommends walking in the light thus, 1 John i. 7. '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.' Without this we needed not think of walking in the light, or of having fellowship with God in that way. None are so sensible of this as the doers of the word, or do so much prize the sprinkling of the blood of Christ for cleansing them from all sin. Of all the good fellowship they are come to, as represented Heb. xii. there is nothing which their sense of things makes them value more than this, verse 24. that they are come 'to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the 'blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than the 'blood of Abel.'

When Paul was the Pharisee, a wondrous doer in his own esteem, he was not sensible how much he needed a Redeemer's righteousness. When he came to understand his condition, and to see himself a chief of sinners, he tells us, Phil. iii. 7. 'But what things were gain to me, these I counted loss for 'Christ;' so he speaks in the past tense; but how would he speak in the present tense, now that he is a doer of the word, a saint, an apostle, who laboured more abundantly than they all? His present sense of things, when he bore all these characters, and his present value for Christ, as he is the Lord our righteousness, he expresses in the present tense thus, verses 8, 9. 'Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss 'for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my 'Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and 'do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be 'found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is 'of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, 'the righteousness which is of God by faith.' Such doers as have a different sense of matters, have never entered far into the business of doing, and are not true doers of the word.

5. The true doers of the word, from the nature of the genuine principle of holiness that is in them, do make progress in well-doing, and advance to greater and greater degree of holiness and fruitfulness. There are others who would have inward disquiet in certain degree of wickedness, and find a certain degree of righteous practice needful, in order to be tolerably easy: when they have reached this, they sit down; their lusts and their sloth allow of no more progress; nor have they a true principle of holiness in them that would drive them farther forward. As for what remains, their righteousness and their lusts dwell easily together.

It is not so with the true doers of the word. Every step they make in holiness opens a new prospect before them; and the principle of new life that is in them urges them forward; 'being justified by faith, they have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;' but this peace gives commencement to a perpetual war against what of the serpent is in them; and the principle of grace that is in them will never have peace with remaining corruption. If corruption dwells with their grace,—the old man with the new in them; yet is not the old man at peace, but is crucified, and will be so, until the body of sin be destroyed. Whatever progress such have made, they rest not, but, 'forgetting those things that are behind, they reach forth unto those things that are before,' Phil. iii. 13. Although there remains of sin in them what causes them think meanly of their attainment in holiness, yet their conflict with it proves that they have no less at heart than to cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

It is needless in this inquiry to multiply marks. If you have these marks, notwithstanding you find yourself much short of the holiness of the law, I may be confident to say, God hath writ his law in your heart; and blessed is the man whose strength is in the Lord; in whose heart are the ways of them who go from strength to strength; every one of them in Zion appeareth before God; you are a doer of the work, and shall be blessed in your doing.

Now, the God of peace make you perfect in every good work, &c.







*C. P.*

SALE  
DUPLICATE

